

**First Session — Seventeenth Legislature
2nd Day**

Thursday, July 29, 1971

The Assembly met at 2:30 o'clock p.m.
On the Orders of the Day.

QUESTIONS

Doré Lake Pulp Mill

Mr. D.G. Stuart (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to direct a question to the Premier. In view of the unemployed situation, the number of the jobless, in view of the statements made recently by groups of various political parties, I wonder if he could tell the Assembly now whether he is prepared in fact either to go ahead with the Doré Lake Pulp Mill or to cancel it?

Hon. A.E. Blakeney (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to advise the House that negotiations are still very much in progress with respect to the Athabasca Pulp Mill, that the Government is aware of the need for a speedy decision and that we hope to be able make a more complete statement in the House, if the House is still sitting, within the next day, say, seven days.

Mr. Stuart: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. I wonder if he could inform the House how much it is costing the Government to delay this decision every day.

Mr. Blakeney: — I haven't the slightest idea of what the likely cost to the Government or to anyone else is for delay. I think that no reliable figures are available.

Firing of Public Servants in Saskatchewan

Mr. C.P. MacDonald (Milestone): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Premier another question. I want to ask the Premier a question about the firing of public servants in Saskatchewan. You know during the campaign one of the major promises of the Premier throughout the Province of Saskatchewan was that there would be not witch hunt.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — I shall state my question, Mr. Speaker. No witch hunt of public servants or political firings. Since the NDP have taken over the Government, a vendetta of major magnitude appears to be in progress. It includes senior civil servants right down to students, Mr. Speaker. In addition, senior civil servants have been summarily dismissed with only the normal 30 days notice despite family or personal obligations, despite the length of service and responsibility.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order!

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Mr. MacDonald: — I'm coming to my question.

Mr. Speaker: — Will the Hon. Member state his question rather than make a speech on the question, please.

Mr. MacDonald: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. There is certainly an atmosphere of suspicion and fear throughout the Province of Saskatchewan. Now the question is, Mr. Speaker: firstly, what is the policy of firing of civil servants by this Party which preaches a new deal for people, now and when this Session is completed? Two, what is the policy of this new deal for people regarding severance pay offered to senior civil servants or any civil servants who have been fired in the past and who will be fired in the future?

Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to reply to the question. I won't take this opportunity to reply to the speech since I think that that would have been better made on the debate which we are now going to enter.

With respect to the dismissals and the alleged witch hunt I have before me a list of the total number of dismissals. It consists of two executive assistants to Ministers. I should have thought that these would have expected to have been severed since some of them indeed — and I see one sitting, the Member for Lumsden — I think would be free to admit that they engaged in political activity and it was . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Blakeney: — I guess that no one suggest that these gentlemen should not be severed since they were, in fact, very much political appointments and there were three others — Mr. Weymark, Mr. McIlrath and Mr. Beeson, all in the Department of Natural Resources. I don't think I need discuss if you wish, the reasons for their severance — one in a Crown corporation is, I think, the person who was actively campaigning during the months of May and June and will be known to the Minister. And that is not the first or only time he was actively campaigning. I don't think there is any necessity of entering upon a discussion of the names unless Members opposite wish.

Now with respect to the alleged dismissal of university students, I shall be delighted if any member opposite will provide us with any single name so that we may pursue this story. I have seen it in the Press. I am not aware of any.

Mr. MacDonald: — A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I certainly will provide him with names of four university students who have been dismissed. I'll see that the Premier gets them immediately. We should certainly appreciate a response in the House at an early date with regard to those four students.

Mr. Blakeney: — We will be delighted. We checked with the Public Service Commission; they weren't able to find them. Perhaps they are with some other agency of which we are not aware.

Student – Teacher Ratios

Mr. J.C. McIsaac (Wilkie): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Education, dealing with the guidelines set out by the Department with respect to teacher-pupil ratios. I refer here to the seven students per teacher in the retarded classes that are beginning this fall for the first time under Liberal legislation and plus the other guidelines that are a part of that. Now the NDP campaigned on a promise of complete abolition of these guidelines. Shortly after they became the government the Minister reneged on this promise. And my question is, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that there is a surplus reported of some three to five hundred teachers in the province, so I am informed, seeking employment at the present time, will not the Minister immediately reconsider and reverse that decision in order to give employment to those people, particularly the young graduates of the colleges of education?

Hon. G. MacMurchy (Minister of Education): — Mr. Speaker, in reply to the Hon. Member opposite, may I say that so far as school planning is concerned the rigid pupil-teacher ration has been removed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — Mr. Speaker, in regard to the present situation facing school boards, I have sent a directive to all fiscal boards inviting them to present requests to me and to the Department of where they feel that the pupil-teacher ration is providing undue hardship. We are ready and willing to invite them to present their proposals; we shall examine their requests in the light of the Budget that was left to us by the former Administration. And might I say also, Mr. Speaker, that requests have been coming and are presently coming in and we have been able to so far meet many of the requests from boards and we shall continue to do so.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McIsaac: — A supplementary question. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the Minister just now abolished the pupil-teacher ratios in the province because up until now he has publicly said that they are not going to be abolished. But my question is this, Mr. Speaker, the directive that he refers to, I should just like to ask him in what way does it differ from previous policy? What he is telling me is this: that they are continuing the same policy of the previous Government that they would consider any situation of any board at any time and that is what we have been doing for several years. I wonder if he could tell us how his policy or his directive is in any way different from previous Liberal practice.

Mr. MacMurchy: — Mr. Speaker, in reply to the Hon. Member's question, that if I am given the opportunity to speak in the Throne Speech Debate, I shall be certainly prepared to reply and point out the differences.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hospital Closures

Mr. T. M. Weatherald (Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Public Health (Mr. Smishek). I think it is a matter of urgent public importance. During the election campaign a number of statements were made on the closure of small hospitals, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — I'll come to the question. Just settle down. We'll get there, we'll get there.

It is a matter of urgent public importance because there are 11 hospital boards that were closed two years ago, Mr. Speaker. Many of them received public statements by candidates who have been elected opposite. These boards now want to know, Mr. Speaker, from the Minister of Public Health, as to whether the hospitals will be allowed to reopen or whether they will not. The question is, Mr. Speaker, when?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. W.E. Smishek (Minister of Public Health): — Mr. Speaker, the matter of the hospital closures is presently being considered and under review and the government policy will be announced in due course.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that a number of these hospitals are still having janitorial services and still being taken care of, these boards would like to know when they will receive this information.

Mr. Smishek: — The Government policy will be announced when considered.

STATEMENT

Special-Care Homes

Hon. G. T. Snyder (Minister of Welfare): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I have a statement that I should like to make concerning the operation of special-care homes in Saskatchewan.

It will be known, Mr. Speaker, for some time that the political party that I represent has been deeply concerned with the entire financial status of the special-care home program in the province. We are concerned that the maintenance rates charged by special-care homes to their guests have been increasing sharply in recent years and have placed, thereby, an unrealistic financial burden on many special-care home guests and their families have suffered a severe burden in this connection. We are also concerned, Mr. Speaker, that many special-care homes still do not meet the minimum requirements of programming as set out in the special-care home regulation.

My Government, Mr. Speaker, intends to meet the needs of our senior citizens but will do so within an equitable distribution of financial responsibility. As a first step in meeting this objective, Mr. Speaker, I have established a study committee which has been given the task of researching and analyzing all aspects of the special-care program and proposing alternate methods of financing these services. We are not prepared merely to endorse the policies of the previous Liberal Government and continue the escalation of rates, but rather we are prepared to develop anew financial base for the special-care program.

My Government is not prepared to alter any maintenance grants during this study period, and I am thus establishing an appeal committee whose take it will be to review the financial situation of any home which feels it is in financial difficulty. My Government is not prepared to let special-care homes operate on a deficit basis, and upon recommendation of the appeal committee, my Department will make block payments to those homes that require financial assistance in order to maintain an adequate level of care and operate on a non-profit basis.

May I turn then for just a moment, Mr. Speaker, to the actions of the previous Liberal Government in regard to the special-care home program. That Government, I suggest today, Mr. Speaker, made a deliberate . . .

Mr. Steuart: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister making a statement? He is making a speech.

Mr. Speaker: — The Minister can make a statement but I will hope he will keep it to a Governmental statement and not a review of the past because that is what our debates are for.

Mr. Snyder: — Mr. Speaker, I am obliged at this time to draw attention to the actions of the previous administrations. I think forthwith you will understand the implications.

I want to turn to the actions of the previous Government in a deliberate politically motivated decision to hold back increases to these special-care homes until after the June election. The subterfuge used at that time was an indication that an adjustment in the minimum wage rates made this necessary. I repeat today, Mr. Speaker, that the Liberal Government did not permit the increase in rates because of the impending Provincial election on June 23rd. Instead, the Government promised subsidies to cover the increased operating costs only after the election.

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, that is not a government statement, that is a speech. And I ask you to make the Minister stick to a government statement. He is making a speech, it is not a government statement to say what we might or might not have done when we were the Government.

Mr. Speaker: — I do believe some of these statements would be better made where they could be debated out. I do believe that Ministers should stick close to statements and further matters which they disagree with, bring up during debates.

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Mr. Snyder: — A concluding word, Mr. Speaker. I just want to suggest that in a letter to the special-care homes, the former Minister of Welfare (Mr. MacDonald) assured these homes that the Government of Saskatchewan would underwrite the amount of the increase during that period, meaning that a subsidy would be paid at non-welfare patients in excess of 470,000 and this warrant was with my Department at the time we assumed office. The Government opposite passed this warrant on the 29th of June.

Mr. Grant: — Why doesn't the Hon. Member, Mr. Speaker, pay attention to your ruling?

Mr. Snyder: — I am saying in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that this Government will not make payments as proposed by the Liberals under the 470,000 warrant but we will launch an immediate study into special-care homes and we will develop a program which will not continue to keep our citizens requiring institutional care in the state of perpetual poverty.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Before I give the right to a Member of the Opposition to reply to the statement, I hope that Minister's statements will be just straight statements and not raise arguments so that arguments can be raised in debates and not in the question period.

Mr. MacDonald (Milestone): — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your viewpoint and I am looking forward to replying in a very non-political manner as well.

I just should like to say that I have with me a clipping from the New Deal for People Plan in reducing health costs and now this gives the Opposition an automatic opportunity to carry on that election promise immediately. In Assiniboia on June 14, 1971 the now Premier of the Province said:

Along with the abolition of deterrent fees the NDP will include level-three nursing home care under Medicare. This means that when older persons get sick and require care in a nursing home the Hospital Plan will pay the difference between the cost of the normal requirements and the cost of nursing homes.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Member also said that there was a subterfuge, that it was a deliberate political move. I should like to give you the dates of two letters I have in my desk both dated February 22, one from myself and one from the director of the Special-Care Homes Branch, informing them about the Special-Care Homes Branch now doing an allocation of rates. I want to point out to you and to quote to the House from the Saskatchewan Care. This is not put out by the Government of Saskatchewan, this is put out by the Saskatchewan Housing and Nursing Home Association. And here is what it says:

Notes from a letter to nursing homes from the Hon. Cy MacDonald. It says: "The Government is now in the process of reviewing its minimum wage legislation. If

this review concludes that an upward revision of the minimum wage is approved, the maximum special-care home rates will require an upward adjustment. It is not desirable to have the two upward rate adjustments within a short period of time, therefore, no increase in maintenance rates is authorized at this time. As soon as the review of the minimum wage legislation is completed and a decision made as to the amount if any, that minimum wages should increase in the province, you will be notified as to the final rate structure approved for you home. At that time you will then be authorized to implement adjustments. During the intervening period, my Department will be prepared to underwrite the differential expenditure for all clients, both Saskatchewan Assistance Plan and non-Saskatchewan Assistance Plan recipients that you accommodate. This underwriting provision will be made effective April 1, 1971, carry on through until a decision is made and communicated to you.

I should like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that this is a public document and if the member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Snyder) has had the good sense to pick it up – if he is so interested in nursing homes – he would have know that everybody in the province knew about this. Also it says – March 1971:

This is a first. So far as we know it is the first time individuals not receiving Saskatchewan assistance have been subsidized by the Province to help the cost of care in nursing homes.

And we think that was a good policy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — And now they are saying that they are going to do the same thing. And I wish to say if you want to carry out that health promise, all you have to do is you have to get up from this House at 5:30, take the Premier and the members of the Cabinet, go straight into the Cabinet room and in five minutes pass an Order-in-Council increasing maintenance rates for the hospital and you can remove all costs, as you promised senior citizens in nursing home care. I want you to remember that.

An Hon. Member: — Thanks for the advice.

Mr. MacDonald: — This is your promise, not mine.

I wish also to make one more comment, Mr. Speaker. Now he just said that: “you know there is a change in nursing home rates coming up.” And I should like to read form the journal of the Canadian Hospital Association, February 1971.

Nursing homes throughout Canada can finally expect some action on the inclusion of nursing home coverage under the hospital and medical care insurance plans in the next year. This is a result of the recent Federal-Provincial health Ministers’ conference. The Ministers’ conference stressed financial flexibility in Federal-Provincial health programs.

I just want you to know that the Federal Government, I as

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Minister, my colleague, the former Minister of Health, have been working on this for two years and now we expect you to put it in operation and real soon.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Snyder: — Just one word in reply, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! We can't have debates on these statements.

Mr. Weatherald: — On a point of order. The Minister is required to sit down. On the point of order, the Minister, if allowed to make one statement, we are allowed to make one reply. That has been conducted according to the rules. I hope, Mr. Speaker, you will see that the rules are followed in this regard.

Mr. Speaker: — I have just stated that we cannot permit debates on statements on Orders of the Day.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Mr. D. Dyck (Saskatoon City Park) moved, seconded by Mr. I. Carlson (Yorkton):

That a humble Address be presented to His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor as follows:

TO HIS HONOUR THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN WOROBEZ Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Saskatchewan.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOUR:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, of the Province of Saskatchewan, in Session assembled, humbly thank Your Honor for the gracious Speech which Your Honor has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present Session.

He said: — Mr. Speaker, in rising to move the Address-in-Reply to the Speech from the Throne may I express my thanks to Premier Allan Blakeney and the Government of Saskatchewan for the confidence that they have placed in me today's. It is an honor to me and a tribute to the many fine people in the new constituency of Saskatoon City Park whom I very proudly represent in this Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — I approach, Mr. Speaker, my position as an elected representative from the constituency of Saskatoon City Park, with a real feeling of modesty and at the same time a sense of challenge. My address today is a very tangible part of that challenge.

I should like, Mr. Speaker, to take this opportunity to welcome you back to the Chair. I know that when you presided over this Assembly from 1962 to 1964 you commanded the respect and confidence of Hon. Members from both sides of the Chamber.

There is no doubt in my mind that you will command that same respect and confidence from this Legislature.

I should like, before proceeding, Mr. Speaker, to congratulate and thank all unsuccessful candidates of all political parties who allowed their names to stand in the election of June 23rd. It takes no little personal courage and no little sacrifice of time and energy to fight an election in the Province of Saskatchewan. Many of the defeated candidates possessed very impressive records of experience in public service, and I hope that they are neither discouraged nor deterred in the future.

Mr. Speaker, June 23, 1971, must be recorded as a momentous days in the history of the Province of Saskatchewan . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — . . . for it was on this day that the present Government, under the dynamic leadership of Premier Elect Allan Blakeney, achieved one of the greatest landslide victories in the history of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — And, as a result of that victory, the whole direction, the whole thrust, and the whole approach to Provincial Government was changed.

The floodgates for real and tangible social and economic change were again opened and progressive-minded people, people with ideas, people all across this Province breathed a sigh of relief and they again had hope. Once again this great province of ours is on the threshold of a new era — an era marked with new and exciting ideas. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, June 23rd was a momentous day, but it was also unique. It was unique in that it was the first time in the history of Canada that a democratic Socialist Party ahs been returned to office after leaving office for a period of time. Far from being annihilated, far from being submerged, far from being forgotten as the Hon. Members to your left, Mr. Speaker, would have us believe, we have bounced back with resiliency born of the determination and conviction of people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — And that day in June was unique for yet other reasons. It was the first time in Canadian history that two provinces had democratic Socialist governments in office simultaneously. Oh no, Mr. Speaker, our party was not submerged and forgotten. On the contrary, we are just beginning to gain momentum, and I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, the eyes of this continent will be on these two provinces in the years ahead.

During the last seven years since 1964, this province has sustained some rather difficult times. You know, the political party represented by the Hon. Members opposite would have had us believe at that time that the land of milk and honey was just around the corner. Their story was a real Alice in Wonderland thriller with a new twist. You know, Mr. Speaker, in 1964, one

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would have thought the heavens were about to open and huge quantities of investment and industrial development would suddenly pour forth. In fact what was their record in terms of investment and industrial development? From 1968 to 1970 investments declined from \$1,242 per capita to \$1,038 per capita. And this per capita investment takes on particular significance when one considers that our population was declining during this period time.

The thought that the panacea to all our problems, as they saw them, was simply to attract more business. And over the years we had banner headline after banner headline, reporting all the new businesses coming to our province. But somehow most of these ventures never materialized. There was the heavy water plant at Estevan. It never materialized. After the heavy water plant there was to be a \$20 million ammonia plant at Estevan. It never materialized. There was the \$2.5 million asbestos cement pipe manufacturing plant to be built in Regina. It never materialized. There was the iron pellet plant to be built by Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Company. It never materialized. There was the Chemical Plant in Prince Albert - \$5 million. There was the Volkswagen distribution centre. There was the wine plant in Moose Jaw. None of these materialized.

The end result in the main was the investment by a handful of giant foreign corporations who were attracted to this province by provincial social welfare in the form of loans, grants, virtual royalty holidays and numerous types of subsidies. And even here they failed. In the end we were left with a serious over-supply situation in these industries. An over-supply of pulp. An over-supply of potash. An over-supply of uranium. An over-supply of sodium sulphate. The Hon. Members across the chamber and their erstwhile colleagues who were unsuccessful in the recent election have failed, Mr. Speaker. The champions of big business have failed in their own corporate backyard. Their promises, so full of sound and fury, in the final analysis signified nothing. A more classic case of government mismanagement could not be found anywhere in the annals of modern political history.

