

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Third Session - Twelfth Legislature
39th Day

Tuesday, April 5, 1955

The House met at three o'clock p.m.
On the Orders of the Day:

PRESS STATEMENT

Hon. C.M. Fines (Provincial Treasurer): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day are called I wish to bring to your attention an article in the 'Leader-Post' this morning where it quotes Mr. Cameron (referring to the member from Maple Creek) as claiming that the liquor inspector had gone through his constituency ordering hotelkeepers to clean and remodel their licensed premises, and claiming it was ordered because "that fellow Cameron complained in the Legislature."

I may say that I have here a statement signed by this inspector:

"I wish to categorically deny the allegations made against me by Mr. Alex Cameron, M.L.A. for Maple Creek, which appeared in the April 5th issue of the Regina 'Leader-Post'. I have never, at any time, in the course of my duties as a liquor board inspector used the name of any member in the Legislative Assembly for the purpose of attempting to intimidate any hotelkeeper."

I thought I should read that denial as quickly as possible, and also to say that I have arranged for a meeting in my office, tomorrow morning at eleven o'clock, to which I invite the hon. member for Maple Creek.

REFUSAL OF INFORMATION

Moved by Mr. Kohaly (Souris-Estevan), seconded by Mr. MacNutt (Nipawin):

"That, in the opinion of this Assembly, the Minister in charge of Saskatchewan Power Corporation erred in refusing certain information sought by Mr. Kohaly, on grounds that 'it is not deemed to be in the public interest to reveal estimates of this nature', in as much as the information sought had been given in a public meeting by a senior officer of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation."

Mr. Robert Kohaly (Souris-Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, the motion which appears under my name on the Order Paper — I am sorry to put it there at such a late date, but unfortunately it was not possible to see that it was debated earlier than this, because it was necessary to wait until the finish of the Crown Corporations Committee meetings.

The point involved is a question surrounding the Legislature itself, and, as a younger member of the Legislature, I hesitate to put myself in

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this position; but I found, last year, that I had a problem similar to this, and again this year, and if events should so dictate that I might be here another year, I am afraid that I may face it again and again. Sooner or later I will have to make some effort to stop what I feel, and the House will decide, is not in the best interest of the procedure of this House.

I came to this House, last Session, in an effort, and made an effort, to be courteous, to try to do those things which are necessary in the hands of an Opposition member; and as you know, Mr. Speaker, I was placed in this House with no possibility to my constituents of being a member of the Government party during this Legislature. They knew very well that they wanted an Opposition member, and I have tried my best to carry out those duties which they definitely assigned to me.

It is one of the duties of the Opposition to question any governmental department, any Crown Corporations, anything to do with the spending of the people's money, and that duty is one which falls on all members, whether they are in the Government or in the Opposition. The Opposition, of course, has the major responsibility, and it is more often that you see it exercised by the Opposition. However, last year, I put on the Order Paper, to be found on page 71 of the Journals of last year, a request for an Order of the Assembly, directed to the Government, and it was sent to the Crown Corporations Committee. I asked at that time, in respect to the supplying of gas to the city of Saskatoon and intervening towns and villages, the estimated (a) total cost; (b) revenue; (c) operating expense; and (d) rate of return after depreciation to the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. The result is indicated on the same page: "A debate arising and the Hon. Mr. Darling having stated that, in his opinion, it was not in the public interest to disclose the information sought," the motion was dropped. At that time I felt that, since the Minister indicated that the questions and the answers to them were not in the public interest, I had best not say anything about it, but drop it, which I did. I looked it over during the year and found, to my amazement, that a substantial portion of the question had been, in fact, answered, some time previous to that. And so this year, I thought I had better put it back on — not the same questions, but similar questions to the same Department. And so I asked for a Return, now known as Sessional Paper No. 88, and I asked three questions there:

(1) The domestic, commercial and industrial consumption of natural gas in systems served by the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, by months, from November, 1953, to January, 1955, inclusive.

That question was answered, by months, by domestic, commercial and industrial categories.

(2) Estimated annual sale for domestic, commercial and industrial natural gas consumers for Saskatoon during the first five years, by years.

(3) Estimated number of domestic and commercial customers for natural gas for Saskatoon during the first five years, by years.

The answer to (2) and (3), according to Sessional Paper No. 88: "It is not deemed to be in the public interest to reveal estimates of this nature."

Now with that background I want to point out to the House that this question is not a new one. It has been debated on more than one occasion in Legislatures. It was very recently debated — on the 7th of February, 1955 — in the House of Commons in Ottawa, when Mr. Diefenbaker asked for a Return on that House showing a copy of all letters and communications from a given date as between the Transport Department and the Canadian National Railways, respecting a lease to the Queen Elizabeth hotel; and the debate arose. The Speaker pointed out, in part, the problem which was involved, and I quote:

“It is simply this: the House is entitled to get only what it is allowed to get. Bourinot claims that the House is not entitled to ask for confidential documents, documents of a private nature or for any documents which the Minister may decide that it is not in the public interest to produce. When a Minister rises in his place and says: ‘I would like the opinion of the House, to be decided by a vote’ it means one of two things — either the member who is now asking that I collect the voices for the purpose of provoking a division does not believe the Minister when he says that the documents asked for are not in the public interest to produce, and therefore, he is not accepting the Minister’s word, which, in all cases, must be accepted in this House.”

And he goes on. Later on Mr. Fulton from Kamloops takes part in the debate and he says, at page 893:

“I take the liberty of suggesting that, as Your Honour has pointed out, in the old days these motions were debatable. It would then be open to the Minister to satisfy, or attempt to satisfy, the House, as to the justification of his position, that it was not in the public interest to produce the document. In the same way it would be open to the Party seeking its production to try to satisfy the Minister and the House that it was in the public interest. Your Honour has pointed out that that sort of debate is no longer permitted. I think it is for that reason that the practice of having a vote on such motions has arisen, because some members of the House may genuinely and sincerely disagree with the suggestion that the matter is against the public interest. Before we appear to accept the suggestion that such motion should not be the subject for division I would again repeat my suggestion that there will be further opportunity to discuss the matter.”

And before I conclude on this point, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that two members who have reached more eminence in the political and parliamentary work, spoke on that question, together with Mr. Speaker, who, of course, is an authority. The result of his decision, again on page 893 of February 7th Hansard:

“May I suggest that nowadays the motions are still debatable, but not when introduced in this way. If the hon. member looks at Standing Order 51 he will see this, and the Standing Order says:

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“That if on any such motion a debate be desired it shall be transferred by the Clerk to the order of Notices of Motion.”

And that brings me to the point that I am not, in any way, casting any reflection on the capabilities of the Minister involved in this particular instance; none whatsoever. I believe that the Minister is carrying on the operation of the Power Corporation most advantageously in the province of Saskatchewan. He has done a marvellous job in combining the use of electricity in that Corporation with the production and distribution of natural gas. I say that advisedly. I hope that I shall not be met later on by the suggestion that I am attacking the Minister and his capabilities. I am definitely not. That is why I read that bit from Hansard.