Well the fairy tale is over. The people of this province got a little tired with the lyrics and said we will have no more. We can now once again get on the serious business of building this province. Since the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, was prepared for a special session only, it did not include many of our plans for the future industrial development of this province. But perhaps it may be strategic and pertinent to mention just a few at this time.

We plan to create in this province a Saskatchewan Development Corporation in which everyone may invest. The funds will in turn be used to invest in the resource and industrial development in the province. There will be a planned and orderly resource development in this province with proper pollution controls, and where our own people will enjoy the fruits and benefits of such development.

We will establish a Department of Economic Development to plan and encourage this orderly economic growth. In addition to this Department we will integrate and co-ordinate such programs as Northern development and urban and rural planning.

We will encourage Saskatchewan investment through diverting pension funds and insurance premiums into the local economy. We will create a new division of government to promote the interests of a sector in our economy the previous Government has failed so miserably, namely the small and medium-sized business firms. Many of these firms are very integral parts of our rural communities. Business representatives will be appointed to provide technical services and information concerning Government programs, legislation, and regulations useful to these business firms. We will establish a lending agency to provide long-term capital for smaller business which are not manufacturers or primary producers.

In concluding this brief section let me say, Mr. Speaker, that there is another potential in Saskatchewan to which insufficient attention has been paid in the past. We have a very valuable resource in the form of our wide-open spaces, clean air, relatively unpolluted streams and our many easy access towns and cities.

I was taking recently with a number of people visiting in Saskatchewan from Eastern Canada and they were very appreciative and visibly impressed with the vastness of our province. I believe the tourist industry has real potential in our province and I am sure the Minister of Natural Resources, the Hon. Mr. Kramer, representing the constituency of the Battlefords, will be giving this area a good deal of consideration in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I have dealt, in a rather cursory way, with a very important responsibility of the Provincial Government, namely the fostering of economic development in our province and I thus only provided a miniature glimpse of a total Economic Development Program, that as it unfolds in the years ahead, will be exciting, imaginative and most of all, successful.

Mr. Speaker, I have in my address so far intentionally omitted the most important sector of the Saskatchewan economy, namely agriculture. But there is a very good reason for this. I have the pleasure of having a seconder to this motion the Hon. Member from Yorkton, Mr. Irving Carlson, whose knowledge of agriculture is certainly superior to mine.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — I am sure he will make an excellent presentation on this and other areas.

I have had the pleasure, on a number of occasions, of travelling through the constituency the Hon. Member represents. I have always been impressed with the very eye-catching countryside and the very fine farms in that area. I am sure he must be very proud to represent that constituency in this Assembly.

I was pleased, Sir, that your Speech included a proposed amendment to the Medical Care Insurance Act and Hospitalization Insurance Act that will have the affect of abolishing deterrent fees for hospital and doctor calls. I need not employ the tie time of the House in enunciating all the arguments against this tax on the sick, or my personal abhorrence of the tax. Members on this side of the Chamber have been critical of the fees since their inception in 1968. Suffice it to say that it was a tax on the wrong people — the sick.

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If it deterred, which I doubt in the light of recent rising health costs, it deterred the wrong people, who in effect were forced to diagnose their own illnesses. I should like, Sir, in a moment to remark on another, more effective ways of reducing health delivery costs.

Your Speech, Sir, also included the cancellation of medical and hospital premiums for people 65 and over. There are many older people . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — . . . in Saskatoon City Park, as there are across this Province, many of whom have the senior citizens pension as their sole source of income. I am very familiar with the hardships they endure in order to meet their financial commitments. I am familiar because I have visited with these people in their living rooms and on their doorsteps. During the eight or nine months prior to the recent election I was able to call at over 2,000 homes in my constituency. In this way I was able to rally understand some of their concerns and problems of these and many other people. The cancellation of these premiums will be welcomed by them as will the abolition of deterrent fees.

I mentioned a moment ago, Mr. Speaker, that I should return to plans pertaining to the matter of reducing health delivery costs. There are a number of plans to which I am sure the Government will be giving early consideration.

Firstly, there is the community clinic approach. The Saskatoon community clinic since its inception and organization has been extremely successful in reducing health cost. It encourages frequent medical check-ups and employs very sophisticated health profiles of all patients. By encouraging frequent medical check-ups, maintaining detailed records of individual medical histories, and by encouraging preventive medicine, it has been highly successful in keeping people out of the hospitals.

There are other efficiencies intrinsic in the operation of group practice clinics, when you have a number of different doctors and specialists working under one roof. There are the obvious advantages of high utilization of medical equipment and apparatus when a number of physicians are sharing this equipment. There is the advantage of easy consultation among doctors about individual patients. There are obvious administrative advantages. There is the centralizing of patient records and files, not to speak of the convenience to the patient in having a number of different physicians and surgeons under one roof.

This Government will encourage and assist the growth and expansion of community clinics throughout this Province as one way of reducing health delivery costs and still maintaining a high level of health care that in the past Saskatchewan people have come to expect.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — Mr. Speaker, the Members of this Chamber are well aware of the high costs of one day in the hospital. In the past all patients were given more or less the same intensity of care. That is up until recently. The University Hospital in

Saskatoon has been experimenting with a self-help section in the hospital where patients that are recovering from minor surgery or were admitted for a battery of tests were allowed to maintain themselves to a large extent, on a self-help basis. The obvious effect of this is to reduce staffing requirements. From the information I have this approach appears to be working reasonably well. Another technique used has been the portable nursing station which would have the effect of decentralizing nursing functions to some extent. The whole area of varying the level and intensity of nursing care warrants much more investigation and study.

In discussions I have had with a number of different hospital personnel recently, Mr. Speaker, I have been informed that many hospital patients, often older people, do not require nursing care of the type delivered in our hospitals. What they do need is level four treatment, i.e., nursing homes. But the problem here, Mr. Speaker, is that there just isn't sufficient accommodation for these people at a price they can't afford to pay. Because of this these people often remain in hospital. This points up the fact that there is a crying need for many more non-profit nursing and senior citizen homes in our province.

During the years from 1964 to 1971, the Government provided assistance in the form of capital grants to a maximum of 20 per cent of total construction costs to only seven projects, a rate of roughly one a year. A total of around \$5 million in construction grants to special care homes was made during this period of time. Over the same period of time hundreds of millions were spent on highways, some of which started in a no-man's land and ended in a no-man's land, others of which were located in certain geographical areas so as to give the driver four different alternatives to travel from point A to B.

Mr. Speaker, in ending this section of my address, let me comment briefly on two other aspects in the process of total health care. I am very pleased to note that your speech included proposed amendments to The Mental Health Act which will have the effect of limiting the charges on the estates of those people who have received treatment at any of Saskatchewan's four major treatment centres. Families in such circumstances are usually in no financial condition to assume these costs. Such legislation tends to distort the differences between mental and physical illness.

Moving to the area of a prescription drug program, let me say, Mr. Speaker, that here is an area where significant savings can accrue to the people of Saskatchewan. A recent study carried out on prescription drug costs indicate that the average cost per family is not significantly high. Somewhere between \$25 and \$30 per year per family. However, individual families, frequently older persons are faced with prescription drug costs that amount to hundreds of dollars per year. In view of this, Mr. Speaker, an excellent case can be made for disbursing the costs of these drugs through insurance and I am confident that Throne Speech of the future will include this. But, Mr. Speaker, I have cited only one aspect of the problem. Another aspect, and perhaps a more vital one, is the exorbitant costs of prescription drugs. All inquiries in Canada in recent years into the quality, manufacturers' costs and prices of prescription drugs, have clearly demonstrated that on the average drug prices are higher in Canada and in Saskatchewan than in any other industrialized country in the world today.

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The major responsibility for the high costs of drugs must be laid at the door of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' association of Canada – PMAC – an alliance of approximately 56 companies, mainly American subsidiaries, that manufacture 85 per cent of the drugs sold by prescription in Canada today, and more directly, the responsibility lies with the brand-name manufacturers. Far from providing a humanitarian service in a humanitarian way, as they like to pretend, they have been acting as little better than bandits preying on the sick. They have persistently over-charged the public and in so doing they are persistently engaged in a campaign of vilification of generic manufacturers, who alone have tried to supply drugs at reasonable prices.

The many investigations into the industry have revealed some startling facts. While two per cent out of every prescription dollar in 1967 was spent for research, 11 ½ cents was spent on advertising and promotion. Except at the level of advertising, competition is virtually non-existent. Brand name drugs sell at prices far above the charge levied for the same drug selling under the generic name.

The solution to this serious problem, Mr. Speaker, lies in part with the Federal Government but there are a number of steps that could be taken at the Provincial level. A system of central drug purchasing could be established for hospital and other government supported institutions. This centralized purchasing agency could, through a policy of accepting tenders, force price competition. Establish the sale of drugs by generic names and this would force price competition in the private sector rather than the current advertising competition. Draw up a provincial drug formulary listing drugs meeting approved standards. Because there are basically only about 200 drugs from which over 90 per cent of all prescriptions are filled, this would tend to educe the stock that pharmacists must carry and thus reduce the costs.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked about only some of the ways to reduce the cost of health delivery to the people of Saskatchewan. There are others, but again let me say, Sir, that I am confident future speeches will cover all of these and this Province as a result will again take a giant step forward in the field of health.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — Mr. Speaker, let me say how pleased I was to hear His Honour say that Bill 2, namely The Essential Service Emergency Act, would be abolished. This abhorrent piece of legislation has been hanging over the heads of labor like a Damocles' sword for too long. Bill 2 is another clear demonstration of the previous Government's limited concept of freedom and rights of people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — They talk about freedom and free enterprise but freedom and free enterprise for whom? Bill 2 in effect was an outright denial of the right of labor people to free collective bargaining. This piece of legislation was a blatant example of the dictatorial approach that was rapidly developing in the previous Government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — The abolition of Bill 2 is a concrete indication, Mr. Speaker, that our party will replace the dictatorial approach with one involving dialogue, negotiation and bargaining. Bill 2 destroyed collective bargaining and in the process accentuated the very problem it was designed to solve. You can't give orders and dictate the individual lives of people like a general can command an army. The main thrust of present and future legislation in this area, Mr. Speaker, will restore once again free collective bargaining. And I see involved in this three basic criteria: the right of labor to organize for the purposes of collective bargaining, the actual guarantee of collective bargaining, and when all else fails, Mr. Speaker, the working man ins no better off than a slave if he cannot withdraw his services. But when all the mechanisms of negotiations are functioning properly, the use of the latter will be limited or virtually non-existent. And, Mr. Speaker, in looking back to the years 1944-1964, permit me to say how proud that I am of the record of our party in the field of progressive labor legislation.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — Prior to 1944 labor legislation in existence was administered by a branch of another department. In recognition of the rights of working men and women in this Province, and to help insure these rights would be safeguarded, a separate Department of Labour was established. By 1964 some of the most advanced labor legislation on the statute books of any province in Canada was to be found in Saskatchewan. May I enumerate, Mr. Speaker, the firsts for labor in Saskatchewan.

The first province to give civil servants the right to bargain collectively. The first province to pass the Bill of Rights in 1947 which pioneered the field of fair employment practices in Canada. Among the rights guaranteed by this Bill, and subsequently by The Fair Employment Practices Bill, is the right to employment of all persons without discrimination based on race, creed, color or national origin. The first province to make statutory provisions for two weeks annual vacation with pay were other firsts. I mention these points not only as a reminder but to provide and indication of what people in our province can once again expect in the future.

Let me digress, Mr. Speaker, very briefly, to an area I feel quite strongly about. I believe MLAs should become more competent, professional and assume more responsibilities in their roles as elected representatives.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — There are obviously many ramifications and implications entailed in this changing role and I don't propose to go into them now. I believe, however, changes in this direction would serve to enhance the prestige and the effectiveness of the Legislature and the total legislative process.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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Mr. Dyck: — I could go on and on enumerating and expanding the plans of the present Government in the areas that I have mentioned and in the areas I have not touched upon. We have in the world today, Mr. Speaker, achieved a high level of technology and a level of accumulated knowledge never before achieved in the history of man, and the level of technology and the quantity of human knowledge is expanding at a frightening rate. But we must learn how to harness, control, and direct both in order to know enough now to produce sufficient goods and services to provide a high standard of living for all people in our province and, indeed, throughout the world, and the task and the challenge before us today is the destruction of poverty within our midst and the assumption of some responsibility for the eradication of poverty throughout the world.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — And in this fight, let me say, Mr. Speaker, how pleased I am to be on the team with Premier Allan Blakeney as leader.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — He has demonstrated beyond the doubt his resourcefulness, his political skill and shrewd political judgment. He has proven his ability outside the Chamber a legal advisor to the Minister in the portfolios in Education, Health and Finally Provincial Treasurer. On June 23rd, he proved his ability as the Leader of our province by obtaining the endorsement of a large majority of the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — Mr. Speaker, I should like at this time to thank the many people of Saskatoon City Park constituency who worked so tirelessly and painstakingly for me during the recent election. Over the years I have been involved in a number of different capacities in a number of different elections, both Provincial and Federal. But never have I been associated with an election campaign when there was such a large involvement and participation of people from all walks of life; working people, professional people, housewives and young people. I am proud and pleased to be associated with these fine men and women. I am proud and pleased to represent them in this Assembly

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — Let me say, Mr. Speaker, that I look for innovative, exciting and new legislation originating from our side of the House in the immediate years ahead and it couldn't happen to a better province — the Province of Saskatchewan, a province in which I am happy to have been raised. We have many wonderful people in our province, hard-working people, and honest people. We have miles of rolling prairie, beautiful lakes and forests in the North. We have numerous fine towns and villages, many of

which are very vibrant and alive and which will insist on remaining viable rural communities in the future.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dyck: — We have a tremendous resource potential, Mr. Speaker, and we live in an era of rising expectations and our people are becoming more and more concerned with not just the quantity of goods and services available to them but the quality of that which they have about them. And, Mr. Speaker, because of our high level of technology and vast amount of accumulated knowledge, it is possible to rise to yet undefined heights, the quantity and quality of our live and therein, Mr. Speaker, lies our challenge. I am confident that this Government is equal to the task.

I, therefore, consider it a privilege to move, seconded by the Hon. Member from Yorkton (Mr. Carlson), that this Humble Address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. I. Carlson (Yorkton): — Mr. Speaker, first of all I should like to add my congratulations to you upon your election as the Speaker of this Assembly. I am sure that you will carry out your duties adequately and fairly, as I understand you have done in the past.

Secondly, may I consider it a great honor that my maiden speech is to second the Address-in-Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — I am grateful, Mr. Speaker, for being granted this opportunity. I say that this opportunity is a great honor for me because this is the very beginning of a new era in the history of Saskatchewan, an era that has been determined by the people of Saskatchewan and will affect the very way of life of all the people of Saskatchewan.

On June 23, 1971, the people of Saskatchewan spoke out loud and clear. They have spoken for a New Deal for the people of this Province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — They want a deal whereby everyone will have an equal opportunity and where the people who are a part of this society will reap the benefits of our vast resources and treasuries. A logical question that one might ask is, “Why have the citizens of Saskatchewan spoken so loudly and so clearly?” There are many reasons for this but I shall deal with only a few.

At this time I want to turn to a few comments about my constituency of Yorkton which I think would be very close to an average constituency in this Province of Saskatchewan. We have the City of Yorkton which is similar in many respects to any of the urban ridings. It comprises some two-thirds of the provincial riding of Yorkton. We have the many smaller towns and,

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of course, the numerous farms throughout the area which makes it also comparable to any of the rural ridings.

I think of the various groups of people whom I talked to before the election campaign, during the campaign and, of course, since June 23rd. I think also of their reasons for speaking out so loudly and clearly on the 23rd of June.

First, there are the farmers who are the very backbone of our economy. These people – as I am sure we are all aware are in real, drastic trouble both financially and socially. They realize that the future looked even worse than the present under the rule of the two Liberal Governments, two Liberal Governments that spoke about the participatory democracy but who failed to listen and to communicate.

Some Hon. Members: — hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — To illustrate the financial crisis the farmers are in, let me point to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics' records which show that in the period from 1968 to 1970, Saskatchewan's net farm income has dropped by 56.2 per cent. Indeed, they are in trouble.

The farmers spoke against the former Provincial Government that was elected on a promise to reduce taxes but in fact caused property taxes to increase two and threefold. They spoke out against the government that encouraged diversification of agriculture which actually forced the individual farmers to become specialists in their field but made no plans for the future when the results of this diversification resulted in over production and lower prices. They spoke out against the government that arbitrarily closed small rural hospitals, that imposed stringent pupil-teacher ratios, which forced many classrooms – and indeed some entire schools – to close down. The farmers also spoke out against the Federal Liberal Government which has fostered reduced rural post office services, allowed the reduction in railway services, and is considering a drastic cut in grainhandling facilities. Here I refer naturally to the proposed cutback of grain delivery points from 1,000 to approximately 100 in the Province of Saskatchewan. The farmers also spoke out very clearly against the Task force Report . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — . . . the report which clearly recommends the elimination of two-thirds of the farming population of Saskatchewan. All this they recommend in the name of economic efficiency.

I should like to commend this Government for taking immediate action to protect farmers who are unable to pay their debts, from seizure of their farm lands and machinery. I know of one case in my constituency of a farmer who has lost his tractor and his truck because he was unable to make his full payments. But the bank doesn't consider that his granaries are full of grain, neither do they consider that he must have this equipment in a very few weeks to begin his harvesting operations.

Let me turn now to some of the other programs that are needed to keep agriculture viable, and to preserve our rural society. One of the most important steps is the establishment

of the Land Bank Commission. This is a proposal that we made prior to the election campaign. It is important to most farmers but especially important for two groups of farmers. First of all, it is important to the older farmers who are ready to retire but who do not have enough cash to buy a home in a local town, village or city to retire. Many of these people have lived on low incomes all their life. Their personal savings have been reinvested in their farms and now these very people who have built our province must liquidate their assets in order to retire in dignity. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, you realize the problem they're up against in these times of poor agricultural economy. They just cannot get reasonable prices for their farms. There are some farmers who would be prepared to buy them but cannot raise the money. So the Land Bank commission becomes very important to this group of people.

The second group of people I refer to are the young farmers, the young farmer who wants to be established on his own or want to expand his farming operation. Through the Land Bank Commission he could use any capital that he has or that he can acquire to purchase machinery or livestock and then rent the land from the Land Bank commission. Once he has established himself, if things go well a few years from now, he gets established and has a little money on hand, he can then make arrangements to purchase the farm.

I must say that this has proven to be a very attractive policy and one which I have been asked about many times during the election campaign and especially since June 23rd.

Let me turn now, Mr. Speaker, to another factor that is causing great concern to our farmers. That is the skyrocketing costs of production and, more specifically, the cost of farm machinery. Again the farmers were disillusioned by a Federal Government that appointed a commission to investigate the whole question of farm machinery costs, services and repairs for machinery but that is unwilling to act on the recommendation of the commission.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — The Barber Commission presented a very clear picture of how the farmers in Canada had been taken advantage of by the multi-national farm corporations. But still we have no action.

The farmers were also disillusioned by the Provincial Liberal Government which had posed as the friend of the farmer but at the same time abolished The Agriculture machinery Administration.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — The Agriculture Machinery Administration was supplying a service to the farmers of Saskatchewan and indeed to all farmers all over North America.

I remember well how the Government assured the public that any necessary testing would be handled by the Agriculture Engineering Department at the University of Saskatchewan. I was attending university at the time that the AMA was abolished and a few months after it was abolished I went over to the

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Agriculture Engineering Department and did a little snooping around and I asked, "How many machines have been tested here?" I was told they had tested two machines for one company. Mr. Speaker, this says to me if they are testing machines for a machine company, only that information that is beneficial to the machine company would then be released. I believe that the AMA is another program that we must reinstate to help our farmers make intelligent decisions when purchasing new equipment.

Let me also say that it is not just the farmers who are concerned about the state of agriculture. I have had many businessmen from the City of Yorkton tell me in various ways that agriculture must be given top priority in order once again to get the economy of Saskatchewan on a good sound foundation.

I want to add that it is not only the Province of Saskatchewan's economy that is at stake, but indeed the economy of all of Canada. If we have a viable agricultural economy, we shall have a much stronger economy throughout the country. We have witnessed massive layoffs in some of our eastern industrial cities where farm machinery is being manufactured. These slumps in the economy don't just happen and they are not necessary. We must change our priorities. And I should hope that the Federal Liberal Government would give some thoughts changing their priorities after listening to the people of Saskatchewan on June 23rd.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — Another group of citizens who spoke out on the 23rd of June were the pioneers of our province. They spoke against higher costs of living, higher taxes and deterrent fees. Most of these people find themselves living on fixed incomes that are actually becoming smaller and smaller.

Mr. Speaker, once again I should like to commend this Government for proposing legislation that will abolish deterrent fees and also abolish medical care and hospital care premiums for our senior citizens.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — To many of these senior citizens the health costs have taken up a large portion of their annual budget.

May I also give this Government credit for introducing legislation to reverse the regressive legislation passed by the former Liberal Government which placed unreasonable burdens on the families of mentally retarded patients. It was unfair because it placed a burden on mentally ill patients that was not also placed on physically ill people. Secondly, it was unfair because it affected only those patients who were placed in the Provincial institutions such as we have at Prince Albert, North Battleford, Moose Jaw and Weyburn, but a patient who was admitted to the psychiatric wing at a hospital in Regina or Saskatoon, or like we have in the City of Yorkton, was not affected. They were in a general hospital and their care was covered by Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan.

Another small group of people who spoke out very loudly and very clearly on June 23rd are the hotel owners. They spoke out against the arrogance of the former Government. Again, I

want to refer to a specific case in my constituency. A young couple own and run a hotel in a small town not too far from Yorkton and to the best of my knowledge, this man has always been a supporter of the Liberal Party. But that has all changed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — It changed at the Hotel Keepers' Association Convention last spring here in the City of Regina. He was pointing out that he was no longer able to make a decent standard of living as a result of higher taxes and reduced revenue. He was pointing out that he was no longer able to make a decent standard of living as a result of higher taxes and reduced revenue. He was pleading his case to the convention. But he received a very typical Liberal answer. He was told, "You're probably running a dirty hotel." Needless to say, that was enough to make any man reconsider his political affiliation.

Mr. Steuart: — Either that or clean up his hotel!

Mr. Carlson: — This many came to me election night very enthusiastic because the Government had changed and he said to me, "I don't expect miracles from you people but I expect you to listen." I am glad to say that this Government is prepared to listen to these people, as indicated in the Speech from the Throne.

There are two other groups of people that I want also to talk about, these are the ones who are working and the ones who are not working because they cannot find jobs. They were disillusioned by the two Liberal Governments who said that they were prepared to accept six per cent unemployment to fight inflation. They also said that no group of working people were allowed to get an increase in salaries of over six per cent, regardless of how low their wages were. To these people it didn't make sense that for some of them they could get more cash income on welfare than working eight hours a day, people like the hospital workers, people who work in nursing homes, farm laborers and many others. And I agree, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't make sense. In addition to this, many of these people have lost their rights to free collective bargaining. These people also could see that it would take a new government with new priorities to restore their voice in society. I am very, very proud indeed of this new Government that is taking action to repeal the Essential Services Emergency Act.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — I mentioned the many people whom we have in our province who cannot find employment. These circumstances are tragic and wasteful. Unemployment is tragic because it deprives a worker of the right to make a living for himself and his family. Unemployment is wasteful because society loses the productive capacity of our people's energies and skills. Canada has the highest rate of unemployment of any industrialized country in the world and according to the Economic Council of Canada, we lose over \$6 billion per year of productivity due to the unemployment. You can well imagine that this means to the country as well as the Province of Saskatchewan.

We in Saskatchewan have suffered from mass unemployment which was created by the Liberal Government in their fight against

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inflation. Yet we all remember the Provincial Liberals' election platform of 1964 to create 80,000 new jobs. What has, in fact, happened? I am sure you are all aware that we've lost in the neighborhood of 100,000 people in the last seven years. In fact, last year alone, Mr. Speaker, 30,000 left the Province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign our party committed itself to initiate job-creating projects. Once again the Government has realized the urgency of the situation and has taken action to create job opportunities.

Some Hon. Members: — Fear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — Again, I should like to refer to a specific case in my own constituency. The previous government had started the construction of a provincial government building in Yorkton but once again they were not prepared to communicate but only to dictate. The law profession of Saskatchewan did not want to include the Court House in the provincial building along with the other government offices and the liquor store. In fact, I am told, Mr. Speaker, even the former Attorney General (Mr. Heald) disapproved but was overruled. During the election campaign, the Hon. Premier, Mr. Blakeney, when he was in Yorkton committed our part when elected as the Government to re-negotiate the financial deal imposed on the city by the former Government. I shall deal with the finances later but the point I am making now is that the Government has listened to the Bar Association and has agreed to build the new provincial building as well as renovate the old Court House, which is an indication of the Government's willingness to listen and also willingness to create more job opportunities for the people in the Province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — I mentioned a moment ago the financial deal that was forced upon the City of Yorkton by the former Government. I believe this is noteworthy and I want to elaborate somewhat at this time.

The former Cabinet was planning a meeting in the city of Yorkton and apparently just a few days prior to the meeting, decided that they really should have some major announcement to make at the Cabinet meeting in Yorkton. They contacted the City council and told them, "If you supply the land, we'll build a building. You've got 48 hours to make up your mind." The City council did in fact make up its mind in 48 hours and it arranged to purchase land at the cost of \$186,287.51. By the time the contractor moved in this June to start the excavation for the building, due to added costs of interest on money, costs of removing buildings from the property, and also the value of some city assets on the property, the total cost to the city has now risen to \$201,038.98. And in return for this, the former Provincial Government said, "We'll give you the old Land titles Office." But a former colleague of some of yours who is now sitting on city Council — and I refer to Alex Kuziak — fought this in City council, he fought it with the Provincial Government, and eventually the Province said, "Okay, we'll give you also the old Court House, we'll give you the old liquor store and we will give you an old weigh scale."

The value of this property as assessed by an independent assessor equalled \$165,000. they were getting \$165,000 book value property for \$201,000 worth of land. Mr. Blakeney said that we would reconsider this deal and in fact the Government has reconsidered it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — The City Council admitted that the Court House was of no value to the City of Yorkton because of its type of construction and because of its location in the city and through negotiations, the Province has agreed to repurchase this Court House back from the city at a cost of \$85,000.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — This says two things. First of all, it puts the Court House in a separate building from the provincial building as the judiciary of this Province has indicated they want and also it has got the city of Yorkton off the hook from this financial Liberal deal that was forced upon by the former Government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — Once again I want to say that this is another example of this Government's willingness to listen to people.

Once again I want to re-emphasize that the people of this Province have spoken loud and clear to every one of us sitting here in this Chamber, regardless of which side of the House we are sitting on, we must realize that the people have spoken.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — I think it's fair to make some fundamental changes in our society and we must fulfill the wishes of the people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — If we fail, there is no one to blame but ourselves. We must not break faith with the people of the Province. We can make some changes but we must change our philosophy and develop new priorities. One of these priorities must be to put people before money. We must plan our economy and plan our society so that the people of Saskatchewan will reap the benefits.

I believe that when the people of the Yorkton constituency elected me as their representative, they were asking for some very basic changes. The speech from the Throne indicates that this Government is prepared to listen to the people and is prepared to make some fundamental changes.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — This new government under the leadership of Allan Blakeney is truly a government of the people for the people.

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Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — Mr. Speaker, this Government offers a New Deal for people of Saskatchewan. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in seconding the Address-in-Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D.G. Steuart (Leader of the Opposition): — We are a little thin in bench strikes but we are moving up.

Mr. Speaker, I should first like to congratulate the member for Saskatoon City Park (Mr. Dyck) and the member for Yorkton (Mr. Carlson) on their initial efforts in this House.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — I hope that neither of the two Members are too disillusioned when the truth sets in. The Member from City Park may have a great Utopia that will come. I could remind him that that same Utopia was planned back in 1944 and the monuments of that Utopia are still scattered throughout the province — the box factory, the woollen mills.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — I have great sympathy for any unsuspecting citizen carried away by the new Socialist Utopia who might invest his life saving in the great development he talked about. I am afraid nothing has changed, although you have multiplied your Members on that side of the House, you still can't run a peanut stand.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Now I should like to especially congratulate the Member for Yorkton (Mr. Carlson). He has every right to be very proud. \$80,000 they have already paid for him and it is only a month old. Now at the rate that's about \$3.6 million from the entire 45 of you. I don't know if the people of Saskatchewan can afford many members like the Member for Yorkton. But anyway I shall congratulate him and Alec Kuziak for being able to negotiate a deal like that. There is an old saying, "Get the Government when they haven't really wakened up yet," and I think you have succeeded. I congratulate you.

Now, Mr. Speaker . . .

An Hon. Member: — Bitter grapes!

Mr. Steuart: — No, I'm not bitter. I just think he made an excellent deal. I was congratulating him. You should try one for Saskatoon, Mr. Member.

I think one question we should ask ourselves at the beginning of this debate is: is this Session really necessary? I sat that the answer is, No. This Session is a grandstand play

by the Socialist Government and it could be costing the people of this Province over \$6,000 a day. Let's look at the Throne speech to see if we really needed to squander this money, money of the taxpayers, on this phony Session. Of course the Government said they want to remove the utilization fees on the Medical Care Plan and the Hospitalization Plan. Well let's be very clear, they didn't need to call a Special Session of the Legislature to do this. It could have been done any day of a Cabinet meeting. In fact, for over a month, the NDP Government have been forcing the people to pay utilization fees under the false pretences that a session was really necessary to remove them. Now, Mr. Speaker, if the Government intends to stop charging people over 65 years old medical and hospital premiums, even the wealthy people, and I know these people in various parties of Saskatchewan. The wealthy people will thank them. But they intend to do this. Again, this could have been done by regulation by Cabinet. If the NDP want to stop collecting from the estates of the mentally ill and they had to do was stop. A normal session next year could have regularized this policy.

The Act concerning the payment of hog premiums – it is already going to retroactive. It could have been passed next January and still have been retroactive to January 1971.

Now, the legislation to protect the farmers unable to pay their debts is a new one. It was never mentioned to us in any of the talks or letters concerning this Session. As for repeal of Bill 2, the Premier himself said that it was not necessary at this time, it could only be activated by the Cabinet had no intention of taking such an action.

And there is the paragraph about the lack of jobs. Mr. Speaker, that is just so much sanctimonious garbage. The NDP are chasing out job-producing industries out of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, here we have the rather sorry spectacle of this much publicized new Deal, this new political party, indulging in petty politics at the taxpayer's expense, firing defenceless civil servants and breaking their campaign promises before the ink was dry on their oaths of office. This useless Session will cost the people of the Province over \$100,000.

Mr. Romanow: — Don't prolong it.

Mr. Steuart: — I thought you would say that, I was hoping you would say that. "Don't prolong it," says the great new warrior, the Attorney General.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Wouldn't they love that. That's what they wanted us to do. But I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll tell you, Mr. A.G. why we were going to prolong it, why we wouldn't let you and your horde of new MLAs steamroller this Opposition. I'll tell you why. Ever since the election the new Premier has been playing fast and loose with the Opposition in regard to this Special Session. First they announced there will be one. Then he changed his mind and then I guess someone put some pressure on him, then he gave in as he seems to do regularly lately and

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the Session was on again. It began to look after utilization fees, medicare and hospital premiums. Then the list of new Bills began to grow until we were told about five of them. Then the Saskatchewan federation of Labour summoned fearless Little Allan and ordered him to repeal Bill 2. And of course he agreed to do that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — You back benchers shouldn't laugh, you weren't at that meeting. If you are real luck he will tell you about it as you go along.

We were still prepared . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — I saw them all coming out. You weren't there either.

We were still prepared to agree to bypass most of the normal legislation safeguards because we had been informed of the Government's plans and the Bills were relatively simple and straightforward. Then on July 27, the day after I had been chosen as Leader of the Opposition, I received a letter from the Premier asking me to concur with the so-called agreement mad with Mr. Thatcher. I have a copy of the letter here and I will table it. It lists eight issues to be dealt with by this Session. We have been aware of all this legislation. While we were convinced that the Session wasn't necessary, we were prepared to go along with the new government. However, on page 2 of the letter, the first paragraph reads as follows, and I quote:

It is possible that the additional legislation could be introduced in which case I will inform you of the nature of the proposed legislation.

Now there is nothing wrong with that if it were a normal session if we were discussing a normal session. But when you consider Mr. Blakeney's next request, the whole thing, Mr. Speaker, becomes incredible. This letter goes on to say that in return the Premier asked me to indicate to him as quickly as possible if we would be prepared to waiver certain rules, namely, to waive the Throne Speech Debate and get this, to consent to proceed through all readings of a Bill on the same day. In short, the NDP refused to tell us what legislation and there lies the difference, Mr. Attorney General (Mr. Romanow). If you would keep you mouth closed for awhile and your ears open — I see you haven't changed by assuming office - you might learn what I am talking about. In short, the NDP refused to tell us what legislation they were planning but wanted us to agree, in advance, to waive our rights and allow them to railroad anything they wanted through this House. Mr. Speaker, we may be a few in number but we will not be pushed around by those Socialists opposite no matter how much they plan or how much they speak.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Michayluk: — Pushed by the people, Davey.

Mr. Steuart: — Yeah, we got a little nudge, Dick, I will admit to that.

When I look over at you my faith in humanity escapes me but I am sure it will come back. Let me give you one example of what they are trying to steamroller through this Legislature. The Throne Speech says legislation will be introduced to protect farmers unable to pay their debts from seizure of their farm land and their machinery. Good, fine. All of us in this House know that the farmers are facing serious problems and that they need protection. Now incidentally, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what we did about it. We passed legislation that protects farmers from seizure of their machinery if they apply to the courts for their help. I will tell you something else, the land Contract Action Act has for years protected all citizens of Saskatchewan from seizure of land and machinery. But if they are not, if they are not doing this, then let the government tell us and tell the public.

If those Acts have developed shortcomings or are proven to have short comings, Mr. Premier, point them out to us and we will give you our full support, but as far as I can find out, you haven't even had the courtesy, for example, to consult the Saskatchewan Implement Dealers Association. I phoned them this morning and they were very concerned about this legislation and most anxious to discuss it. Why shouldn't they be? It could put them out of business. This could put the implement dealers out of business and it was your Party, Mr. Premier, that promised to help out the small businessman. This proposed Bill could push a Bill like this through in one day, is unbelievable. Mr. Speaker, make no mistake that is exactly what the NDP government had in mind when the Premier wrote me asking me for a blank cheque on any legislation that he might choose to put before this House.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Thatcher never received a letter from Mr. Romanow, and his office never received a letter from Mr. Romanow. The truth is, there never was a letter from Mr. Romanow. And the Premier did tell me that, I agree, that's my source of information, also I checked the former Premier's office. I just want to pint this out because I haven't seen any retraction from the Premier. I haven't seen him get up and say, "I was misquoted," because the impression that he left was that I had or that our caucus had reneged on a deal that had been made between Mr. Romanow and the late Mr. Thatcher.

Some Hon. Members: — They tried to leave that impression but there never was any such deal. You sent him eight pieces of legislation and you told him as far as we know, that's all there was. Then

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Mr. Blakeney got up in front of that press and said, "We sent him a letter, Mr. Romanow sent him a letter." They never sent him a letter, all we know is that there were to be eight pieces of legislation. Then I got a letter from Mr. Blakeney and he said there will be eight pieces of legislation and there might be something else when we make up our mind. The Speech from the Throne contained a piece of legislation about which we had never heard anything.

An Hon. Member: — Tell the truth!