I feel that it is a question of whether or not I am entitled to receive certain information when I ask it, as a member of this House; whether any member, on either side, asks any Cabinet Minister, then of course he has the right to answer or not answer. If he doesn't answer, and says it is on grounds of the public interest, then we have the right to come back and find out whether or not it is, in fact, in the public interest. We must accept his statement, and we have done so. When he made the statement, last year, I accepted it, and then I started to dig into it. This year, I asked a similar set of questions again; I got the same type of an answer. Then I looked at it and tried to decide what to do; I was informed by the authority which we usually go to in this House that you had one or two methods by which to deal with this. The best one was to take it to Crown Corporations Committee. I took it to Crown Corporations Committee and raised the point once again and those members of this House who were in the Committee at that time saw the result. The only thing left to me was to bring it on to the floor of the House and to see whether the individual members of this House would consider the question fairly and equitably and to see one thing only — not the competence of the Minister — nothing short of whether I had received an answer to my question or not, and whether, in having said that it was not in the public interest, it was correct. That is to say, ought I not to have received that answer. That is all there is to be asked in this resolution; nothing more than that, nothing less than that.

First of all we must decide whether this is a confidential document, whether the information which I required was confidential from a governmental standpoint; secondly, as I understand it, whether this is a private document, that is, a personal document; a document coming to me in my personal capacity; thirdly, was it in the public interest not to produce the documents which I required.

As I say, the same situation occurred last year and I wish to go over just one small portion of it. I asked for the total cost — that was the first part; the total cost of the distribution, the supplying of gas to the city of Saskatoon and intervening towns, and the reply was, of course, that it was not in the public interest. However, if you will be referred to the Canadian Press dispatch of January 13, 1953 — a year before I asked this question about the total cost — Canadian Press . . .

Hon. Mr. Darling: — Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question? Did you ask for the total cost or did you ask for the estimated cost?

Mr. Kohaly: — I asked, as printed here, and I have the original, Mr. Speaker: “In respect of the supplying of gas to the city of Saskatoon

and intervening towns and villages, the estimated total cost.”

I asked for the estimated total cost and, as I say, on January 13, 1953, by Canadian Press dispatch, the Minister of Public Works, the Hon. Mr. Darling, speaking to a C.C.F. Women’s Club in Saskatoon, is reported to have told them that, first of all, the figure of \$250,000 a year in annual grants would come to the city by the fifth year of distribution. And that was made by a responsible person.

In the second instance, on January 15, 1953 (two days later, and still a year before my motion), the Premier himself, a responsible person, issued a statement to the public press of this province and as reported in the Saskatoon ‘Star Phoenix’ of January 15th of that year, and in part he is quoted as follows:

“And the city of Saskatoon, from the fifth year on, may anticipate a yearly grant in lieu of taxes amounting to approximately \$250,000.”

At the same time, Premier Douglas, in January 15th ‘Leader Post’ was reported as saying, in speaking to the press:

“The grant to the city of 5 per cent of the revenue from the sale of gas is expected to reach a quarter of a million dollars a year once the project is well under way. And further, why the Mayor should criticize the Government for being willing to spend \$7,000,000 to make gas available to the citizens of Saskatoon is something which is difficult to understand.”

A responsible person has answered, one year before my query, the estimated total cost. But that was not sufficient. On February 25, 1953, almost a year again, Mr. J.R. Sarsfield, business manager of The Saskatchewan Power Corporation, made a speech to the Lions Club in Saskatoon, and he broke down the estimated cost at that time — and that is the question I asked — into three divisions, and added them up to some \$6,000,000.

Again, the same man, speaking before a group called ‘The Canadian Gas Association’ at Banff, on June 22, 1954, again on this question of cost, gave the figures. And I quote Mr. Sarsfield:

“As a utility we knew we were undertaking a major effort. The total expenditure of which would be \$3,000,000 for transmission lines and another \$3,000,000 for the distribution system.”

These are all statements made by responsible people. When the Premier and when the Minister of Public Works in charge of the Power Corporation, and the business manager of the Power Corporation, make statements, these are responsible men making statements. The C.C.F. Women’s Club, the Lions Club, the press and radio, the Canadian Gas Association, are all entitled to this information a year before I asked the question in this House and get the answer that it is not in the public interest to give me that answer. It was already given to these other people, but it is not in the interest of the public that a member of the Legislature should receive such information.

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When this matter was brought up in the Crown Corporations Committee I raised a similar problem there. I believe the Minister of Natural Resources spoke, and the Hon. Provincial Treasurer spoke, as well as one or two other private members. And the answers ranged there from, “oh, this is a single person speaking, and it was not necessarily an authoritative statement, that it was a guess or estimate and so on.” Well, I suggest that the guessing and the estimating of the Public Works Minister and the Premier should be much more accurate than what is suggested by my friends opposite.

I want to go, for a moment, to a copy entitled ‘The Saskatoon Story’ which came into my hands and which purports to have been delivered by J.R. Sarsfield, business manager, Saskatchewan Power Corporation, at the 47th annual convention of the Canadian Gas Association at Banff on June 22, 1954. You will bear in mind that this was delivered some considerable time before I asked for the Return in this House. This is the paper which he purports to have delivered and which report is contained in a press release in the ‘Calgary Herald’ on June 22, 1954, over the title of J.R. Sarsfield. And so it was given and was reported — the entire contents of this was reported. I want to point out to you that this gentleman, whom I have every reason to expect knows exactly what he is doing or he would not be the business manager of such a giant corporation, was sent over to speak to The Canadian Gas Association, a very large and reputable and all-embracing organization as far as the gas industry in the Dominion of Canada is concerned, was probably sent over there with the knowledge, consent and intention of the Minister in charge, otherwise, we are going to be faced with having to deal with civil servants who want to rush about from one end of the country to the other making statements which are not the property of the responsible Minister.

But here is how he delivers this, and the reason I read a portion of this, Mr. Speaker, is because it was indicated that this was the private suggestion and thought of Mr. Sarsfield. He starts out:

“I have been requested by the manufacturers section to tell you what happens when a city is served with natural gas . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I notice someone in the gallery taking notes. It is against the rules of the House to take notes.

Mr. Kohaly: — I repeat, Mr. Speaker, at the commencement of the story — ‘The Saskatoon Story’ by Mr. Sarsfield:

“I have been requested by the manufacturers section to tell you what happens when a city is served with natural gas for the first time. In this paper I would like to report to you under the following headings:

(1) the utility; (2) the trade; (3) the customer; and (4) sign post for the future.