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, it is only common decency to fully inform the Opposition of all Bills and issues to be brought before a special session. If, and I emphasize if, the Government wants to short-cut the normal democratic safeguards built into our legislative process, this was not done, and as a result we were insisting on judging each Bill on its merits. Some, like the removal of utilization fees, we will be prepared to waive the normal time requirements, others we will oppose or amend them.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to take a moment in this debate to talk about our former leader, talk about the role our party will play in this House and across the province. Members on both sides of the House and people from all walks of life throughout the province have paid sincere tributes to Ross Thatcher these last few days. His courage, his energy and his devotion to our nation and province have been recognized and justifiably praised. Today, I want to recall another aspect of Ross Thatcher's career and that was his ability and style as a debater in this Legislature. He was a fighter, he asked no quarter and he gave none. When he stood in his place, it was to deliver a hard-hitting down to earth speech. This quality was never more apparent than when he led us in Opposition from 1960 to 1964. It was his energy, his driving, fighting, hammering criticism in this legislature that led to the defeat of the Socialist Government in 1964. Well Mr. Speaker, we don't have another Ross Thatcher on this side of the House, but we do have his example and his memory and we have 14 enthusiastic Members who have dedicated themselves to give this Government the most responsible and the toughest opposition ever given in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — That is the first priority of our Liberal Caucus, to keep that Government honest and to never let you, the Government, forget or the public, the unbelievable promises upon which you rode into office and to expense the inevitable blunders that you are now making and that you will continue to make.

Mr. Speaker, I promise you and that last individual who blundered out there, and all the other 45 members, as well the people of Saskatchewan that our 14 Liberal members will work and we will fight and we will blow it just as we did in 1960, 1961 and 1962 until we finally defeated you in 1964. In fact, we will carry out to the best of our abilities the traditional functions of the Opposition: (1) we'll criticize you legislation; (2) we shall endeavor to offer constructive alternatives; (3) we will act as financial watchdogs for the taxpayers. At the same time, we will work with the thousands of other Liberal Party members in Saskatchewan to rebuild our

party.

One month ago we suffered a most decisive defeat at the polls, we must and we will, examine into the reason for our defeat and then bring our policies and our programs into line with the desires of the majority of the people of this Province. At the same time, we caution our friends in the NDP not to take too much comfort from our political set-back. I should point out that we still have a strong well-organized political party and that we received 43 per cent of the vote. I suppose Mr. Blakeney could be forgiven that when they look along across here at our small group they suffer from a slight case of over-confidence. I suggest before they become too smug, Mr. Blakeney take a look behind him at all those 44 happy faces, each one of them convince he belongs in the Cabinet. Each one is confident that it is only a matter of time until he is called to the front benches to sit in splendor with Allan's chosen few like Eiling, Everett, and all the rest of them.

An Hon. Member: — What about Henry.

Mr. Steuart: — Oh, Henry, I don't know. I don't know if Henry has that much hope or not.

An Hon. Member: — He didn't even get to be a Legislative Secretary.

Mr. Steuart: — No! I find that incredible, that a man with his record wouldn't even be given one of those party hack jobs.

Then there are all those promises they made. First there are the ones that the official party made, then there are ones the candidates made back home in the constituencies. The promises made by the official party would cost over \$1 billion. I am afraid, Mr. Speaker, we haven't added up the local bribes yet, but as a special service to the Government we will table our findings.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, what's going to happen to little Allan and his brave new world when most of those new members wake up to the truth that they are doomed to spend all of their short political lives languishing unseen and unheard on the back benches? What will happen when they find out that those fearless fighters on the front bench can't even keep their won home? You know, Mr. Speaker, I think we already know what will happen. In fact it has already begun. They will form little rump groups, they will hold special meetings and they will make independent pressure groups, threatening the Government, pointing out their sins of omission. In fact I have a press release here to the *Leader-Post*, July 23rd:

Wafflers tell Blakeney to take over the pulp mill.

I can see the head Wafflers out there organizing a meeting right now. The story goes on here to tell how John Richards, the lecturer from Saskatoon, the MLA from up there, along with Don Mitchell, the well-know Waffler, demanded that the Government kick Mr. Landegger out of Saskatchewan with no compensation and then grab the Prince Albert pulp mill.

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Well, we all know that Mr. Blakeney has got lots of problems. We know that Mr. Blakeney is up to his armpits in pulp mills and iron mines, union pressures and men and women who are out of work. And we must appreciate what a trying time this is for the new Government and the new Premier. If he pleases the Unions he makes the Wafflers unhappy. If he gets jobs for the unemployed, eh upsets the ecologists. That's why we, in the Opposition, have been leaving him alone. We are really trying to help him out.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, along comes John Richards, a Member of Allan's own party, a fellow MLA and spoils everything by demanding that the Premier make a decision and keep his promise to throw out the Doré Lake Pulp Mill and take over the one at Prince Albert. You know, Mr. Speaker, I'd call this base ingratitude, because the Premier had only recently made Mr. Richards a Legislative Secretary. I don't know whether it was either Health or Welfare, but he made him a Legislative Secretary, it was a fact of life. In fairness to the new member from Saskatoon, it is just possible that Mr. Richards might have remembered that Premier Blakeney called his position, the position he now holds, one of the most useless jobs in the world, only fit for political hacks, when he introduced the same job six or seven years ago. But anyway, he shakes his head. I don't know whether he is trying to wake up or if he is denying what I said. We've got the quotes, Mr. Premier, and you will get them quoted back to you before this Session is over. How you would have the unmitigated gall to resurrect Legislative Secretaries the good Lord Himself doesn't know, but never mind, we will remind all of you of what you said.

However, in fairness, we see the pattern already emerging. We see, Mr. Speaker, the ranks of the NDP Socialists, and I predict that the new Government has within its ranks the seeds of its own destruction. Mr. Premier, your impossible promises, and your unmanageable Wafflers, will turn your dream of a New Deal into a nightmare and I tell you the rot has already set in. Not satisfied, for example, with newspaper threats, the Wafflers are putting out open letters for NDP MLAs demanding socialization of the Prince Albert pulp mill.

An Hon. Member: — The Liberal MLAs too.

Mr. Steuart: — Oh, they hit them all. And I understand, Mr. Premier, the Wafflers will rally at Fort Qu'Appelle this Saturday. I can tell you the saying of Chairman Mao will get a good workout this weekend out there. I can also tell you, Mr. Premier, that the people of this Province are watching you. If you buckle under the pressure of these extreme radicals, Saskatchewan will go down the drain in the next four years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — I am going to tell you something else, if Premier Blakeney resists the Wafflers the NDP will be split from top to bottom and we will flush the whole mess down the drain four years from now in the next election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Oh, here he is. I am sorry,

the future Minister of Industry for the new NDP Socialist Government was out when I made mention of him. I am glad he is back in his place.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to turn for a minute or two to some of the promises made by the Socialists during the election campaign. First, a pledge made by Mr. Blakeney and the NDP to the civil servants. For seven years our friends opposite lectured us regarding justice and fair play to civil servants. Why, they said, as long as a man is qualified and doing a good job he should have job security regardless of political conviction and regardless of which political party is in office.

Mr. Blakeney: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Oh, “hear, hear” he says. There, there! But he’s here, here and a lot of civil servants that had the guts to be Liberals are there, there! They are not here anymore.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — During the recent campaign our new Premier went on record as saying that if he was ever the head of the government no public servant need fear for his job. As reported in the *Leader-Post*, June 22nd, Mr. Blakeney promised there would be no purge in the civil Service. I quote, “There will be no firing.” That’s what Mr. Blakeney said, “No firing.” Mr. Speaker, that promise to the civil servants has been broken already. We are seeing the start of a witch hunt, I predict, the likes we haven’t seen since you people took over in 1944.

You said that later in this debate, or later in this Session, you would answer the charge made by Mr. Lane about firing the students and don’t think we won’t give you those names. Because it is a fact and no matter how much you wiggle and waggle you can’t get out of it. And I say that the man that will direct this attack will be the Premier himself. He has already forgotten his promise.

Let’s take one example, Jack Weymark, the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources. He was a respected civil servant and he never worked at any time for the Liberal Party. His only shortcoming might have been that he was once a business partner of our former Premier, Mr. Thatcher. Hardly grounds for dismissal I would say.

Another dismissal in the Department of Natural Resources was that of the Assistant Deputy Minister, Robert Beeson. He was not an Order-in-Council appointment, he was a qualified public civil servant, he applied for the job, he met all the academic and administrative qualifications and he received the position. Now I’ll admit . . .

Mr. Blakeney: — . . . an O.C. appointment.

Mr. Steuart: — He wasn’t an O.C. appointment.

Mr. Blakeney: — Oh, yes, he was.

Mr. Steuart: — Oh, no, he wasn’t. He obtained his job through the normal civil service competition. I didn’t say it wasn’t an Order-in-Council appointment. I said he applied for a job . . .

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Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Blakeney: — Why bother?

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Blakeney, when those braying jackasses behind you get finished laughing, I'll point out to you that it is possible to qualify as a civil servant and it can still be an Order-in-Council appointment. Why bother? Well, I don't know why bother, I am just telling you a fact of life. If you don't know it, you had better look into it and find out. But there is one point, he did work for me as my executive assistant. Again, maybe that is why he was dismissed.

Let's take a look at some more of the Department of Natural Resources. They fired a girl in the Department of Natural Resources and they fired a clerk up in the city of Prince Albert. Neither the Premier (Mr. Blakeney) nor the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Kramer) had the decency to call in, or to talk and explain to, either the Deputy Minister or his Assistant as to why they were being fired and neither one of them were given reasonable compensation fitting for the job that they had.

You know it is also curious who the great new Minister of Natural Resources selected to replace these two people. The new Deputy Minister is a Mr. Art Hartwell. He came to the Government recommended by Clarence Fines, Mrs. Louise Lucas, the former CCF MP and the not forgettable** Mr. Joe Phelps of the famous CCF of many, many years ago. Who took Mr. Beeson's place? Well, if you don't know I'll tell you, Mr. Premier, Martin Semchuk, former NDP MLA and full-time party hack.

An Hon. Member: — You've got to be kidding, Dave.

Mr. Steuart: — There, Mr. Speaker, are two outstanding appointments, the non-partisan individuals. Their qualifications — defeated NDP candidates. The appointments are a disgrace to this Government.

This Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Kramer) does not stop at senior civil servants.

An Hon. Member: — How is he doing?

Mr. Steuart: — I don't know, he better ask you how he is doing. You'd fire him tomorrow if you could, but you can't.

An Hon. Member: — How many did you fire?

Mr. Steuart: — Sure we fired some, sure we fired some, but we are not the sanctimonious NDP that sat on this side of the House, for seven years, and wrung their hands like Uriah Heep and said, "We would never do that, we wouldn't fire people," and then they get in here and they start the day after they are in. I am point out to the people of the Province once again — your sanctimonious talk when you were in Opposition, the pious garbage you spread all over this province and your actual actions now that you have seized the reins of power.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — But that's not the end. The Attorney General, Mr. Romanow, saw fit to dismiss Mr. Bernie Bierschenko, an outstanding and hardworking member of the Saskatchewan Insurance Office.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — I haven't finished yet. Last week — I have another one for you, where is the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Wood). Take a look into this one Mr. Minister of Municipal Affairs. Mr. Ivan Maitland, just an ordinary ferry operator, was fired. He operated the Riverhurst ferry in the Morse constituency. Maybe he was hired by the Premier or a recommendation by the former Premier might have had something to do with that. I can also tell you something else. Other civil servants have been intimidated and it would appear that after this Session — I predict this — there will be a wholesale firing in this Government from Deputy Ministers down to the lowest clerks. I can tell you something else. We are compiling a full list of political firings and it will be presented later in this Session. I'll bring it up now to warn the Government that we intend to hold them publicly responsible for their actions in firing defenseless people for political revenge. And that is exactly what they are doing.

Let's take another look at the promises made across this province. This concerns education. It has to do with the Minister of Education and the pupil-teacher ratio. Now, you know, Mr. Speaker, I am sure I don't have to tell the members opposite that the great majority of teachers in Saskatchewan came out openly in the last election and they supported the NDP Socialists.

An Hon. Member: — Why?

Mr. Steuart: — I'll tell you why in a minute. If you are a teacher I hope you can learn it and I shall say it simply so you can all learn it. Unfortunately the ration of teachers on this side and pupils on that side are a little higher than I really like. But a great majority of teachers supported the NDP led by many in the Teachers' Federation itself, they worked all day and night for our defeat. Now let me make it crystal clear, I recognize that this was their democratic right. I don't question the rights of any teacher or anyone else to take whatever political stand they see fit. In fact, I welcome their involvement in politics and I only wish that it had been on our side. But why, why did so many teachers take such a strong stand against the Liberals and for the NDP Socialists in the last election?

I believe there were two basic reasons — wage guidelines and the pupil-teacher ratio. The teachers believed that we had been too tough on wage increases and by insisting on increasing the number of students per teacher they believe we caused many problems in education and cost many teachers their jobs. Now another complaint that I ran into in many parts of the province was the fact that our Minister of Education, Dr. McIsaac, was not a teacher. Oh, they said he was a fine man but he is not one of us. "How can he understand our problems," they said, "the problems of a teacher when he is not a professional teacher

like we are.” These then were their complaints against our Government and, of course, the NDP capitalized on this discontent and again that is natural and reasonable. But, Mr. Speaker, what is not natural and reasonable is what they have done to those same teachers in the five weeks since the election. The NDP candidate said to each teacher, elect us and we shall take off the guidelines in wage increases, the sky is the limit. They said, elect us and we shall reserve the Liberal policy of increasing the number of students per teacher. They said, elect us Socialists and we promise we shall give you a professional teacher as Minister of Education. Well, it didn’t take the NDP long to kick their good friends, the teachers right square in the teeth. First, they chose the Hon. Mr. MacMurchy as Minister of Education, and I am sure he is a fine man.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Stuart: — But I understand that this MacMurchy is either a full-time farmer and a part-time political worker, or a full-time political worker and a part-time farmer. I don’t know which. But let me make it very clear, I think both of those professions are admirable. I don’t have any complaint about them. There is nothing wrong with these and I don’t complain but by no stretch of the imagination could Mr. MacMurchy be called a teacher. Now it couldn’t have been because Mr. Blakeney didn’t have any other choice because I am informed that there are 14 or 15 teachers sitting as NDP MLAs and one of them even has some university teaching experience. Not much, but some. Now what a slap in the face it was to all those teachers in this House and to the hundreds of teachers across the province who worked so hard and believed so blindly that the NDP would give them one of their own as Minister. My god, Mr. Speaker, they end up with a trustee. Or just an ordinary man like Mr. McIsaac, but a trustee - -right out of the enemy camp! Oh, Mr. Blakeney, that is one time when you showed either unbelievable stupidity or fantastic courage – only time will tell.

Mr. Speaker, that is not all, that is not all. What was one of the Minister’s few first acts when he said he couldn’t change the pupil-teacher ratio at this time of the year. Always that little wiggling characteristic and that’s going to be the great hallmark of this Government. Make a statement and wiggle out of it. Make another one and barge out of it. Those voters have sure got you fellows up a tree, haven’t they? They’ll have you down in awhile. Why couldn’t he do it? Not because you didn’t have any money. I’ll remind you I left you fellows \$90 million. \$90 million.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Stuart: — So when anybody comes to this Government and they want a hospital, or a school, or a road, or the teachers want a raise, or these civil servants, all the Canadian Union of Public Employees, who got the new catch-up program, when they came to you, let there be no mistake, you’ve got the money, Allan. You can tell them any other reason, but you’ve got the money. Unless you have hidden it or lost it, unless you’re lost it in five weeks – but when I left there it was 100 per cent. \$90 million! Now, Mr. Speaker, I issue a challenge to the teachers of Saskatchewan, to all those teachers who helped elect the Socialist NDP Members and how they worked day and night, I suggest to them that I am sure they don’t like this set-up. I suggest

that they will do like Eiling Kramer did when he was left out of the Cabinet – stalk out and raise bloody murder. What happened? Back in he came two days later, little Allan weakened. I suggest you do like the Labor Unions did when Allan got up and said, “We won’t change Bill 2, that doesn’t need to be repealed.” They demanded and they pounded the table. What happened? Little Allan weakened. I suggest they take a page out of their book. Follow the Wafflers. It sounds like a song. Follow the Wafflers! It is easy to do this. Print pamphlets, write open letters and hold public meetings and really put on the pressure. And I guarantee you, once again, little Allan will weaken.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Do all those things to teach us and you will get what you want. He will weaken. That is his track record. Premier for five weeks and five times in five weeks he has been faced with decision, five times he has made one decision and reversed himself.

Mr. Speaker, I intend to go in more detail into the government’s failure to hold out any hope for the unemployed and for the underemployed, so I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

SECOND READING

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier) moved second reading of Bill No. 2 — **An Act to provide for the Postponement of the Tabling of Certain Documents.**

He said:

Mr. Speaker, this is the traditional Bill to postpone the tabling of documents. Members will be aware that in many of the statutes that are on our statute books, there are provisions which provide that annual reports and the like shall be tabled within the first 10 or 15 days, as the case may be, of the regular sessions which have been traditionally held in the winter, in February. They have no real application to the special session held in July. It has been the custom to move a Bill of this nature and I move second reading Bill No. 2.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

HON. W.E. SMISHEK (Minister of Public Health) moved second reading of Bill No. 3 — **An Act to amend the Saskatchewan Hospitalization Act.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want first of all to congratulate you on the appointment of Speaker of this Legislature. All of us, I am sure, know of you long experience in this Legislature, the respect that you hold for the tradition of democracy and the respect and the high esteem that you hold for this Legislature. I am sure that you will preside over the proceedings in fairness in justice. I extend to you my very sincere congratulations on this very high and important appointment.

Mr. Speaker, may I also express my commendation to our

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Leader and Premier since this is my first opportunity to take part in the debate in this first Session.

The Member for Regina Centre (Mr. Blakeney) has conducted an outstanding campaign in the last few months. It was his tremendous and dynamic leadership that brought Saskatchewan that we have seen in modern history.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — I congratulate him on the campaign he conducted. I congratulate him on the leadership that he has given. I congratulate him on his ideas and the leadership that he will provide in this Legislature and to the people of the Province of Saskatchewan.

I also extended my sincere congratulations to all the members in this Legislature who were elected were victorious . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! I must remind the Minister that on second reading of a Bill we must stick to the principles of the Bill and not to general statements of congratulations. I know that the Chair likes to allow some latitude but we must stick to the Bill.

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, I intend to get to it very soon. Mr. Speaker, I thought that I should open the speech in this form since it is the first time that I take time in debate here. Also, if you permit me, Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my deepest sympathies to the families of those members who are no longer with us. In particular my sympathy goes out to the family of the former Premier of the Province, who passed away so suddenly and untimely.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill that I am about to introduce has two very important provisions in it. Both of them can be summarized very briefly.

One amendment which will be effective as of August 1, 1971, removes the authority of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council to prescribe amounts that hospitals and physiotherapists may charge patients for services that they have received. In other words, it takes the deterrent fee principle out of the statute.

The other amendment will provide the authority, effective as of January 1, 1972, for residents of Saskatchewan who are 65 years of age and over to receive medical and hospital services completely free of charge. Both of these amendments were commitments the new Democratic Party made to the people of Saskatchewan during the election and pre-election campaign. We are acting as quickly as possible to implement the pledges that we made to the people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, let me deal with the hospital deterrent fee first. This amendment is of such importance that I feel I must provide the Members of the House with some of the background information which made it necessary for us, or made it necessary, first of all, for to strongly oppose the introduction of those fees and when we were not successful in preventing their introduction, to continually keep the injustice of deterrent fees of the former Liberal Government and in front of

the people of Saskatchewan.

I don't need to remind the Hon. Members Opposite what the reaction of the people of Saskatchewan to deterrent fees has been. It seems to me that they spoke out most eloquently on this matter on June 23rd.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, this amendment is one of the first in our plan to develop a comprehensive health services program for the citizens of Saskatchewan. It will be one step towards restoring Saskatchewan to the position of health care leadership which it held seven years ago.

To do this, we must first of all, rebuild what seven years of Liberal Government has destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to serve notice that this amendment is just a beginning of the rebuilding program and the rebuilding process. In speaking in support of this amendment, I should like the members seated here today, to think back to that "Black Friday" of March 1, 1968, on the date on which the Saskatchewan Liberal Government introduced their nefarious deterrent fee program. Two weeks later when I took part in the debate, on the deterrent fees, I quoted from the preamble to the constitution of the World Health Organization.

Mr. Speaker, I felt that it was an appropriate quotation, at that time, to start the discussion would have ended in the Government withdrawing the deterrent fee amendment. In spite of our reasonable and logical objections, the amendments were passed. Deterrent fees were introduced in spite of the objections from groups representing every segment of our society, including the young people, senior citizens, labor groups, farm groups, church groups, citizen groups, doctors and nurses and many others.

It is generally know that I opposed the deterrent fee principle as part of any public health scheme long before I became a member of this Legislature. So, today, as I move second reading to this Bill, which will remove this tax on the sick, from our provincial statues effect August 1st. I do it with a deep feeling of profound satisfaction. Permit me, again, to quote from the preamble from the Constitution of the World Health Organization:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Health of all people is fundamental to the obtaining of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest co-operation of the individual and the state. The achievement of any state, in the promotion and protection of heath, is of value to all. Unequal development in different countries in the promotion of health and control of disease especially communicable disease, is a common danger.

The extension to all people of the benefits of medical, physiological and related knowledge, is essential to the fullest attainment of health. Informed opinion and active co-operation on the part of the public are of utmost

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importance in the improvement of the health of the people. Governments have their responsibility for the health of their people which can be fulfilled only by the provision of adequate health care and social measures.

Mr. Speaker, deterrent fees are repugnant to and in violation of practically every principle contained in the preamble of the World Health Organizations.

Mr. Speaker, according to a pamphlet, distributed by the Liberals to each householder, deterrent fees – they call them utilization fees – were introduced for three basic reasons. I bring particularly to the attention to the Hon. Members Opposite, this was the leaflet that they printed and distributed by the thousands to the people of Saskatchewan, trying to sell the deterrent fee principle to the public.

They said that there were three basic reasons why they were introducing them. The Liberals said: 1. It is desirable to eliminate the incidence of trivial and unnecessary demands on publicly supported health services. 2. The Liberals said that the Government wishes to reduce public costs of medical care and hospital services. 3. The Liberals said that government believes direct patient financial participation will encourage responsible use of the service.

Mr. Speaker, let's have a look at each of these reasons and see if they can survive any objective scrutiny. First of all they say it is desirable to eliminate the incidence of trivial and unnecessary demands on publicly supported health services.

Now back in 1968 when the deterrent fee program was under debate, we asked the Liberals to come forward with proof of abuses they have said existed. We have been waiting for over three years and we are still waiting, Mr. Speaker, for the Liberals to produce that evidence of abuse.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — All we have ever heard were statements such as these: “Everyone knows there are abuses.” This was the statement of the Liberals, or statements something to this effect: “Why, just the other day I was talking to a fellow and he told me that a friend of his mother-in-law was admitted to a hospital for a couple of days just so that she could have a rest.”

Did they name names, Mr. Speaker? Did they provide the dates? Of course not, Mr. Speaker. Did they provide any evidence of any study in depth that had been made, or undertaken by qualified people, which would indicate if there were any abuses, and if so, what was the extent of the abuses? Of course not, Mr. Speaker.

The Hon. Member for Regina Whitmore Park (Mr. Grant) who was then the Minister of Health, in speaking in support of the 1968 amendment, said that because there is no demand control, there is no patient resistance to doctor over-utilization. He argued that utilization fees would deter people from making unnecessary and frivolous demands for services. This, in turn, implied that the average citizen is in a position to judge, in every situation, whether or not he should seek the advice or

care of his doctor. The physician, as well as the patient, has a responsibility to ensure that his services are wisely used.

Deterrent charges, if they are to succeed in achieving their intended effect, also produce the opposite effect, Mr. Speaker. They lead to under-utilization, by discouraging patients from seeking advice in the early stage of illness when symptoms may appear inconsequential.

It is well known that early detection of illness and the prompt introduction of effective treatment, often prevents complications and chronic disability later on. Thus, parents for example, should be encouraged and not deterred from seeking prompt advice and care for their children whose illnesses are usually acute and of short duration.

Similarly in the case of the aged people, among whom chronic disease is more prevalent and often starts more insidiously at an early stage. It is not logical nor sound from the health point of view to deter care in the early stages of chronic illness, nor to cover all costs once the disease has become chronic.

I am not suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that there have not been any abuses, but I am suggesting that there are better ways for dealing with a proper and effective use of health plans which can be encouraged in other more positive ways, of greater importance of achieving this result is the education of the public to appreciate the full responsibilities, but also the limitations of medical services.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, you don't go after a mosquito with a shotgun. You don't penalize the whole province for the indiscretion of a few people. When deterrent fees were introduced the Liberals said that they would review their effectiveness and if they didn't appear to be working, they would abolish them. Of course, to the Liberals, this only meant one thing: could they reduce the cost of hospital and medical care to the public purse. If they could do that, the often disastrous consequences to the economic position of thousands of Saskatchewan people was of no concern to the Liberals at all.

Members of the former Government were fond of saying, "Utilization fees are working and our plans are being used in a more responsible manner." How did they determine that the plans were being used in a more responsible manner? Well, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that they determined this the same way they determined that the plans were being abused. This time somebody told them that he had been talking to a friend of his mother-in-law and since deterrent fees were introduced, she hadn't been able to get into the hospital for a rest.

In the 1971 pre-election leaflet — I have it here with me, Mr. Speaker, somewhere — the Liberals distributed these leaflets in large numbers. They said the alarming increase and the demand for health services appears to have slowed down. Mr. Speaker, take note of the word "appears" to have slowed down. It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that that particular leaflet was being distributed by the Liberals in every committee room . . .

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Mr. MacPherson: — Can we get you one Walter?

Mr. Smishek: — Oh, I found one! And these were the leaflets that were printed at public expense, public money was being used by the Liberals . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — . . . to finance their election campaign and to distort their story about the insidious deterrent fees, Mr. Speaker. I can find no evidence that any study in depth was ever done to learn about the effects of deterrent fees on the health of the Saskatchewan citizen. Now, Mr. Speaker, I suggested several years ago – in fact it was on March 11, 1969 – that an examination be made of this . I introduced in the Legislature a resolution which was seconded by the Hon. Member for Moose Jaw South (Mr. Snyder) which read this way, quote:

That this Assembly recommend to the consideration of the Government the establishment of a commission to examine health programs in Saskatchewan and elsewhere with the view to determining the cost of such programs and various methods of financing them; 2. The number, ages and status of persons who are deterred by utilization fees from seeking health services. 3. Methods of organizing health services which will control costs without placing obstacles in the way of obtaining needed services and at the same time make possible an improvement in the quality of health services.

Mr. Speaker, what did the Liberal Government do? It moved an amendment to the resolution commending the government of Canada for establishing a Federal-Provincial study on the cost of health services in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Federal Government finally got around to establishing such a committee but how in Heaven's name could such a committee be expected to determine the number, the age and the economic status of persons in Saskatchewan who did not seek the health services they required because of deterrent fees? Mr. Speaker, this should have been then the former Government's first step if they really wanted to know whether deterrent fees were working and how they were working.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — If the Members of the former government did, where did they get their information that the deterrent fees were working? There doesn't seem to be any evidence that they made any careful assessment.

Mr. Speaker, since I became Minister of Health, I have been informed by the officials of the Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan that they have been unable to demonstrate any saving resulting from the deterrent fee program. Ho, they have been saving money, Mr. Speaker, but the savings have been to the consolidated fund. In 1970 total deterrent fees for the Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan were in the neighborhood of \$4.5 million. This was the amount deducted from the budget of our Saskatchewan hospitals, the great bulk of which had to be paid

by the sick people of the province. From their viewpoint this was bad enough but it can't even be said that the Government saved an equivalent amount of money. When you consider such offsetting decreases as the loss in Federal reimbursements, allowances for bad debts, an increase in payments on behalf of The Saskatchewan Assistance Plan beneficiaries, the net saving through the consolidated fund would be only somewhere in the order of \$2.5 million. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the sick people of the province paid out the greater part of \$4.5 million to save the consolidated fund \$2.5 million.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the few Liberals remaining in this House may still not be convinced that bringing in deterrent fees was a pretty stupid way to run a health service. We have done just about everything possible to illustrate that from any point of view, whether social or economic, deterrent fees are disastrous. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, they have been a political disaster for the Liberal Party in this Province . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — . . . and I trust that this lesson will not be totally lost on the few Hon. Members who are sitting opposite to us.

Mr. Romanow: - - No Saskatchewan resident can be safe with the Liberals anywhere!

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, let us look at a few of the Saskatchewan hospital statistics that gave us some additional information as to whether or not deterrent fees had been working. Let me quote just a few.

In 1963 the average length of stay in hospitals was 9.4 days. In 197- the figure remained the same — still 9.4 days.

In other words, there is no statistical evidence that deterrent fees have contributed to a drop in the average length of stay of patients in our general hospitals. How about the average number of separations per 1,000 population? In 1963 the figure was 216. In 1968, the year the tax on the sick was introduced, the comparable figure was 208. In 1970, Mr. Speaker, the figure went way up — 222. No evidence here of deterrent fees working, Mr. Speaker.

In 1963 the number of patient days per 1,000 population was 2,072. In 1968 it dropped to 1,957 but in 1970 the comparable figure is 2,049. Again, Mr. Speaker, no evidence of deterrent fees working. The reason for all this, of course, is that the sick people in this Province have continued to rely on the professional advice of their doctors in respect to their admission and discharge from hospitals.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, the second basic reason for the introduction of deterrent fees was to reduce public costs of medical care and hospital services. Mr. Speaker, the Liberals came through in fine style on this one as well. Since the introduction of the medical and hospital deterrent fees, they have reduced public costs by transferring responsibility to the public in excess of \$21 million. The sad story that goes along with

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this is that over the same period of time, the province lost in excess of \$4.2 in federal cost-sharing because of this transfer of responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I think the point needs repeating. Since 1968, April 15th of that year, the general public had to pay out \$21 million in deterrent fees and in the same period of time the province lost over \$4.2 million in Federal cost-sharing. In any man's language \$4.2 million does not come in the category of peanuts. We remember the fate of C.D. Howe who said, "What's a million" And now when have seen what appeared to the people who say, "That's only \$4 million." This is what our Liberal friends gave up for the privilege of taxing the sick people of our province.

The third basic reason for introducing deterrent fees was that the Liberals believed that direct patient participation, financial participation, would encourage the more responsible use by the people of the service. The Liberals would have us believe the majority of our citizens enjoy going to the hospital or that they enjoy half a morning or an afternoon in the office waiting to see a doctor Mr. Speaker, it is my belief that 99.9 per cent of our citizens would be delighted never to have a visit a doctor or ever have to be admitted to the hospital.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, from my own personal point of view, a visit to the drugstore to pick up a prescription after visiting the doctor is quite enough to deter me from any frivolous visits.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are often fond of saying that those who use the service should pay for the service. This kind of thinking puts medical and hospital care in the same kind of a class as a fishing licence. Few people object to paying a fishing licence when they want to go fishing. They understand that they have made a personal decision to go fishing and therefore they do not object to the price of a licence which will help to pay for the cost of stocking our lakes. But no one makes a personal decision that way in respect of medical care when it comes to the members of their family or themselves when they get sick.

The Liberals tried to make a great deal out of the fact that no one suffers financially because the government pays the fees on behalf of persons on the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan. What about the groups just above the welfare plan level? There are many thousands of these people, Mr. Speaker, who are required to pay the deterrent fees — the old age pensioners, the young people who are just getting started or a man who just found his first job, the couple with a large family — these are the people who suffer because of the deterrent fees. These are the people are deterred from going to see the doctor when medical attention is required. It should not be necessary that the poor and those people on welfare should suffer the most. No one has bothered to find out how many mothers have used money set aside for milk in order that they could take their youngster to see the doctor. No one has bothered to find out what hardship they do to the elderly couple when one of them has to go in a hospital for a month and it takes almost the entire Old Age Pension cheque to pay the deterrent fee. Don't tell me there are no financial

hardships associated with deterrent fees. They may not be hardships to many of the people living in the Whitmore Park constituency or Albert Park constituency, but they are hardships to vast majorities to the people living in Regina North East and Regina North West . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — . . . and the Riversdale constituency, this I know.

In speaking, Mr. Speaker, in debate on the matter way back in April of 1968, I quoted a statement made by Sir Winston Churchill back in 1944. He was not known to be a Socialist - as I am sure you'll all agree. I think the statement is worth repeating. He said this:

Disease must be attacked whether it appears in the poorest or richest man or woman simply on the grounds that it is an enemy and everybody in the country, irrespective of means, age or occupation, shall have equal opportunity to benefit from the best and most up-to-date medical and allied services available.

Mr. Speaker, deterrent fees deny equal opportunity to health care. They deter the poor. It is class legislation, Mr. Speaker. Deterrent fees are a regressive tax and have no place in an enlightened society. Our citizens cannot continue to be denied access to hospital and medical care treatment because of inability to pay a fee every time they need a service.

Mr. Speaker, not all Liberals are in favor of deterrent fees. May I take just a few minutes to quote from an item that appeared in the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* on April 2, 1971. The item was under the heading, "Munro criticizes utilization fees." I quote in part:

Health Minister John Munro said Thursday he would like to discourage the imposition of deterrent or utilization fees under provincial and medical care insurance programs. Studies of the practice in force in Saskatchewan and Alberta have indicated that these have no effect on the use of hospital beds or calls on doctors' services. Mr. Munro said that in discussions with the provinces he has tried to discourage imposition of such fees and that he personally believes they inhibit access to health services by the individual.

We give credit to Mr. Munro for the view, Mr. Speaker, but he obviously didn't have too much success with his Liberal friends in the Province of Saskatchewan.

May I also inform this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, that Alberta has now eliminated both hospital and medical care deterrent fees as well.