“Before dealing with the subject I would like to tell you something about the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. Ours is a Crown Corporation, and as you adjudge from our name, predominantly in electric power. We have a total investment of about \$70 million in electricity and gas plants. We serve over 100,000 electric customers and 6,000 gas. This year we celebrated our Silver Jubilee

as an electric utility. In the natural gas field we have two years operating experience in a small part of our system and one years operating experience on the line to Saskatoon and in that city. Prior to entering this field several years were spent in studying and planning. We have a somewhat special electric system and serve a very sparsely populated area, having a field of operation 400 miles wide by 360 miles north and south. We have three major steam plants — one natural gas Diesel generating station and another one under construction. We also have a number of straight Diesel generating stations.

“Since 1949 our big effort has been to bring electricity to the farms of the province under our farm electrification programme. By the end of this year over 26,000 will be served. This is not a paper on our electric system but we are also proud of our record in this phase of operation. We have 1,300 employees. Our farm programme, this year, will build over 6,000 miles of farm transmission lines, with total capital expenditure, this year, of approximately \$20 million.”

He goes on and says:

“But the story we have to tell is the story of Saskatoon and natural gas. We entered the natural gas business for several reasons. We require . . . “

Hon. Mr. Nollet: — And on and on.

Mr. Kohaly: — And on and on and on, in exactly the same way throughout; undoubtedly the Minister of Agriculture has somehow or other read this document as well.

That is the way he talked. He talks about “we have 3,000 employees . . . “ “we have spent, as capital programmes, some \$20 million . . . “ “We have 6,000 miles of transmission . . .” “We serve over 100,000 electric customers”, and so on. That is not the statement of a man coming up there and suggesting, in his own personal capacity, what is going on in the province of Saskatchewan. It continues throughout. It is a concerted effort by this man, Mr. Sarsfield, and I might say he has done a very good job of explaining the system in the province of Saskatchewan; but it is a statement which you might well expect to have heard from the Minister himself. That is a statement that I would not be the least bit surprised to see couched in those terms by the Minister in charge of this Corporation, by any Minister, because it follows the form usually found when Ministers are explaining their departments. But this is given by Mr. Sarsfield, and there is nothing wrong with it, except that I cannot possibly accept the suggestion that this man Sarsfield is over in Banff talking to such a well-known organization as The Canadian Gas Association and doing it on his own. He is over there reporting for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation.

I want to point out that Mr. Sarsfield, throughout this report, on almost every page until you get on towards the back, speaks of having given

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information out to the various people in the province of Saskatchewan concerning the bringing of gas to Saskatoon. On the second page he shows how many gas burners they expected:

“Our analysis showed that there were at least 6,000 oil burning space heating customers out of a potential of 14,000.”

Where did he get that information? He got that information and delivered it to the public from the documents which the Power Corporation had got from consulting engineers and from their own services. He goes on, on the third page:

“Since natural gas was new to the trade, we took the distributors and retailers into our fullest confidence.”

So they found out all about it. Then he goes on, in the same paragraph:

“We used the blackboard extensively to work our gas bills and show comparisons with other type of competitive fuels. We were invited to speak to service clubs to further inform the general public on the correct natural gas story.”

And he goes on and on:

“Our office became a beaten pathway by appliance manufacturers representatives, none of whom ever went away without spending all the time they desired in getting information on the Saskatoon situation.”

They had gone across almost the entire field with anybody who might be interested — except one type of person, and that was a member of this Legislature. That, Mr. Speaker, was not “in the public interest.” It was not in the public interest that a member of the Legislature should receive the information that service clubs, manufacturers agents, C.C.F. Women’s Clubs and so on, should receive.

I could go on throughout this entire dissertation by Mr.Sarsfield, but there is one thing I want to point out. On the fourth page of his speech, at that time, he reported to The Canadian Gas Association, the following:

“Two consulting firms — Fish Engineering of Houston, Texas, and the Gas Machinery Company of Hamilton, Ontario, were asked to advise on many points.”

And he refers, in his report, to a series of graphs which he had made up and attached to his speech, delivered widely to the gathering at the 47th annual convention; and that, in turn, was distributed to the newspapers. The graphs are all here, all attached, all part of the same speech; and he gives very, very particular information.

I want to point out that all I asked for in this particular Return was the estimated cost. I asked for the estimated figures. I did it particularly — I went through one of his graphs which he attaches and which has, in very large letters, written across the top of the graph: “Graph showing

estimated number domestic, commercial, customers for Saskatoon for a five-year period.” And it gives it by years across the bottom — one, two, three, four, five. It is nothing more difficult than that. It starts out with 6,000 domestic customers in the first year, actual customers; then it goes on for a period of five years by year, shows the graph, shows 12,000 in the fifth year. That was his statement that he delivered to The Gas Association and to the public press of this province and of the province of Alberta.

So I came along and, unfortunately, found it necessary to ask the question. I asked the estimated number of domestic and commercial customers for natural gas for Saskatoon during the first five years, by years — exactly the same way as he has headed his graph, except that I added one thing — I put a question mark in there. That is all I added to it. And there it is. We know what the figures are — 12,000; it is as simple as can be. If you criss-cross the line you can see it exactly, and that, Mr. Speaker, is estimated. That is what Mr. Sarsfield has to say — “the estimated”; and that is what I asked for. I asked for the domestic, commercial and that is what he had in the graph, and that is what I asked for. And for five years and for Saskatoon and by years — exactly what he had. And that is what he gave, months before I asked the question; and this is what I got as an answer: “It is not deemed to be in the public interest to reveal estimates of this nature.” That was my answer. I have the answer right here, but because of the attitude and the results I had obtained, last year, I deemed it necessary to put it back, this year, and ask for it; and I did so and there is what happened to me.

The second question which was not answered, or I should say it was answered in the manner in which it was, that it was “against the public interest,” was the estimated annual sale of commercial, domestic and industrial natural gas consumers for Saskatoon during the first five years, by years, which is again a copy of the large print that he had on his graph, except that, once again, I added the question mark. There it is: “Graph showing estimated annual sales for domestic, commercial and industrial natural gas consumers to Saskatoon, by years, for five years” — one, two, three, four, five; and it shows it exactly. It is easy to read. I had the information. I asked the question, because he had already given it to the public; and my answer, of course, was: “It is not deemed to be in the public interest to reveal estimates of this nature.”

And so I found it necessary, Mr. Speaker, to put this resolution on to the floor of the House. I feel that as far as the Fish report is concerned, this report (here is a copy of it) can be picked up almost at random. It has been in the hands of the Saskatoon Council, has been debated, with the press following it completely; there was nothing to stop them; there is the Fish report. But what was the answer to the Accounts Committee — the Accounts Committee statement was that the Fish report was confidential, that it might give information to some other competitor. Well, if this is confidential, I don’t know how come. I don’t know how they intend to keep it confidential, by giving so many mimeographed copies out across this province. Here they are. They are easy to get; anybody can have it; anybody can read it; it has been debated by the Council of the city of Saskatoon; but in this instance, when I asked a question, I cannot get the information because it might disclose something in here to some competitor, that would not be right and would be detrimental to the Power Corporation.

I am not going into the material. Undoubtedly all the answers to the questions I have asked, except a small point that can be obtained from

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any gas distributing organization in the United States or Canada, is all contained in there. We can get the information from this. But I could not get it on the floor of the House.

Now I feel that, as far as the argument of the Minister that the Fish report is confidential is concerned it does not stand up. It does not stand up in any respect, because it is not confidential. It has been out in the press; he has given statements; the Premier has given statements; Sarsfield has given statements. They are all responsible men and they have all given responsible statements, and I feel that when I ask for an estimate, which was all I asked for — not the actual figures but an estimate — I should have received exactly what I asked for and not the type of answer which I did receive.

On the other hand, if the Fish report was confidential, that is to say that they bought and paid for it, and it was theirs; after all, if we are going to pour millions of dollars of the people's money of this province into the development of the Power Corporation and of the gas distributing system, then we, as members of the Legislature, representing the people, are entitled to ask questions about our property; and those questions I did ask, and I think that we are entitled to have received an answer other than the one we did. All I want to say is that an answer like that is nothing more than an ordinary everyday farce — just a farce of an answer; and it is something that a member in this House, no matter be he the youngest, is not entitled to be treated to. With a flimsy excuse like that I feel that the privilege of this House is being abused, that we ought to be very careful that this does not occur again and make very sure that when we ask these questions, we are not going to receive a flimsy, farcical answer; but that the Minister who may be asked, whether it be the Minister of Public Works or any other Minister, will give it very serious consideration and come up with a serious and proper answer, and make sure that they give us answers at least that have been given by them and others in the Government to the public on dates upwards to a year earlier.

There is one other point that I want to make clear. I am quite confident that, shortly others will speak on this motion and that we will hear that the Fish report should be kept confidential. Well, if they can prove to me that with the wide distribution that the press and general public has had on the Fish report, there is any more reason why it should be kept confidential, then I shall be satisfied.

One other point in that regard is the matter of the gas distribution system in Saskatchewan. I am not arguing whether it should or should not be a monopoly, but the fact remains that it is a monopoly, and when it is a monopoly I was careful to point out to you, Mr. Speaker, in my budget address, this year, that with monopolies you must be very careful to see that the public receive all of the information concerning it, more careful than with ordinary Crown Corporations. I can understand where we could have a Crown Corporation such as a salt plant, or the brickyard, or some of these others, which are in everyday competition with other plants producing the same products, or could be very easily; there is nothing to stop them; then their private information certainly might be detrimental to the good business of that Crown Corporation; but where you have a system such as our power plant, such as our telephone system, such as our natural gas distribution system, where nobody else is going to come in to the province of Saskatchewan in the foreseeable future and start up a comparable line, then what in the world could be the reason for not disclosing to the public some of the factors surrounding the expenditure of that money.

I feel very strongly about that point that this is a monopoly, and in almost all of the states of the United States and elsewhere where gas companies have monopolies, they are required, by law, to make their books public. Although they are run by private individuals, or run by the state, they must put their books before the public, and why? For the simple reason that they are a monopoly, that great care must be exercised to see, first of all, as the Premier himself has stated on other occasions:

“Mr. Douglas, Canadian Press Report, April 23, 1952, said it would be brought to the people by means of a public utility. The Premier said the transmission would be a public utility under the people’s Government and the people would not have to pay through the nose for the gas they burned.”

And Mr. Douglas was correct when he said that. And that is the very reason why the people of this province should be entitled, with this monopoly, to see all of the facts surrounding its operation and its development. That is why we should see the Fish report. If there is something in there we want to know about we should be entitled to see it — the people of this province have bought and we have paid for it — and not mimeograph it and send it around the countryside and then deny the members the right to look into it. There is a good reason why we want to see that Fish report. There is a good reason why we want to know the actual cost of the distribution system; why we want to know the revenue; why we want to know the operating expenses, the rate of return after depreciation. We want to know whether or not this Power Corporation, operating the natural gas in the province of Saskatchewan, is, in fact, doing what Premier Douglas had to say. Is it a public utility in which the people do not have to pay through the nose for the gas they burn? Isn’t that a problem which is placed directly on the doorstep of a member of this Legislature? The Premier, himself, raised the point. All I want to do is follow up what the Premier had to say some three years ago, and I can only do so by asking these questions. They are legitimate questions. I asked for the estimated — estimated, which is exactly what Mr. Sarsfield properly did. He went over there to tell the Canadian Gas Association that we were doing a good job, and he cannot do that unless he comes up with just exactly these graphs and these stories and these figures explicitly, but after all, the people of this province ought to be entitled to the same type of information as the Canadian Gas Association in a meeting at Banff, would be entitled to.

I asked those questions, last year, and I asked them this year, and I am afraid that I may have to ask them on another occasion should that occasion present itself to me. I hope that I shall have an opportunity, on another occasion, to get the correct answers and to get them from the Minister — not to have to search through newspaper reports, find out the proceedings of the C.C.F. Women’s Club, the Lions Club, and all these other manufacturers of appliances and so on, to get my information. That is why I brought it to the floor of the House.

Once again I want to repeat that it is a question of whether or not a member of this House is entitled to the same amount of information as the general public are entitled to. That is the question. It is not a question of whether I have or have not confidence in this Minister or any other Minister of this Government or any other government; it is not a question of that at all. It is a question of shall I get an answer when I ask a question, especially if the answer has already been given, a year before, to the general public, especially if the answer has been given in a national convention; and that is the

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question that is being asked here.

I want to point out to you one point brought out by Mr. Sarsfield in his speech to the Canadian Gas Association that bears on this. Here is what he had to say:

“No industry can more exemplify the Bible maxim, which reads: ‘Freely ask and freely you shall receive’.”

Well, as far as some of these outside organizations are concerned, Mr. Speaker, they freely ask and they freely receive. I would like, if it were possible, some day, to draw to the attention of Mr. Sarsfield how I freely asked and how I freely got the answers. The answers that I freely got were, “No, Mr. Legislator, it is not in the public interest.” So, I have to attend the Lions Club meeting, I am going to have to try to get into the C.C.F. Women’s Club meetings, and try to get some of the bits and pieces of information.

I realize, Mr. Speaker, that I have gone on much longer than I had intended . . .

Mr. Walker (Gravelbourg): — You are doing okay, Bob.

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Mr. Kohaly: — I am sure that many members on both sides of the House would like to discuss this question further, and I want to point out that all I am asking for is about this question of public interest, which is undoubtedly a good question. There are times when it should definitely be raised, very definitely. I agree with that 100 per cent; there are places where it should. I pointed out one in certain Crown Corporations which is similar, that they should keep this information to themselves, that there are cases where it ought not to be given out, and the best proof, in this particular instance, that this was not in the public interest to be held back, was the Premier himself, who gave the statement, \$7,000,000. It was the Minister in charge of Public Works who gave the statement in Saskatoon; it was the business manager of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation who spoke, not only to the press, but to the Canadian Gas Association. Those three people apparently agree with me, that the information which I required ought to be given to the public, because it was, in fact, given to them by those three people. So I want to distinguish between this information which I required, and the information which certainly could be against public interest. This is not one of such instances.