Mr. Speaker, it would have been possible to abolish deterrent fees by amending the regulation as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart) has stated. However, we are so firmly opposed to the principle of deterrent fees that we want to take the authority for such charges right out of the law. We should have like, Mr. Speaker, to make the change earlier but it was

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not possible to do this for a number of reasons. First of all, in addition to the legal work involved in changing the acts, a change of this proportion requires many administrative adjustments to the processing system of the Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan and the Medical Care Insurance Plan as well. I also felt that it was proper for me to meet with a number of professional and administrative organizations, such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the Cancer Commission, the Saskatchewan Hospital Association, and the Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Commission, to inform them in advance of the action we propose to take.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that I had cordial meetings with each of the organizations that I have mentioned. May I also report that not a single group objects to it or opposes our proposal for the removal of deterrent fees. In fact, in each case they welcomed it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: —Mr. Speaker, I now want to make a few comments on the second amendment which when passes will mean that citizens of Saskatchewan who are 65 years of age and over will no longer have to pay the joint hospital and medical care tax. Not all the details have been worked out to this point but generally speaking, if a citizen was 65 years of age as of June 23 of 1971 from paying the 1972 tax. He Hon. Member asked, why the 23rd. It is a very significant date in the history of the Province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — If a citizen will reach the age of 65 at any time after June 23 or at any time during the calendar year, 1972, he will also be exempt from payment of the tax in 1972. Proof of age may be required. Newcomers to the province will have to register with a plan and be required to submit acceptable proof of their age at their time of registration. We will make this process and procedure as easy as possible. This amendment we are proposing will affect approximately 93,000 Saskatchewan residents or 10 per cent of Saskatchewan population. It will cost about \$3 million. Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the contribution the older citizens of Saskatchewan have made to the development of our province. These people were deeply involved and committed throughout their lives to work for the building of a greater and a better Saskatchewan. Many of these people were hit hard by the economic depression of the '30s. Many lost their homes and their life savings. Many of these people are living on small pensions and we feel most emphatically that along with abolishing deterrent fees we must also arrange that these people will have free medical and hospital care.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — This will be a major step forward to improving their living conditions and their quality of life. Mr. Speaker, this is just one more link in a long and continuing chain of events in which the new Democratic Party which I represent has worked

in the interests of the senior citizens of this country. My I remind the Members in the House that early in 1927 the representatives of labor in the House of commons, led by Mr. J.S. Woodsworth, used this influence to convince the Liberal Government of Prime Minister McKenzie King of the need for old age pension legislation. We believed at that time, as we do today, that these people to whom our country owes so much have a right to live in dignity and in comfort. At that time, Mr. Speaker, the labor members held the balance of power in the House of Commons. Mr. Woodsworth told Mr. King that as one of the conditions which Mr. King received the support of his party he must introduce legislation which would provide pensions for senior citizens. Mr. King may have been a spiritualist but he was first of all a realist. Thanks to the persuasive powers of Mr. Woodsworth and his colleagues in the House of commons in 1927, the senior citizens in this country have enjoyed the benefits of a monthly pension cheque ever since that time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: —Mr. Speaker, shortly after I became Minister of health, I asked my officials in the Department to review the terms and conditions of our cost-sharing arrangements with the Federal Government to see if this change in legislation for the over 65 age group would prejudice in any way our claims for financial participation under the Hospital Care Act. They concluded this would not. However, to ensure that our interpretation of the agreement was the same as that of the Federal government, I wrote to the Hon. John Munro, Minister of National health and Welfare, and informed him of our proposed action. I asked him to confirm the conclusions we had reached in respect of cost-sharing. Mr. Speaker, I should like to take time for a second to read the reply I received from the Hon. John Munro. He says this:

Thank you for your letter of July 5 advising me of a specific change which you propose to make to your legislation to exclude all persons age 65 and over in the province from payment of the medical care premium and province from payment of the medical care premium and the Hospitalization Act. Subject to review of the specific amendment and assuming that such exemptions from payment of premiums will not exclude this group of persons from being insured residents with the same entitlement to benefits as those residents who pay the premiums, your proposal to exempt all residents age 65 and over from payment of this joint tax would not jeopardize our sharing arrangements under the Hospital Insurance and Medical Care Program.

Such a change, Mr. Speaker, would however require amendment to schedule D of our agreement under The Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Act and this administrative matter can be handled after the applicable legislative amendments have been put into effect. I am pleased to have this assurance from the Federal Minister of Health and Welfare.

I shall conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that a little over three years ago when the Liberals moved second reading to deterrent fees, I said at that time that they had just played a funeral march for the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the name of the song you hear being played throughout this Province today is “Hallelujah, Happy Days are Here Again.”

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Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — It has been a great Homecoming '71, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. T.M. Weatherald (Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, as you well know under the rules normal courtesy calls that we be allowed to look over the Minister's remarks after he has made them on second reading of a Bill. But in order to speed up the process of the House as we are anxious to do, I shall consider his remarks and made a few of my own.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say very briefly what we feel our position is as far as utilization fees are concerned. The honest attempt that controlling the costs of medical care and hospitalization. I disagree very much with what the Hon. Minister has said when he said that the \$180 limitation that was put on, including both the hospital and the office calls, were a tremendous hardship on very many people. That speaker well knew, social welfare or who are unable to pay their deterrent fees had them paid for them. It is a gross exaggeration to say to this House that it was a tremendous hardship imposed on the people of Saskatchewan. \$180 is still not that tremendous amount of money.

Mr. Speaker, we will be asking the question of the Minister I wish he was in his seat and I hope that one of the Cabinet will pass it on to him — as to what the cost of medical care and hospitalization was in 1964 and what is currently today because we feel that the astronomical rise that has taken place in the cost of health care in Saskatchewan will show that the problems that they are encountering have not gone away and that they will continue for a long time to come, Mr. Speaker. We are most interested in their effort to control the skyrocketing cost of health care in the Province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Romanow: — Deterrent fees don't.

Mr. Weatherald: — We shall be very interested, Mr. Attorney General to find out what does do it and we shall be watching for your solutions with a great deal of interest as will all the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to support the taking off of the utilization fees.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — We are going to support the taking off of utilization fees for the obvious reasons that we put forth what was an honest presentation and an honest attempt at controlling health costs. It is obvious the people of Saskatchewan did not agree with that approach and therefore we are very willing to find out what the new Government's approach will be and we are willing to let them go ahead and do it.

Mr. MacMurchy: — Bound by the wishes of the people.

Mr. Weatherald: — “Bound by the wishes of the people,” the Minister of Education says, Mr. Speaker, and we are most delighted to have them put forth their attempt and we shall watch with great interest in the next four years as to how the increases costs of health care financed because, Mr. Speaker, as I have said, troling these costs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, after saying a few words about utilization fees and our attempt at controlling health costs which will be dealt with at more length by a number of my colleagues, I want to deal substantially with the second aspect of the Bill and that is taking off of the premium as far as hospitalization is concerned. I believe, Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that another Bill is coming forward to take off the costs of the medical care premium and this one has strictly to do with hospitalization so I shall continue my remarks in regard to hospitalization only.

The Bill, Mr. Speaker, has a substantial number of weaknesses. The first one, Mr. Speaker, is that a substantial number of families in this province with the breadwinner over 65 will receive no benefit if the wife is under 65 and there is another dependent in the family. I have already come across many people in my own constituency, Mr. Speaker, who have brought to my attention that the wife is about 63 or 64 and she will not qualify, Mr. Speaker, for any benefit under this Act. If by chance, Mr. Speaker, the husband happens to be 65 and the wife happens to be 50 there is a fair chance that there may be a dependent in the family or two or three, Mr. Speaker. Then, Mr. Speaker, we have the breadwinner in the family who gets the reduction but he will pay for both his wife and children in the family. Now, Mr. Speaker, the very family that needs the help, the breadwinner is retired on a low income, has family responsibilities for both his wife and children, but his is right back to where it started, Mr. Speaker, and I may even make that prediction that he will shortly be worse off than ever before when the government opposite raises the premium. Now this is one particular group which I have great sorrow for. You know, Mr. Speaker, I listened to a great many speeches from the member for Regina North West – I believe it is Mr. Whelan – I haven’t quite got all the constituencies sorted out yet.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — I am waiting on a seating plan, fellows.

But anyway his is to give a great number of speeches and I hope that under this Bill that he is going to get up and give a speech, the usual speech he used to give us, his concern for poor people which we all share in this House, the concern for people who need assistance, and I hope he will get up and tell us how this Bill is really going to help this man over 65 who has a substantial number of children. Maybe even the Minister will bring in an amendment to help the situation, Mr. Speaker. We are all hoping he will.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the question is, once the premiums are taken off, then we have the question of how this revenue is going to be raised. I must say that I am terribly fearful that

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the poor people of Saskatchewan through this sales tax – the farmers, the unionists, the people who are hard worker, a and the families in this Province – are going to end up paying more sales tax, Mr. Speaker, for everyone over 65 regardless of whether they needed the help or not, maybe a little more income tax. Mr. Speaker, this was a well calculated ploy before the election and I must admit it was very successful.

An Hon. Member: — Right!

Mr. Weatherald: — Brought out about five days before voting day or six possibly in the hope that the young people of Saskatchewan would not see through it because they are going to be the ones paying the bills. It was presented to the electorate and obviously accepted. But, Mr. Speaker, the young people in this Province should cry out in revolt against paying this substantial amount of increased taxation that they will be called on for some many people over 65 who are not in need of any help whatsoever.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — I am surprised, Mr. Speaker, t the Minister of Health (Mr. Smishek), a Robin Hood in reverse I would almost call him, taking from the poor and giving to the rich across this Province. Mr. Speaker, he referred to is won constituency. Now we take a look around the City of Regina and wee see many people in his constituency will need this type of assistance and then we take many people in Albert Park, Whitmore Park, many of the people in the southern party of Regina, Mr. Speaker, people on high incomes, the old age pensioner over 65. maybe if they are farmers they have sold their land, Mr. Speaker, and are in a reasonably good financial position. They may be even receiving the Canada Pension Plan if they have contributed. Their family responsibilities are relatively low, Mr. Speaker, because their children are all grown up. They don't have many expenses, over 65, Mr. Speaker, because they probably don't drive the care quite to the same extent that they used to. Mr. Speaker, the towns of Saskatchewan are full of people over 65 who are well-to-do. They are well-to-do people and they do not ask, Mr. Speaker, this Government or any other government to tax their children so that they can have free hospitalization.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — Mr. Speaker, in my constituency the fathers and the mothers over 65 are not asking any government to take off the hospitalization premium and put it on the young people, their sons and daughters with families with high financial responsibility as far as education is concerned. They don't expect their children to pay free hospitalization for them.

To the Minister, Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct another question because I hope when he closes debate he will answer it and hat is, that out of the 93,000 residents of Saskatchewan that are receiving assistance, how many, Mr. Speaker, are the people who are in dire need of assistance?

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, in his previous speech the Minister got up and he told us about the people of his

constituency and how they needed assistance and all of us on this die of the House will agree that there are many people in that constituency and many people all over this Province who need some assistance financially and they are over 65.

Later on, Mr. Speaker, when we come to moving amendments in committee, I intend to suggest that we move an amendment allowing those people in Saskatchewan who receive the Old Age Supplement, free hospitalization.

Mr. Smishek: — Means test?

Mr. Weatherald: — Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words about the means Test. I knew the Minister would bring that question up. The question is that we don't need any means Test. The information is on file. It is filed in Ottawa and the information is totally available. We need no Means Test whatsoever to pay free hospitalization to those people that need it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — We are not against, on this side, those who need it. We are against passing out the cheques and taxing the people who can't afford to pay increased taxation to so many who don't need that type of help.

Mr. Messer: — How about Homeowner Grants?

Mr. Weatherald: — I should like to cover that, Mr. Speaker, but I think that you would rule me out of order.

Mr. C.P. MacDonald: — Why don't you remove it if you don't like it?

Mr. Weatherald: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that you may even qualify under this, although I haven't checked you age. I have, Mr. Speaker, been taking a very good look, because during the election campaign as the promises come forth, I started taking a look at the words called 'ability to pay' which were used very widely by the members opposite and which we fully endorse as a fine way of increasing tax measure, because it certainly looked as if, if elected they would be required to increase those taxes. So I took a good look at those who had the ability to pay.

Mr. Speaker, ability to pay is a great word because there are very few people who think they are in that group. But lo and behold it turned out what that there are not very many rich people in the Province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, do you know how many there are? Do you know how many people in Saskatchewan really make over \$10,000? 4.6 per cent. And I shouldn't be at all surprised that a substantial number of the teacher representatives that we have on the other side have just learned that they fall in this very unkindly group as far as increased taxes are concerned.

Mr. Speaker, anyway we have another group in the \$8,000 to \$10,000 and we have about 5.2 per cent of Saskatchewan people who are in this. So what makes a group of only 9.8 per cent of people in Saskatchewan who make over \$80,000.

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Mr. Speaker, the point is this: that we are going to be asked for increased taxation in the Province of Saskatchewan shortly to help a lot of people who don't need help. We are going to endure the taxation put on many, many working people that do need help, and we, on this side, Mr. Speaker, are against that principle.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — Mr. Speaker, I have already stated my intention when the Bill goes into committee. Now, I wish to give the substance of the motion that I shall present to the committee when the opportunity arises. It is this, that in this regard where one person of a married couple has attained the age of 65 and is eligible for old age security supplement, the couple and the immediate family thereof shall be entitled to receive benefits under this Act and there shall be no liability for payment of the tax.

Now I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Health (Mr. Smishek) will very closely consider this amendment when it comes up in Committee of the Whole. I am sure that the Minister of Health, after listening to him for seven years, is very much in favor of helping only those people who need help. We are convinced of that, those of us who may have sat here for seven years and have listened to his many, many speeches. He is against helping people who don't need assistance. He is against taxing so many people that will be called on to pay the increased taxation for this \$3 million exemption.

Mr. Speaker, the time of adjournment is shortly upon us and we ask, Mr. Speaker, that because the Minister has only presented the second reading this afternoon, that in order to facilitate the opportunity to have more of our speakers on this side study what he has said, I beg leave to adjourn the debate. I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, I'll ask for 5:30.

The Assembly recessed from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Mr. L. Larson (Pelly): — Mr. Speaker, may I in one breath and in one sentence offer congratulations to yourself and to every elected member of the House, and in the same breath offer condolences to the bereaved family of the Hon. Mr. Thatcher.

Now I want to spend a few brief minutes saying a few words on this Bill that was so ably introduced by the Minister of Health (Mr. Smishek). I feel that is one of the more important steps that are being taken by this Government to bring back to Saskatchewan a recognition of the more fundamental and the more important aspects of life and society.

I think that the recognition of these principles adopted by the CCF Government years ago is now demonstrated by the fact that since that time practically all of Canada and now most of the North American continent have adopted similar types of legislation.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Larson: — I think there was another important aspect of the

original Medicare Plan that people appreciated and really like. This was the particular clause whereby you paid while you were well and benefited when you were sick. Two very important human aspects – pay while you are well so that you may benefit when you are sick and not earning.

These were some of the fundamental principles that were recognized and was written into the Act as it was. Deterrent fees and utilization fees certainly destroyed this principle. They destroyed it totally and completely. No one has ever convinced me that there was any human justification for placing a tax on any human being when he was sick and unfortunate enough not to be able to earn or even to take care of himself. No one has ever convinced me that where more money was needed, and we were not able to provide the services with the premium rates that were in existence, that you would correct any deficiencies, if there was a deficiency in the first place, by taxing a man when he is flat on his back. No one has ever convinced me of this.

Mr. Steuart: — Are you bringing out the violins?

Mr. Larson: — Yes, I could play an even better tune than that Dewey.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Larson: — It has often been said that society and people are judged by the way that they look after their aged and infirm. I think this is a very fair judgment. I think it is a judgment that will measure the morale and the human values of any society.

Now the Bill before us goes a long way, in my opinion, to justify that judgment. I think that if we really and sincerely believe what so many of us like to say, like to parrot, like to mouth, then it is incumbent on us that we prove it by our actions.

This Bill proves that this Government means what it says, that it is taking immediate steps – after only a very few weeks in office, a few weekends that in many respects have been very hectic from more points of view than one. And yet during this time, this Government has seen fit to bring forth this kind of legislation and this kind of return and restoration of a human and social principle that was recognized all over Canada and was destroyed in the Province of Saskatchewan by the former Liberal Government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Larson: — I could say a great deal more along the same line with regard to deterrent fees. There will be much more said. But I think the loudest voice, and the voice that as heard most clearly and most distinctly, was the voice of the people of Saskatchewan June 23rd.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Larson: — I don't believe, Mr. Speaker, that there is anyone in this Assembly who can speak with a more forceful, a more

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eloquent, and a more meaningful voice than the people of Saskatchewan did.

When I look across the way, after the fuss and after all the eulogies that were made with regard to deterrent fees and their benefits and their needs, we see the results.

I want, Mr. Speaker, to spend a few minutes of Section 3 (a) of this Bill which deals with the relief of premiums for people over 65 years of age.

I think, again, that this is setting a precedent. I think, again, that this is recognizing a human and a social value. After all, the people 65 and over have been, to a very large extent, responsible for having laid the foundation, for having worked and sacrificed for many of the things that we in Saskatchewan enjoy today, including medical care and so on. I think it is fitting that a society should recognize these people. I think it is fitting that we should, at a very early stage, say to them, "Thank you, thank you, for your contribution!" This is just one small way, Mr. Speaker, that we can say thank you and say it in a meaningful fashion. That there won't be some loopholes and some discrepancies, no one doubts. Any progressive move is bound to create a certain amount of loopholes.

A good government as it goes along will correct these. But in the establishment of the principle sometimes risks have to be taken and sometimes you have to do things that later must be corrected. But the fundamental principle is that you do start, and that you do lay the foundation, and that you don't criticize before you have reasons to criticize. And when you do criticize, you criticize constructively.

I think the thought of placing money and other obstacles before the value, the principle and the needs of these people of 65 and over, is morally wrong. I am very proud that this Government and the Party that I have the honor and the privilege of representing looks at these moral values and is prepared to correct any deficiency that may from time to time arise.

I want to say that many of the senior citizens have found the premium to be an embarrassment, and to some extent, a burden to them. I have spoken to many who have been in the unfortunate position of having to do things that destroy their pride. It destroys some of the principle that they fought for and believed in all their life, by having to be reduced to a point where they are made feel that they are taking charity. This is not what these people want. This is not what they stand for. This is not what they sacrificed for. So I say, that removing of the embarrassment and the burden from them is going to go a long way towards giving them peace of mind, giving them some contentment, as well as a feeling of well-being and being necessary.

I am sure that many of them will feel that we really belong to a society, and we really belong to people, who are prepared to make the kind of sacrifices that some of us will have to make in order to provide these people with the independence, and the self-assurance and the pride that this will give.

I could go on in the same vein. I could go on for a considerable time, but I don't think that it is really

necessary, other than to say this is one of the tangible demonstrations of the difference between the two parties that prevail and exist in Saskatchewan and in this country.

I don't think at this time or any place has it ever been more adequately demonstrated that there is a basic difference – a very basic and a very fundamental difference. The people of Saskatchewan, fortunately, have the opportunity and the privilege of trying both of the philosophies. They have returned on June 23rd to the one that they have found, in the past, to be worthwhile and they are prepared to go along with and to trust.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in supporting this Bill before the House.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. C.P. MacDonald (Milestone): — Mr. Speaker, this is the first opportunity that I have had to participate in this theatrical production, sponsored or promoted by Mr. Allan Blakeney, directed by Mr. Roy Romanow, with the chorus line provided by the teachers, with the dialogue provided by the preachers and by the songsters made up by the Wafflers.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that if there is ever an indication that this is a theatrical production, this whole Session, it is this Bill on utilization fees. I suppose, Mr. Speaker, that occasionally when someone wants to do something, he like to get patted on the back, he likes to get the opportunity to stand on his feet and get public acclaim. But never have I ever seen anything like this Session called to remove deterrent fees when it could have been done the day that the NDP took over the government by passing of an Order-in-Council.