Again, I want to point out that I asked for estimates. I realized that it would be almost impossible for them to forecast, in any manner other than by estimates, for a period of five years. I asked for estimates. Mr. Sarsfield recognized that was the way to answer this, because he headed his graphs ‘estimated’, and that is the way I asked my questions, and, of course, you know what the answer was.

I have this information, Mr. Speaker. I think I have outlined it sufficiently so that you realize that I do have it. I received this information from the press and from these statements, and from no other source but those sources I have indicated and have read from here, today. I have it now. I realize that the answering of this question by the Minister to whom it was directed will not increase my knowledge of the subject one little bit. It will

not do that; but I think we should have the information coming from the responsible person, the responsible Ministers, to the responsible source, and that is this Legislature; and unless we get that information on this occasion and on occasions to come then this legislature is certainly not carrying out its duties; and I think it is one of my duties to speak up and to ask that close scrutiny be given before such an answer is given in the future.

Therefore, I move this resolution, seconded by Mr. MacNutt.

Hon. J.A. Darling (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Souris-Estevan has talked me into the question and out of it and back in again and back out of it for so long that I doubt whether I can find my balance at this stage. He at one time said that he had been asking for estimates and then he emphasized that down in the United States the utilities are required to make their books public. That is, of course, what we do in Crown Corporations Committee. He said emphatically — “We have good reasons why we want to know the actual costs.” Now, Mr. Speaker, at no time has any member of the Opposition been refused the actual cost of anything once it has been accomplished. That was at the end of his speech.

Another statement that the hon. gentleman made was in connection with Mr. Sarsfield — that Mr. Sarsfield had written a speech which I might very well have made as Minister responsible for the Power Corporation; that he had gone to speak to the Canadian Gas Association at Banff, and doubtless with my knowledge, direction and consent. Mr. Speaker, to get the record clear, I might say that Mr. Sarsfield is a member of the Canadian Gas Association. He wasn't sent to Banff to do any particular duty there for the Power Corporation. He went to attend the Convention as a member of the Canadian Gas Association. Furthermore, when the hon. member asked the Minister for certain information regarding estimates, these estimates are contained in the Fish report. It is one thing for Mr. Sarsfield, or for anyone else, to go out and speak largely of possible costs, estimated costs, estimated consumption, estimates of any kind; in a meeting of this kind his words may be not misleading, but they are not necessarily accurate. If they are accurate, they are so because they are estimates of his own and he is responsible for those estimates. But if, in this legislature, I report an estimate of consumption in the city of Saskatoon for five years forward, and it is formally entered into the records of the House, I am certainly, to put it colloquially, sticking my neck out a very long way.

No Minister is required to disclose what his thoughts are for five years in advance. The Fish Engineering Report was made available to the city of Saskatoon — and, by the way, I don't find it so easy to get a copy of that report as the hon. member for Souris-Estevan; I haven't got a copy at this time. As soon as I get one someone borrows it.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Where did he get his?

Hon. Mr. Darling: — He got it from the city of Saskatoon. I want to say that when we are doing business with a city and the report deals with our joint operations, it is surely only frankness and aboveboard business to let them know the whole story. If they gave a copy to the hon. member for Souris-Estevan — well, I wouldn't, had I been in the city of Saskatoon office.

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Mr. Howe (Kelvington): — Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Darling: — I want now to read a letter that Mr. Sarsfield wrote to me following the press report of the Crown Corporations Committee session at which the hon. member for Souris-Estevan raised this same point. I am not going to read it all, but he writes as follows:

“I see by the ‘Leader-Post’, Friday, April 1st, the report of comments made at a Crown Corporations session in regard to a paper delivered by myself to the Canadian Gas Association. The implication of this reporting is to the effect that by numerous charts and texts, a paper based on the Fish Engineering Report was given. Nothing could be further from the actual situation. Such a paper would be of little interest to the group I was speaking to. The paper was requested by the Manufacturers’ Section of the Association, to inform them of the experience of the utility after the year’s operation. The paper was based on the assumption they were looking for factual information.”

Not estimates. Not estimates made by a consulting firm before we ever had put a spade into the ground to lay a pipeline, but forecasts based on a year of operation of the utility, which is a vastly different thing. I am quite sure, since the hon. member for Souris-Estevan has both the Fish Report and a copy of Mr. Sarsfield’s charts, that he will see some disparity between the two. We in the Power Corporation were only interested that the Fish engineering estimates of possible consumption and customer acceptance in the city of Saskatoon would be sufficiently conservative, that they would not exaggerate the economic probabilities — the probable economic behaviour of the natural gas distribution system. We were not too interested that they would prove to be completely accurate.

Now, I won’t read all of this but I will read the very last paragraph of Mr. Sarsfield’s letter, and I will table the letter if anyone is interested that I should do so:

“Following, there were eight additional pages (that is, following the charts) of information reporting rates and policies in effect and were reported as general information in the hands of our customers. Such inclusion is of no particular significance except to those in utility operation. None of it contained material which was dealt with at any time by Fish Engineering, and was provided in this paper as a small return to the 100-odd gas utilities with which we had consulted, and many of which had provided information to us which guided our successful operations.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, the question is, has a Minister the right to regard the report of a consulting firm as confidential? I state with absolute assurance that it would create an extremely bad precedent were I, or any other Minister, to make information available from a report of our consultants. I can think of reports of consultants the contents of which are such that I would rather resign my seat in this House than divulge them, because to do so would constitute a departure from fair dealing with individuals and companies which have given information to assist us, which they would certainly not choose to be made public.

So the question of making public the Fish Report (which report may have nothing in it which needs to be kept private from anyone), the publishing of such a report, as a matter of right, at the request of a member of this Legislature, would create a precedent which would make it extremely difficult for the Power Corporation, or any Minister, to refuse to give similar information in connection with other reports, the result of which would be extremely unfortunate.

The question has been raised as to my right to reply to the hon. member's question that it is not in the public interest. I don't profess to be an expert in parliamentary rules and procedures; however, I am attracted to page 124 of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, Third Edition, 1943, and I read therein the middle of the page, in Citation 307:

“A Minister may decline to answer a question without stating the reason for his refusal, and insistence on an answer is out of order, no debate being allowed. A refusal to answer cannot be raised as a question of privilege, nor is it regular to comment upon such refusal. A member can put a question but has no right to insist upon an answer.

“An answer to a question cannot be insisted upon if the answer be refused by the Minister on the grounds of the public interest; nor can the question be replaced on the notice paper. The refusal of a Minister to answer on this ground cannot be raised as a matter of privilege.”

Mr. Speaker, it is suggested in this resolution that I erred. I had the backing of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Procedure as well as the very firm conviction that while there may be nothing in the Fish Report which needs be kept from the general public, nevertheless, the tabling of such report, such confidential and privileged documents, would create a precedent that we certainly could not live up to in the Legislature.

Hon. C.M. Fines (Provincial Treasurer): — Mr. Speaker, the whole question of whether or not a document or information is privileged, is based on precedent. I think that one of the things that we all must learn in this House is that we conduct the business here based upon procedures and precedents that have been worked out for us all down through the ages, unless, of course, we want to throw overboard completely these precedents and establish rules of our own.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question about it that, generally speaking, all documents, whether they be letters, whether they be reports, or what they may be from department officials to heads of departments, or from individuals, from whom any advice is sought, are privileged documents. All one needs to do is refer to May 14th edition, page 337, Rule 5:

“Seeking information about matters which are of a nature secret, such as decisions of proceedings of the Cabinet, including the Committee of Imperial Defence and other committees of the Cabinet, advice given to the Crown by law officers etc.”

These are the things that are classified as being entirely out of order.

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Well, of course, there is usually a safeguard. I can understand why my hon. friend does not have to worry about it; but Opposition groups generally hesitate about asking questions which they know should not be answered because they may be placed in a position of being the government of the day. That is so, in Great Britain, for example. One never sees these questions placed upon the Order Paper.

Now, I think, Mr. Speaker, there were two events in recent years that have focused our attention on this subject. First of all there was the question of the South Saskatchewan dam. You will remember the advance information that got out on that. Then, too, you will remember the advance information that got out on the Currie report, the leakage there. Information in both these instances was given to the public through the newspapers, even before the actual report appeared at all in the House of Commons. May I say it is a very common practice. My hon. friend read from the debate in the House of Commons. I have another one here. Again Mr. Diefenbaker tried to get certain information. Well, at that time the Speaker quoted Bourinot, 4th Edition, which says:

“The practice of asking for reports from officers addressed to particular departments of the executive government is considered to be open to serious objection.”

And later he points out:

“Whatever exchange took place between the Minister and some other person with respect to this particular matter is, as the Minister has said, privileged. If there are any documents, they are privileged documents and they are not to be asked for in this House. This has been the practice followed and accepted by the House.”

That, Mr. Speaker, is found on page 1550.

There is no question about the report being a privileged document, because the consultants were engaged to act in the capacity of advisers to the corporation; so there is no question about the confidential nature of the report.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that brings in the question of the motives, and after all, motives play a very important part in this. The hon. member asked the same question a year ago. He gave us the date, on page 71 referred to. He later ascertained that the information had been given to the press and had been quoted by Mr. Sarsfield. He doesn't know whether the information he was asking for was given by Mr. Sarsfield or not, but what he does know is the answer that would have been given by the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, because, after all, when you are dealing with guesses, you cannot be sure what anyone is going to guess. But, as a result, seeing this information given by Mr. Sarsfield, again he repeats his question this year. Why? I think that is a very important question. Why did he repeat it? Was he trying to trap the Minister? Is that the reason he repeated the question, to see if the Minister would give the same answer? May I say, Mr. Speaker, Beauchesne holds a very dim view of that. Beauchesne points out in Rule 311:

“Supplementary questions should not be put, and ought not to be put to embarrass a Minister, or lead him to give an answer in a hurry, which at a subsequent time, he might be sorry that he gave.”

I think here that if the Minister had answered this question he might have cause to regret it some day. When you are asking, for instance, for an estimate on the number of power connections there are going to be, or how many gas connections there are going to be five years hence, it can be nothing but a guess. It is all right to go up to Banff, or it is all right later to go to the club and the Premier go to the Lion's or the Kinsmen Club and make an address; but after all, when he makes that address, he is making that address as a member of the Government? — certainly; as a citizen? — certainly; but not officially, not officially. AND if his figure is wrong, he can say, “Well, I thought that is what it was going to be”, but it cannot be quoted back to him the same way that it could if it were to appear here.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is one motive — was it to embarrass the Minister, or was it to confirm a newspaper article on a speech which was made outside the House. He quoted three speeches; he quoted the Premier speaking to the Kinsmen Club, I think it was, or the Lions; he quoted the Minister speaking to the Women's C.C.F. Club at Saskatoon; he quoted Mr. Sarsfield speaking to a Gas convention. Again, I should like to point out that if it was to confirm a newspaper article, if that was the reason for the question, Beauchesne says:

“A question must not enquire whether statements made in a newspaper are true.”

But again, we go to May, and quote from May, Page 337, No. 15:

“The following types of questions may be enumerated as being out of order: asking whether statements of the press or of private individuals or unofficial bodies are accurate.”

Or, again, another very good one:

“It shall also be out of order seeking for purposes of argument information on matters of past history.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, again may I say that it is highly impractical for governments to be able to answer questions which are really attempts to decide something in the future. We are prepared to answer at all times questions on accomplished fact. We are prepared to answer questions as to how much money has been spent on this gas connection. We are prepared to answer questions on how many gas connections have been made. We are prepared to answer questions as to how many miles of line have been laid. We are prepared to answer questions in connection with any contract which has been entered into. We are prepared to give any factual information. But, when it comes to asking questions the answers to which are guessing as to what is going to happen in the future, then, again, may I say it is highly impractical and inadmissible.

I should like to turn here to May 14th Edition, when he goes on to say the type of things that are inadmissible:

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“Seeking an expression of an opinion.”

Seeking an expression of opinion — that is all this is doing. This is ruled out under the rules we operate by in the House. We have no right to ask a question seeking an expression of opinion. But, after all, all we would be doing is giving an opinion in answering this question.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again, may I say that last year this question was asked and was refused. Once a question has been refused no hon. member has any right to put it back on the Order Paper, even though he changes a few words of it. You cannot repeat in substance questions that have already been answered, or of which an answer has been refused. Again, may I refer my hon. friend to May 14th Edition on Page 338, No. 26:

“Repeating in substance questions already answered, or to which an answer has been refused.”

When the question was refused last year, that should have been the end of it, and may I say if my hon. friend had been over in Great Britain that question would never have appeared on the Order Paper at all. It would have been dropped. What is my authority for that? I should like to quote from the Journal of Society of Clerks-at-the-Table:

“A refusal is not made more palatable to members by the fact that it has brought into operation another rule governing the admissibility of a question, that it must not repeat in substance questions already answered or to which an answer has been refused. Such questions could not therefore be accepted by the Clerks at the Table and did not even achieve the publicity attached to an appearance on the Order Paper.”

My hon. friend would have failed in his objective, which, of course, is to get publicity.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is no question in my mind. There is no question in the minds of the people who have guided British parliamentary institutions all down through the ages that it should remain a government prerogative to decide when full disclosure should be made of any advice on which it bases policy for which it alone must accept responsibility. The Government must accept that responsibility. We are prepared to give any information based on facts, but we are not prepared to put on the records of this House information which can be nothing more than a guess.