However, Mr. Speaker, oh, there is the Minister of Health (Mr. Smishek). Look at them go. Well we want you to answer a few questions as well when we go into committee. First I want to say and reiterate what my colleague, Mr. Weatherald, the Member from Cannington has indicated, that this party as the Opposition in the House will support this Bill not necessarily because we like it, but because we have no choice, you happen to have 45 Members and we have 14.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — But I do want to say this, that because when shall support this Bill does not mean that we are not concerned about the implications of it, because when the window dressing is gone, when the trappings are finished, when the hail of my publicity is washed out the window, there are going to be many implications fro the people of Saskatchewan.

One of the things that does concern me is that the Government on that side of the House has now agreed in principle to throw out the principle of selectivity and to establish the principle of universality in all welfare and health benefits in this Province and perhaps to establish that principle across Canada. Whether they realize it or not, Mr. Speaker, there is only so much money in Canada for welfare, there is only so much

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money in Saskatchewan for health and it is important that that money be directed to those people who need it. Perhaps rather than paying the medical care costs or premiums for people, who this winter, may be down in the hotels in Florida, lying on the beach or in the Waldorf Astoria in New York, or in California, or perhaps even in Europe, or Clarence Fines, in Fort Lauderdale. They should have sat down and looked at the needs of housing, they should have looked at the needs of native people, they should have looked and directed their attention to the real needs. Nobody questions, Mr. Speaker, the needs of assisting people who are in need or have a need in the payment of medicare premiums.

The Liberal Government when they sat on that side of the House inaugurated the first medical indigency program in Canada, whereby a person that was on a marginal income could apply for a health card and have all his health benefits paid for, his utilization fees and so forth. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, that principle should have been extended, but what we are concerned about is what is going to happen as a result of this legislation to the young person, the man who is starting off in life with three or four children who is making \$3,000 or \$4,000 a year and in all that period of his life he needs more help and more financial assistance than at any other time when his family responsibilities are completed. As my colleague from Cannington pointed out, if the Minister of Health (Mr. Smishek) had really wanted to help those people who were in need he would have selected those people over 65 years of age to still have them. It is possible for a man at 65 years of age to still have six and seven dependents, and yet he says oh, no, the man who has reached retirement, who has a wife, who has six or seven dependents will have to pay his own medical care premium for his wife and all his dependents. But the man who has retired at 65 or 66, 67, and has no financial liability, who now has a pension plan, who now has the Canada Pension Plan, who perhaps has all kinds of assets, who has a pension that looks after him very comfortably that he will not have to pay his premiums.

We are going to take one stand on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we are going to insist that they continue to keep up with their promises and their platform. I want to read one that was made by the leader of the Opposition.

An NDP government would abolish all medical and hospital premiums for persons 65 years of age, starting January 1 1972, Party leader Allan Blakeney said here Friday night.

Everyone 65 years or over in Saskatchewan will receive medical coverage free as a matter of right. We wonder, Mr. Speaker, is it free? Is it free to the man 25 years of age with seven children, is it free to the man 35 with eight children.

He described the policy as a centerpiece of what he called his bill of retirement rights. More details will be announced in the campaign later he said. But Mr. Blakeney also promised, and this is the key, "that his party would abolish all deterrent fees and would include the cost of Level III Nursing Care under Medicare," he goes on. In answer to a question from the audience, Mr. Blakeney said he would hope to be able to provide the extra service and at least hold the line on the present medicare fee of \$72

per family and perhaps eventually reduce it to the 1964 level of \$52.

Mr. Speaker, we intend to see that they keep that promise and that it is a fact and not a promise, that if it was a bribe, we intend to see that they fulfil that bribe. You know, Mr. Speaker, that is only the first step in perhaps making Saskatchewan the welfare state.

All of us know what the welfare state has done to Uruguay, Sweden, to Scandinavian countries. We know what it has done to Britain, France. Look at this, “Why put up with the high cost of drugs, start a drug care program, vote Mike Feschuk.” Mr. Henry is ill and so is Saskatchewan Medicare Plan. Then look at what the NDP in Alberta said, not only did they eliminate them from 65 years of age – here is their program. I have to put my glasses on so I can find it . . .

An. Hon. Member: — He is getting old!

Mr. MacDonald: — . . . When I ended up getting glasses, and had I waited three months I should have got them free from the Socialists.

But the NDP in Alberta say, oh no, we will eliminate all medicare premiums. So all I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that the only point that we want to make here this evening, is that we want to be absolutely certain that they do keep the head tax at \$72 so that the young people in Saskatchewan don’t pay the bill. We are also going to watch with care that they don’t do what they in the Province of Manitoba. You know what they did there? They reduced it from \$200 or \$250 or whatever it was to \$100 approximately. Then they turned around and they increased income tax from 33 to 39 per cent, they raised the corporation tax from 11 to 13 per cent . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — . . . what they had better realize, Mr. Speaker, is that the major feeling facing Canada today in unemployment. If you look at that Throne Speech they did nothing about it. You know, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that is going to be interesting in this House is that when that chorus starts from the other side, they intend to drown out the truth, and we want to hear you, from now on we’ll be the cheer leaders, just keep speaking.

All I am saying, Mr. Speaker, the Province of Manitoba became the highest taxed province in the Dominion of Canada eight months after the NDP became the Government. We are going to do all that we can to prevent, that by give-away, by Socialism, by drug programs, level III nursing care, you name it, that the Province of Saskatchewan is not to become the highest taxed province in Canada. We hope that they will maintain their promise of a head tax of \$72 and that we look forward to the 1st of November when that head tax is reviewed that it goes down to \$52. We want to ensure that Saskatchewan doesn’t take the road to become the greatest welfare state in the world.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. A. Oliver (Shaunavon): — Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a

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a privilege to speak on behalf of the people of my constituency, the constituency of Shaunavon . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — That would be a change for the people of Shaunavon!

Mr. Oliver: — . . . and so the people of Saskatchewan in general who made it possible for them to sit on the Government side of the House.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Oliver: — This particular Bill that is before us now is one of the most important pieces of legislation to come before this Session, in my opinion. It will have far-reaching effects on the lives of many of our senior citizens. During the campaign I was really shocked to find people, especially old people who were really living under poverty stricken conditions, really bad. Some pensioners stated that they were so poor that they had to skip a meal to provide money enough for small expenses, and the small expenses that were really bothering them were the deterrent fees.

The financial commitments are heavy upon these people. The Hon. Member from Cannington (Mr. Weatherald) stated that the small towns and villages are just full of wealthy senior citizens. I should like to know where these small towns and villages are, they sure aren't in the southwest.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Oliver: — Now these old folks planned their retirement, 10, 20 years ago and at that time the cost of living was lower. During their productive years of life they produced enough wealth to care for themselves providing the cost of living had remaining static. But unfortunately, the cost of living has been going up at an alarming rate, in fact it has risen about 3 per cent since the 1st of January this year. Now this same Hon. Member also stated, he didn't think the senior citizens would want their children to be taxed to provide free medicare for them, I believe this is true. But what parent would want his child to go without something, even the smallest pleasure just to give dear old dad some comfort, not very many parents would do that. But all too often, youth are neglectful of their parents and all too often and also too late they begin to realize how important their parents are and how much they have sacrificed just so the children would not have to work as hard as they did. They want a better life for their children. I doubt if there are any young people who would really seriously object to paying a little more taxation if needed this need arises, to make mom's and dad's life a little easier financially.

People of my generation often forget just what it was like for our parents to raise a family during the depression years of the '30s. Although when I was pit pm the campaign, I found that it was being argued by a number of young couples who have young families and who were unemployed, that there was little difference during the last seven years. Many of them said, in discussing the province's economy and the economic conditions brought on by the previous Government, "What is the difference

between the conditions that prevailed during the 'Dirty Thirties' and the last seven years under the Liberals and the leadership of 'pulp mill Davey?' By the way I should like to congratulate him on a very fine leadership campaign speech.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Oliver: — Is it true that there have been many abuses in the medicare and in going to doctors and so forth. But let's look at the patients who are going. Who are these that are abusing the services? Now going to the doctor has never been a joyous occasion for me, and I am sure it isn't for the majority of people. However, there are a few people who are continually running to the doctor over various petty ailments. I strongly doubt if their ailments are of a physical nature, they are of a mental nature. But they are still sick, they need help. If they were properly treated that abuse would soon end. Doctors in my constituency tell me that people are staying away from the clinics and the doctors until their ailment is in an advanced stage. In the case of cancer it is often too late sometimes, but there is much needless pain and suffering not to mention the mental anguish and the financial cost involved later.

To sum up, Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about our people and to me this is only one of the many ways that we are going to help them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. J.C. McIsaac (Wilkie): — Mr. Speaker, this Bill as has been pointed out is a rather interesting one from a number of viewpoints. Firstly, in that it doesn't need to be brought before the House at all to bring about the changes that will result from enacting this legislation. As a matter of fact this Bill, like the entire Session, Mr. Speaker, is nothing really more than window-dressing for the NDP Members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McIsaac: — On one hand, they are saving the poor people over 65, the sick, the ill and so on, money by this legislation and at the same time spending needless thousands of taxpayers' dollars by the expense of this particular Session that we are now sitting in.

Now, the NDP, of course, are used to putting political expediency before political responsibility so it doesn't really come as a surprise as far as we are concerned. They are abolishing a very small fee really, presently paid by the recipients of hospital care. A fee that in most cases doesn't amount to more than 5 or 6 per cent of the cost of medical care, the cost of hospitalization, a fee that, of course, has an annual family limit in total of \$180 as the price — and I suggest it is a pretty small price — for the quality of care that the Minister was talking about and I know he is genuinely concerned about that when he introduced the Bill, a fee that is already paid by the Government of Saskatchewan if the patient is financially unable to meet it. This fee is a practice in health care, Mr. Speaker, that is employed by other responsible governments in other Canadian provinces and other countries of the world, including some countries governed by Socialist administrations,

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but responsible Socialist administrations that have had some common sense and experience in government and experience in operating an overall comprehensive health care plan.

The Minister said in his remarks this afternoon, I believe I quote him correctly, “that utilization fees have been a financial disaster.” Now it is true, and I’ll be the first to admit that they have been a political disaster, but certainly I don’t say and I don’t think that he can document the case that they have been in any way a financial disaster to anyone in this Province in the course and period of time in which they have been in operation.

I have to wonder, Mr. Speaker, when we look at another plan, an insurance plan, the automobile accident insurance plan, a plan that was introduced by the Members opposite when they were the Government and has been with us for many, many years. This is a plan with \$200 deduction and it has worked well. It has worked well for I have never heard them complain or consider here the financial disaster of \$200 for the unfortunate individual who happens to have a car accident, an auto accident or be involved in one. I have never heard a word or an outcry in this particular respect. We have the same principle applying here, the very same principle applying in this particular Bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this Bill before us also proposes to abolish the payment of premiums by certain individuals over age 65. This again was an election promise of the NDP and one that obviously proved very popular, so that, so that Bill 3 again marks the fulfilling of the first of the NDP election promises. And in this sense, I am glad to see it because in education and in other areas, they have reneged on so many to-date that we are rather pleased to see this one implemented.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McIsaac: — It’s a welcome change, Mr. Speaker, to see them bringing about the fulfilment of one of those promises.

In fulfilling this promise they are demonstrating the characteristic that I am sure will characterize future welfare changes and welfare legislation that they may bring in, and that is the principle referred to by the Member for Milestone (Mr. MacDonald), the old principle of universality – everybody over 65 gets it whether or not he is in need of this kind of assistance in foregoing the payment of the premium.

It has been pointed out by the member for Cannington (Mr. Weatherald), my seatmate and the Member for Milestone that there are many people over age 65 who can use the help and we certainly support removing the premiums for those people. But there are also many people over 65, Mr. Speaker, who are well-to-do enough that they can well afford to pay the premium themselves, enough that they can well afford to pay the premium themselves, despite the fact – as I listened to the member for Canora – these are people that got along in this Province in this life and got along well under governments of all stripes, did not particularly get there by any government aid of any kind and I particularly get there by any government aid of any kind and I don’t believe really want that kind of aid or assistance right now.

The Member for Canora (Mr. Matsalla), as I recall, talked of saying thank you to all of those people over 65 – I wonder

about the group with a spouse who happens to be under 65 or who happens to have dependents. Surely, I think Mr. Speaker, the member for Canora is sincere – and I've heard him in the House before – I believe that he is - all of those people over 65 deserve the same kind of sincere thank you.

Mr. Matsalla: — Mr. Speaker, on appoint of order. I am wondering if the Hon. Member is referring to me as the Member for Canora or is he referring to mar. Larson as the Member for Pelly?

Mr. Speaker: — I think the Member for Canora has not spoken on this debate.

Mr. McIsaac: — I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. The member is quite right. It was the Member for Pelly (Mr. Larson) whom I was referring to who spoke earlier in this debate, the Member for Pelly. I can't believe, Mr. Speaker, that . . .

An. Hon. Member: — . . . road map!

Mr. McIsaac: — We need a road map, yes! In a day or two we will probably get some of the haze of faces sorted out, Mr. Speaker. I hope you would facilitate some direction over here and give us a seating plan so that we will know where some of these fellow sit and where they come from.

I can't believe that the Minister, who introduced this Bill this afternoon, intends to overlook those people over 65 who happen to have a spouse or dependents under 65 and surely he'll want to give them the same "kind of contentment, the same kind of well-being," that the member for Pelly referred to so eloquently, and save them the "financial embarrassment," I believe he mentioned, of "paying the premium," and again, I quote the Member for Pelly in this respect.

I hope sincerely, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister – and I know he is sincerely interested in and always has been during his time in this House – in health care for the people of the Province. I hope he will consider amending this legislation when we get in Committee to bring about that particular effect and action.

I suggest, too, Mr. Speaker, that the passing of this Bill – and I don't have the confidence in the Opposition that my seatmate the Member from Milestone (Mr. MacDonald) has – this Bill is the first of many that will place a much heavier load on them with the young family, the 25 to 45-year old age bracket in this Province. And I predict that it's only the beginning of a series of hastily conceived give-aways to the old – there is no other area left but the in between 35 to 45-year old man with a family. And God knows it costs more and more today than it ever did to raise a family. Bills and taxes are high enough now but I predict, Mr. Speaker, that it will not take four years, it will only take one year for that particular age bracket in this Province to become the most highly taxed group of people, not only in Saskatchewan but in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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Mr. J. Richards (Saskatoon University): — Mr. Speaker, I should very much like to participate in this debate on second reading of this Bill. I intend to devote the major part of my comments to the question of utilization fees, therefore, I shall begin with a very brief comment on the other aspect of the Bill relating to the removal of the premium on those over 65.

Now, Mr. Speaker, technically the premium, as a flat tax of so many dollars per year, is a regressive tax. It constitutes higher proportion of a low than of a high income. And, notwithstanding the heartfelt comments of the Hon. Member for Cannington (Mr. Weatherald) about the wealthy people over 65, statistically those in that age bracket are among the poorest in any age bracket and therefore the removal of the premium on those over 65 years of age is a small, and emphasize the word “small”, step in the direction of having a more just, a more equitable tax system.

Perhaps more important, Mr. Speaker, is that this Bill indicates a direction which this Government intends to take – a direction involving more thought and concern for old people. For surely, Mr. Speaker, the treatment of old people in all Capitalist societies is one of the major condemnations of these societies. I have no desire to return us to an idyllic pre-Capitalist past because there was no such thing, but some of the more primitive people have been a great deal more humane in their treatment of old people than we, who are anxious to shove them into nursing homes and forget them. There are some good nursing homes but many of them are merely modern-day death houses.

And when you hear the comments of the people on the other side of the House who seek to defend the deterrent fee as a principle which is embodied in the Automobile Insurance Plan, as if cars and people are analogous things, one begins to realize the very sad state to which our society has sunk when we begin to think . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Richards: — . . . of the treatment of our body and the maintenance of our health as being analogous to the treatment and maintenance of our health of our cars.

Now, to return to the question of utilization fees. A utilization fee is a price and if you will bear with me, Mr. Speaker, I shall outline three very elementary points from my Economics 101 Class with respect to the price system. Prices are supposed to do three things, Mr. Speaker. First, they are supposed to allocate economic goods – and health services are certainly one example of an economic good. Prices allocate according to the criterion of ability to pay. Secondly, prices are supposed to allocate resources used in production of goods and services. One blatant example of the effectiveness of the price system in doing that is to be seen in the number of very wealthy backstreet abortionists who will perform their duties are willing to pay the price. Incidentally, I hope that before four years are up, this Government will have been able to play its part in getting rid of any federal laws opposing abortion.

The third function which the price system plays, of course, is that it distributes income among those who are involved in the provision of goods and services. Prices, in the form of wages received by the poorest of hospital workers and in the form of the fees of the wealthiest of specialist physicians, are the mechanism whereby income earned in the provision of health services is distributed.

Now, in the provision of health services, when have learned from bitter experience that the price system must go. In fact, this is one of the first areas of our economic life that we have learned needs an element of Socialism. Now, why must the price system go? Well, to put it into one sentence which is true but trite – health services must be allocated on a basis of need and not on a basis of ability to pay. However, I am quite willing to admit, Mr. Speaker, that if we are to do away with the price system, if we are to do away with the price system as a means of allocating particular health services, we must replace it with some other system which can perform better the functions which were performed, however badly, by the price system. We must decide, if we are going to do away with the inequities of the price system, how we are going to allocate health services among the people of the province, how are we going to allocate the productive resources that we have available through the budget in the provision of new health services. We're going to have to decide what will be the relative income shares, the income received by various people participating in the process of producing health care. One of the great injustices which exists at the moment is, of course, the shockingly low wages received by public health employees.

Now, the utilization fee was an attempt, Mr. Speaker, to introduce through the back door a kind of ghost of the price system. We had succeeded in getting rid of it in 1962; and we were introducing its shadow in the utilization fee. Mr. Speaker, I have a certain grudging admiration of the previous administration for having seen fit to introduce the utilization fee. Certainly, as the Liberals are the first to admit, it was not a politically popular move to undertake and it obviously indicates that their government – and I am quite willing to admit it – had a good deal more on its mind than simple political pragmatism.