Now, my hon. friend, this afternoon, told us that he wanted to be sure that in the future he would not receive a flimsy, farcical answer. If he does not ask a flimsy farcical question, he won't get that kind of an answer; but if he is going to ask that kind of a question, he will get that kind of an answer. He got up, this afternoon, in a very righteous mood to tell us about how courteous he had always been in this House since he was elected. Mr. Speaker, there are other people who have been courteous, too. I think this Government and this Legislature have been very courteous to him. I think he will agree. I don't suppose there is another party in the British Empire, the British Commonwealth of Nations where its unelected leader is allowed to sit on the floor of the House where the member can go back and get information from time to time, if he wants, during the Session. I don't suppose that would be

allowed anywhere else. We have certainly extended every courtesy to the hon. gentleman.

Before I sit down I want to reply to a statement that the members had a duty to find out how money is going to be spent. I want to say that I agree with that; and I want to say that I am disappointed at the way they are going about to try to find out. For instance, Bill No. 43 increased the amount of the expenditure of the Power Corporation from \$65 million to \$90 million; \$25 million was voted here, and there was not a single question asked from the other side. I do not suppose there is another Opposition on the face of this earth that would be so weak that they would allow a proposed expenditure of \$25 million to go through without trying to find out what it is about. There was the place to try to find out what were the plans for the future. What was the Power Corporation going to do about the extension of its gas utility? How much money was going to be spent on it? They do not even know what the programme is for this year. They are not interested in that. They are interested rather in bringing in picayune resolutions regretting that we do not give certain information on gas, based on guesses. Why don't they come in here and ask for information on facts, things that we can answer? We have nothing to hide. Any time we have information we will be glad to give it to them, but not simply guesses.

Mr. Cameron: — Did the Minister say he had only one answer to give — not in the public interest?

Hon. Mr. Fines: — I'm sorry, I don't follow you.

Mr. Cameron: — Did I understand you to say that there is only the one answer that a Minister can give, because it would divulge information . . .

Hon. Mr. Fines: — No, I didn't say that at all.

Mr. Cameron: — Then, there is no answer to the statement.

Mr. Speaker: — No, you asked a question.

Mr. Cameron: — I am seeking information from the Minister in answering this question.

Mr. Howe: — Didn't you listen to his speech?

Mr. Cameron: — Well, now, Mr. Speaker, why ask it at all . . . after the treatment we are getting.

Mr. Speaker: — He answered the question. You asked a specific question and he said 'no'. If you want to ask another question, if he is willing to answer it is his privilege.

Mr. Cameron: — I want to ask him . . . raise another question.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order!

Hon. Mr. Brockelbank: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I get tired of the hon. members opposite getting up at a time in a debate when they have absolutely no right to get up and ask a question, and then complaining of the way they have been treated. The hon. member, if he has been

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following the rules strictly, when he first rose on his feet to speak in this debate, which he actually has now, has exhausted his right. And all the reward the Minister gets for answering his question is abuse from the hon. member, and I think the hon. members opposite could spend a lot of time studying the proper rules of parliament for their benefit.

Opposition Members: — Same to you! Same to you!

Hon. Mr. Nollet: — They should study parts subject to the public interest.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order!

Mr. Cameron: — I withdraw my question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I think the hon. member must withdraw that statement. Your question was answered.

Mr. Cameron: — I asked a second question.

Mr. Speaker: — Then you went on to give umbrage, and ask another question. If the hon. Minister is willing to answer it that is his privilege.

Is the House ready for the question? I must inform the House that the mover of the resolution is now ready to close the debate. Anyone wishing to speak must do so now.

Mr. Kohaly (Souris-Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, I think that all I am going to do is refer the individual members and the Ministers who have been good enough to speak in this debate to the Return now on Sessional Paper no. 88. You will find set out there in fair and concise writing the questions. The questions are set out there, 1, 2 and 3. You will also find the answers. There are the questions; there are the answers. Unfortunately, some of my references from newspapers were not set out in a plain, clear, concise way. However, I shall be glad to give anyone the exact date of newspaper or article from which I quoted, this afternoon.

I want to point out that I asked for estimates. The hon. Minister in charge of the Crown Corporation involved spoke about accurate figures. That is not correct. I said the first word in both cases 'estimate'. The Provincial Treasurer then spoke of . . .

Hon. Mr. Darling: — The hon. member misunderstood me, because in the course of his speech he mentioned that down in the United States and all over the country utilities were required to make the books public. That is what we do, in the Power Corporations Committee, but this is a matter of consultance. In the course of his speech the hon. member said there are good reasons why we want to know actual costs. He is not asking for actual costs when he is asking for estimates. That is my point of privilege.

Mr. Kohaly: — That is not my question, unfortunately, again. I have long since learnt that when we introduce these we sometimes have to watch for two sides: one the actual question and, secondly, the question which was erased from the actual question. I asked last year one set of questions; this year another set. I want to make it clear right now, that I was not

repeating the set of questions which I asked last year. Any hon. member who would do me the courtesy of just reading the two sets, one from the Journals, the other from the Sessional Papers, will see that they bear no resemblance to each other. All you have to do is to refer to the two. The one says 'total cost'. You will not see one question in here about the total cost in Sessional Paper No. 88, not one question, and that I am prepared to have any member read. It says 'total cost'; the second one 'revenue'. Not one question in the second on Sessional paper No. 88.

(3) Operating expenses — worded on Sessional Paper No. 88.

(4) Rate of return after depreciation — not mentioned.

I did not ask the same set of questions, nor are they ancillary insofar as they referred to those four questions as found on page 71. They were not.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — May I ask the hon. gentleman a question? Why did he say in his address then, that since he didn't get the information last year, he decided to ask the same questions this year?

Mr. Kohaly: — Well, if I spoke of it in that manner, Mr. Speaker, I was not intending to convey that they were the same, and if my words did not read so, then I am very sorry. I apologize to you and to the House and to the members for having said them. What I intended to say was that I found, last year, an answer to a series of questions which were not satisfactory. Therefore, I resubmitted questions asking for answers in this particular department to see whether they were similar type of answers. Now, not necessarily of similar substance, and a reading of the two, which I mentioned when I was in my material, would indicate.

Mr. Speaker: — I take it that the hon. member is answering the statement made by the previous speaker, that you had broken the rules . . .

Mr. Kohaly: — Oh, yes . . .

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Mr. Speaker, may I say that I only did it because he said he had resubmitted the questions to see if he would get the same kind of answer.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order! The member is confining himself fairly well to answering the speeches made in the debate.

Mr. Kohaly: — I am trying to, Mr. Speaker. I just merely wish to leave both documents with any member of the House to read and to see whether or not the questions which I asked were fair and permissible, and I hope that I have stayed within the bounds of the rules.

I want to point out that I read a portion of the Hansard merely to show that it was not permissible to argue the point when it was said by a Minister that it was not in the public interest. I pointed out that the Speaker, following the rule of the House, indicated that a substantive motion be brought to the floor of the House, a notice of Motion, brought and be debated, which is exactly what I have done. I, first of all, took it to the Crown Corporations Committee because I felt that the second step was a more drastic way, and I might get my proper answer in the Crown Corporations Committee. I did that, as I mentioned in my remarks earlier, and I didn't get satisfaction. All I got was he was making some statements of his own and that is his business and so on . . .

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Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order! You are just repeating yourself now. Not answering questions.

Mr. Kohaly: — All right, I'll get right to it then. I understood the Minister of the Power Corporation to indicate that the Fish report was considered by them to be confidential. That is the way I understood it. Well, now, if the Fish report was confidential, why have we got the document itself being bandied around the country, being argued by a city council, being available to anyone who wanted to pick it up — and by the way, I did not say that I had obtained this from the City of Saskatoon; at no time did I say that. I did not say where I got a copy of the Fish report that I have in my hand, because that might well not be . . .

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege, is my hon. friend aware that the Fish Engineering report is the property of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation and unless it was given to him by the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, any member of the House who has a copy has either got it by improper means or by someone who got it by improper means.

Mr. Kohaly: — That may well be. I cannot say where this copy that I have here of the Fish report originally came from, but I do know that it is a mimeographed sheet entitled "Fish Engineering Corporation, Engineer Report, City of Saskatoon Natural Gas System." That's what it is, and that is the report and that has been discussed by the City of Saskatoon in council and that is well known across the province. There has been publicity. Mr. Sarsfield uses it. I say then, that if it ever was confidential, which it probably was, that it is past that stage, that it now is not confidential information, and that the bits and pieces have so been added together in public that the whole report should well be available to at least members of the Legislature.

Hon. Mr. Darling: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege, the hon. gentleman just repeated that Mr. Sarsfield had used the Fish Engineering report. I read in the course of my few words that Mr. Sarsfield said that there was nothing from the Fish Engineering report in his address.

Mr. Kohaly: — Well, as I pointed out originally, I read the paragraph on page 4 that Mr. Sarsfield took — and this is right in the middle of this material; why would he put it in? — a thought happened to strike him, I suppose:

"Two consultant firms, Fish Engineering of Houston, Texas, and Barret Machinery Company of Hamilton, Ontario, were asked to advise on many points."

That's a quotation from that.

Hon. Mr. Darling: — That doesn't say what he said is based on that report. Mr. Speaker, what the hon. gentleman has just read does not substantiate the statement that Mr. Sarsfield gave an address on the Fish Engineering report.

Mr. Speaker: — But we cannot keep on debating it over and over. We have already heard that statement.

Mr. Kohaly: — In any event, he refers to it in the middle of his discussion, and probably referred to it advisedly, otherwise he must have

just added that as an agenda without any intention that it should bear any relation to his speech before the Gas Association. That may be. In any event, I want to deal just for a moment with the suggestion of my motives. My motive, I explained fully when I commenced. I have no other motive than to try to set the situation right. I can see that some of my suggestions fall on deaf ears as far as such a result being the end result.

I am not trying to trap the Minister in any way, shape or form. I continue to this moment to have extreme respect for the Minister and his ability, which I have certainly said before. I did not try to trap him. I certainly tried to get the answers to certain questions. If that is trapping, then I am in error.

Secondly, I certainly was not after publicity. If I had been, I would not use the floor of the House for that purpose. I would go out among the general public and make these statements where there was not a possibility for the Minister to immediately answer, or any other member of the Cabinet to do so. I came here first of all to the Crown Corporations Committee. Then I came here, and if I was after publicity I could certainly find a better way of doing it than to use this method.

I want to deal with only one other point and that is that these questions were not questions which were flimsy or farcical, unless you can say that the total cost of the natural gas system in Saskatoon is a flimsy question; unless you can say that the question of the revenue . . .

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege, the question of cost has nothing to do with this question. He is talking about estimates five years ahead, nothing to do with costs; and he has no right to try to confuse this House or the country by suggesting that he has been refused anything to do with costs. He has never been refused figures regarding costs. What he has been refused are estimates based on the Fish Engineering Report.

Mr. Speaker: — The hon. member was not dealing with that. He was dealing with the statement of the Provincial Treasurer, carrying out expressions — that is what he is repudiating.

Hon. Mr. Darling: — Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, he was dealing with estimates, not costs.

Mr. Speaker: — He is now referring to a statement that it was “a flimsy and farcical question.”

Mr. Kohaly: — Well, going no further with the point at this time — I shall do that. I have certainly raised the issue; I asked the questions, I received an answer, Mr. Speaker. I have taken every step that was available to me and I submit I followed in each step the proper procedure set down by this House every single inch of the way. No one can say otherwise; no one has said otherwise — that I have not stayed within the procedure of this House. I submit, Mr. Speaker . . .

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, lest silence be taken as consent for that statement, I say the hon. gentleman has not stayed within the rules of the House. It has been proven under the rules of the House that the question was an improper question.

Mr. Kohaly: — It certainly has not been proven.

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Premier Douglas: — It was proven to the House that you cannot ask for an expression of opinion. An estimate is an expression of opinion. The hon. gentleman ought to know that actually. There is no excuse for not knowing the rules of the House . . .

Hon. Mr. Darling: — When you raise a silly question . . .

Mr. Speaker: — If you will read the resolution it is simply a question of whether the House is approving of the method for this being done. The question was answered.

Mr. Kohaly: — Mr. Speaker, all I wish to say is that I want to see whether or not individual members of this House will consider this question of whether I should have the information which I asked for and whether or not the Minister ought to have given it to me. He did not give it to me, easy to see; to this date I have not received the information from that authority, and I am asking for it in this resolution with respect only that the Minister erred in not giving this information. In order not to stir up any more trouble, that is all I would like to say.

The question being put, it was negatived.

SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MUNICIPAL LAW

Moved by Mr. Heming, seconded by Mr. Stone:

“That the first report of the Select Standing Committee on Municipal Law be now concurred in.”

Mr. D.H.R. Heming (Moose Jaw City): — Mr. Speaker, the Assembly designated the Municipal Law Committee to receive the correspondence gathered by the Special Committee on Uniform Time.

The Committee's report was somewhat lengthy and the Committee is indebted to the work and the analysis of the situation currently by the hon. member from Hanley (Mr. Walker), and for the efforts of the Clerk for editing such report. I am grateful, and I sincerely hope that the members have had a chance to read in the 'Votes and Proceedings' of April 4th what this Committee is and as such, Mr. Speaker, I will move, seconded by Mr. Stone, that the first report of the Select Standing committee on Municipal Law be now concurred in.

Mr. R.A. Walker (Hanley): — Mr. Speaker, I have been attempting to accomplish standardization of time over the years, and I would like to have had something to say about the adoption of the report, but in view of the rather lengthy discourses we have had this afternoon, I would beg leave to adjourn the debate.

(Debate adjourned)

The Assembly adjourned at 10 o'clock p.m.