The previous administration, was convinced that the use of the price system, the use of cost accounting, the use of the deterrent effect of ability pay – even in a modified form of the deterrent fee – was in some sense a just act to do. Ad to some extent I think we should give them credit. But now let us come back and again begin to analyze why we on this side of the House opposed the deterrent fee and I trust that when we have finished this debate, Mr. Speaker, we shall have laid to rest one of the topics of political conversation with which the Saskatchewan public must surely be very tired.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Richards: — The deterrent fee is but one small question in the whole complex arena of questions that must be faced with respect to health care. I want to outline very briefly what are our arguments in opposition to it and hope that we can, as quickly as possible, spend our time on other means more important, because much larger, questions.

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Now, the first argument in opposition to it is the question of whom did it hit. The Hon. Minister of Public Health (Mr. Smishek) made reference to the absence of detailed studies having been done to show what had been the effect of the deterrent fee. Let me quote from one study which has just become available, a study done by a former colleague of mine at the University of Saskatchewan – Dr. Beck, entitled *An Analysis of the Demand for Physicians' Services in Saskatchewan*. To quote from him on page 154:

In general the greatest reduction of health services (this is after the imposition of the utilization fee, Mr. Speaker) occurred among large families and among those families whose head was in the upper age classes. The utilization fee resulted in reduced services to the aged and large families.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, it deterred the people whom it should not deter. It deterred those with large families, the plight of whom has been sorely lamented by those on the other side of the House. It deterred the aged whom we are trying to help. These are the kind of details of the operation of the deterrent fee which surely should suggest that it is not performing the function which with a certain sincerity, I believed the former administration was intending it to perform – namely the control of costs, the allocation of health services in a rational manner.

The second argument, of course, is a very simple one about lost cost-sharing funds of at least \$1.3 annually due to the imposition of the deterrent fee. The third argument against the deterrent fee is that it resulted in a great deal of bureaucratic inefficiency because it involved a great deal of paper work for a very small sum in each individual case.

Now, Mr. Speaker, having presented the arguments against, we should come back to the one argument which stands in favor of the deterrent fee, namely, the argument that it might prevent the frivolous use of health services. In other words, provide a more rational allocation of health services. As we have seen, Mr. Speaker, it has not done that; it has deterred those whom it should not deter and it has not deterred those whom the doctor might consider to be frivolous users of the service, such as the neurotic middle aged housewife who descends upon him regularly. These people do not consider their attendance to the doctor to be frivolous and therefore \$1.50 does not deter them.

I should like to terminate my comments at this stage. We have succeeded in a good number of things, Mr. Speaker, with respect to health services. It is a great pleasure to see the correlation between income and use of health services decline since the imposition of medical care in 1962. This is an indication that income is becoming a decreasingly important variable in access to health services. I would insist, Mr. Speaker, that there are other barriers besides money to the acquiring of adequate health services. There remain important barriers in the form of the geographical maldistribution of health services. There remain important other kinds of barriers in terms of bureaucracy, in terms of people's ignorance about what is available and what should be available. These kinds of barriers it will be, I trust, the duty and the privilege of this Government to abolish in the next four years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. G. MacMurchy (Minister of Education): — My first words in this Assembly must be to congratulate you on your election to the highest office of the Legislature, that of the Speaker, a position which you occupy with distinction. I am particularly proud to congratulate you in this way because while I am the MA for Last Mountain constituency, I am resident in Wadena constituency, even though it would appear that Semans is a great distance from Wadena. I was very pleased to support you, not only in 1967, but in the election this last June.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — I am pleased and I am proud to speak on behalf of the senior citizens of this Province. I am proud of the senior citizens of this Province unlike the member for Cannington (Mr. Weatherald) who said he felt sorry for the senior citizens. I am proud of the senior citizens of Saskatchewan because they built this Province and I was proud to visit them during the campaign and in periods before. In the campaign, when they asked me, “Are you really going to remove deterrent fees, are you really going to take off the premiums,” I was proud to say, “Yes, we are. Yes we are and immediately after we take office.” We are doing that at this time.

I am proud too, to be able to speak in support of this Bill, for this is an outstanding of legislation of benefit to a class of people who are often hard-pressed to maintain a dignified standard of living.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — It is to me a first indication of how the New Democratic Party will give priority to people as the government of this Province. Now, the abolition of the head tax for health plans on senior citizens puts into practice a key principle of the philosophy of our party and of our government, the principle of taxation by ability to pay. Flat-rate taxes are generally bad taxes because they take the same bite out of a small income as they do out of a large one. They are inconsistent with fair and just taxation practice and must be eliminated in all possible cases. A large percentage, indeed the vast majority of people over 65, are living on pensions or on other fixed incomes and are thus more heavily penalized by flat taxes such as the health premium. I believe the measures contained in this Bill will help to some extent at least to assuage the burden.

Mr. Speaker, the introduction of this legislation by our New Democratic Government stands in sharp contrast to the actions of the former Government. A very small remnant of which now occupies the wide-open spaces to your left.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — In 1964 the Liberal Party had barely warmed the seats of office when it began to introduce a series of aggressive and backward measures which brought increasing hardship to those over 65. First of all, they abolished the division of services for the aged, they fired its director, they jumped its plans to

bring help to our elderly people. Next they jacked up the head tax from \$52 to \$72. Now I am a poor mathematician but that seems to be an increase of 40 per cent. Then they brought in deterrent fees – the notorious, hideous tax on the sick and one of their most repugnant Acts. I recall just a year ago at their convention where members of the party brought forward a resolution calling for the removal of these fees for at least the senior citizens and how one of their leading Cabinet Ministers entered the debate to prevent the deterrent fees from being removed. They slashed grants to senior citizens' homes thereby hiking the rent and forcing many older people to apply for welfare. They welched on their promise to establish a drug-care program allowing the drug companies to continue to gouge the sick. While all this was going on the little man who is now leading the Members opposite was managing the finances of our Province in such a way that property taxes per person rose over 50 per cent forcing many retired people to abandon their homes which they loved so dearly. New Democrats have already, in this Session, taken a number of important steps toward building a concern for people into the policies of the Government. We intend to continue with new programs designed to benefit Saskatchewan people. It is to be hoped that progressive legislation such as the Bill now before us will not be compromised in its effort by any alteration such as that proposed in the speech this afternoon by the Member for Cannington (Mr. Weatherald).

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — The idea of a Means Test! For that is what the member was talking about. That is a poor and petty adjustment that comes awkwardly from the mouths of the Liberals from the old government. Why do members opposite talk of a Means Test for senior citizens when they are prepared to give away literally million of dollars of public funds to such needy individuals as Carl Landegger?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — This proposal is inconsistent with their actions of office. As recently as four months ago, another example of the old Liberal attitude of Socialism of the rich and Free Enterprise for the rest. Mr. Speaker, as I have stated, the principle of this Bill is an excellent one. It is a principle to which the New Democratic Government will adhere and one which will reappear again and again in other legislation as we move to enact the New Deal for people. I would urge all Members of this Assembly to give this Bill their full support.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. W.A. Robbins (Saskatoon Nutana Centre): — Mr. Speaker, on this my first occasion in rising in this sitting of the Legislative Assembly, I should like to add my congratulation to those of other Members, to you, Sir, on the high office of the Speaker. I am certain you will bring dignity and fair play to the occupancy of that Chair.

Mr. Speaker, in 1968, the Liberal Government of Saskatchewan introduced hospitalization utilization fees, as we termed them, costing \$2.50 per day, subject to some maximum stipulations.

The Government of that day argued that hospital and health services were being over-utilized and therefore as a means of controlling rising costs, the fees were necessary. The New Democrats, who then sat in Opposition argued, that the imposition of the daily fee represented a “tax upon the sick” and could not be logically justified. We are all aware that costs are rising. Inflationary factors have been apparent throughout the entire period since World War II and have been increased through the impact of conflicts in countries like Korea and Vietnam and through the enormous world-wide expenditures for military hardware in what historians are pleased to term the cold war. Mr. Speaker, control of costs is a major problem for every government, for every city council, for every rural municipality, for every farm, for every business operation and for every citizen in this Province. Saskatchewan spends very large sums on health care of its citizens and the people of Saskatchewan may be assured that this Government and will continue to be concerned about the control of those costs.

However, our approach is quite different to that of the preceding Liberal government and this Bill is primary evidence of that fact. Perhaps I could relate a brief story to the Members on the opposite side of the House, Mr. Speaker, to illustrate my point. This is a biblical story called, “The Story of the Good Samaritan.” You will recall that story without me relating it in detail. But there were significant participants in that story. The first group can be classified as the “The Robbers>” The robbers had a part to play in that story and they have a part to play in the world in which we live today. They have a very simple motto – “What’s yours is mine and I’ll take it.” The second group in that story were the “Priest and the Levite,” or those who passed by on the other side. They had a very simple motto and their motto was, “What’s mine is mine and I’ll keep it.” The good Samaritan was the third participant in that story and he proved by his actions that he had a very simple motto and one that I contend is badly needed in the world in which we live today. His motto was “What’s mine is mine but I’m willing to share it.”

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — Members of the Opposition do not realize that that does not destroy a person’s individuality and that is the kind of thing we need an increasing amount of in the world today. We do not believe on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, that the person who is suffering from physical or mental disability or illness should be called upon to shoulder an extra burden and particularly while that condition applies. Recovery from illness is much more likely to be improved if the patient does not carry the extra burden of financial worries while he is ill. This in itself, Mr. Speaker, can be a means of decreasing overall health costs.

I imagine most Members are aware that hospitalization expenditures are the major portion of our overall health costs. Hospital costs have risen very rapidly. I understand in the hospitals in Saskatoon, public ward rates are now up to \$50 and \$60 per day. To control those costs is important. Indeed it is imperative. And how can we make progress in this direction? In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, we may well pay a good deal more

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attention to the opinions of medical personnel participating in community health clinics like they have in Prince Albert – perhaps the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart) has heard of that one, and also in Saskatoon, Regina, Eston and many other locations. I know my experience with the community clinic in Saskatoon clearly indicates the medical personnel are dedicated to the “preventative medicine approach” and are intent on keeping their patients out of hospitals, the very place where we, as a Province, are incurring our major costs in relation to health.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — I might say, Mr. Speaker, I have never been able to understand that line of thinking which says, “charge a person who is ill an extra fee to deter him from going to the hospital or when he or she finds himself or herself in need of hospital treatment, levy a utilization fee because of the use of that facility.” One does not check into a hospital and out of a hospital like he does into or out of a hotel or motel. One goes to hospital if the doctor admits you; one leaves that hospital only if the doctor discharges you. I suppose it could be argued with some validity that there is reason to say that there are persons who do use medical services to excess. As previous speakers have intimidated these people are not well, they suffer from a neurotic condition. I suppose if one used that argument in terms of doctor services, even if one felt it had some validity – and I do not really believe that that contention is a valid one – you simply cannot use that approach when you think in terms of hospital services. I again stress, only the doctor admits you, only the doctor discharges you. There can be no logic and no reason in arguing that you should attempt to deter an individual from going to the hospital and this is the basic thing that is being removed from this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree with the intent of Bill 3 which removes the deterrent fee for hospital services. In my opinion it should never have been enacted in 1968 when it was and I am pleased to see the Government provide it with an early demise and a decent burial in this the First Session of the Seventeenth Legislature. I support this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D.G. Steuart (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that the Member for Saskatoon University (Mr. Richards) isn't in his place – I think that is the right one. I do hope the Opposition gets a chart of the Government Members because we are having a little difficulty; it must be relatively easy for you, but it is difficult for us because there are so many of you, but I will first refer to the Member for Saskatoon University as I found what he had to say very interesting. He presented a logical case against utilization fees, whether you agree with the individual – he is coming in now and I am pleased to see he is coming in. I was just addressing some remarks to the Member for Saskatoon University. I found his talk very interesting. It was different. Whether one agreed with him or not, it was a refreshing change from the

usual bleeding-heart approach that we have come to expect from the NDP Members opposite whenever they talk about health care or welfare problems. He also, I think, put his finger on a very real problem and that is, how any government today allocates health care or any other services that is expected of a modern government and still controls the cost.

The last Member who rose talked about the same thing. He said he put deterrent fees on the wrong people. People don't put themselves in the hospital and take themselves out. If he had much to do with hospitals and I am sure the Minister of Health will find this out if he doesn't know it already, this is only partially true, unfortunately people do insist on staying in the hospital. They do go in early and our hospitals are organized in a very peculiar way. You've got a real problem, I know it and recognize it, and I am sure Mr. Blakeney recognizes it. If your Government can find some way, some better way of controlling costs and I am sure there is a better way than utilization fees. If you can find that way and make such a breakthrough and still allocate these health services to the people who really need them and control costs, let me tell you that this side of the House would be the first to congratulate you and the first to support you.

This is a real problem and make no mistake about it. You go into any hospital in this Province, Saturday morning, Saturday night, Sunday, Monday, Saturday afternoon, many of them are almost deserted. The central core of our hospitals are the operating rooms, the laboratories, etc. For some reason we have agreed in this Province, our Government first and ours, that they should not operate on a full time capacity. Maybe your Government now will change it. We operate our hospitals on about a four and one-half day week or a four day week.

With the rapidly escalating health costs that we all face all over this nation, something has to change. Let's not kid ourselves, as a Government or as the Opposition, that every dollar that is spent on health or education is a sacred dollar or necessarily a good dollar. You know it, I'm sure, and if you don't know you will find it out. In the sacred name of health, welfare and education, there are literally millions of dollars being wasted and it is a disgrace. If you could find some way of stemming the flow of these wasted dollars, you would make a breakthrough and we will support you.

You look at the hospitals today. You show me how many people are treated in the foyers and the boardrooms of all these hospitals. I remember when they built the new Victoria Union Hospital in Prince Albert – and I happened to be the Minister of Health – I was told over and over again this is a bare bones hospital. “Oh, if you cut another dollar out of this a year you haven't got a humanitarian bone in your body and it is just bare bones.” I remember walking into the opening, I just about disappeared in the carpet – of course I'm not very big. It was a beautiful foyer. I said, “If this is bare bones, God help us if you had really spent the money.” I have never seen anybody treated out there in that beautiful foyer. I don't know what good it is. I don't know whether it is necessary or not. But I've said this before, if someone came down and looked at our society here in Saskatchewan and in many places in Canada, they would say that we must have rather peculiar priorities.

You look at our schools today, under us and under you,

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mansions, palaces. I never heard of a beautiful school educating a child yet. Sure, the facilities in it are good but I am talking about the buildings. Take a look at our hospitals. I remember opening a hospital in Rosetown and the hospital closed up was built to last of the next 200 years. We closed it up because it was that the public demanded it.

The same thing in our schools, our hospitals, our public building generally. I sometimes begin to think, when I was in Government, when I was the Minister of Health and when I was the Treasurer, "your Treasure is your watchdog." Somebody said, "Well Davey is the Minister of Finance and when he leaves the Provincial Treasury tax will go up 400 per cent to 500 per cent in the municipalities." But I am going to tell you something, it is easy to spend money for a new government. It is easy to please the people. It is great to take the so-called tax off the sick and the poor and the old aged. But I am going to tell you something else, somebody of that side of the House, somebody in this society of ours, better give a priority to that dollar. Somebody once said, "You know, the Lord must love the poor people, eh made so many of them." I am going to tell you as a slightly retired tax collector, that the tax collector, and that's the new tax collector over there, loves the poor people, because make no mistake, they really pay the taxes. That's who will really carry the burden. Now it's been said here, and I will repeat it, we put on utilization fees not because we had nay illusion that they were popular but in an effort to make the use of these great services more responsible on behalf of the patients, the hospitals and the doctors. Make no mistake, we recognized then and we recognize now that it was a blunt instrument. We knew then that it wasn't the best of all possible methods. We had studied the experiences in Swift Current where the utilization went down and then it started to come back up again. You will find when you study the chart that the same thing can happen.

Now there may be a better way. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, and the Members of this House, that the cost of health in this nation has doubled within the last few years. The Economic Council of Canada has stated and it didn't state this lightly, that if we don't do something about the cost of education and of health, it could – this is of course ridiculous – but it could consume the entire gross national product in the year 2000. And the Federal Government has warned us when we were the Government and they will warn you that they intend, and I believe them, and I don't care what government is down there, they intend to put a stop on these open-ended deals they have in regard to post-secondary education, health and welfare. And when this happens it will hurt all the provinces and it will hurt us here in Saskatchewan. I hope, I said this when I was on that side of the House and I'll say it now in support of the problems you'll have, that if and when they do this that they do, in fact, take into consideration the hard fact that we in this Province did try to control costs. Whether we were right or whether we were wrong, obviously in these cases, the people of Saskatchewan have said, "You were wrong." Let me tell you, the people of this Province, what we did sincerely. What we did we knew we did in the face of courting political disaster and we found political disaster. But we still did it, and we did it because the man who sat thee and who would have sat here, had he lived, had a very strong conviction that was backed by most of these people, all of these people, the people that sat on

our side of the House, that it was the responsibility of the Government to take those difficult decisions when we knew that the costs of these services were literally, literally running away with the tax burden of the people. No one likes to put taxes on. I sat over there and I brought in more taxes one year that we had seen up to that point and it didn't make me popular.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — I can remember, the Members on our side said, "We're behind you Dave." And I looked around and I didn't realize how far behind me they were. But I want to say this, we might have been defeated but if you think we are going to stand up here — we are going to support this because the people have told us they want us to support it — but as far as we are concerned utilization fees in this Province are a dead issue. Mr. Robbins said that and I agree with him. He said that to the University in Saskatoon, it's finished, it's over. We are going to vote for it. You can laugh at us, you can ridicule us, you can do anything you want. That's your privilege, I wouldn't take it away from you for one minute, we would be doing the same thing if we were over there and if there were 14 or 15 of you sitting there. That's natural and we expect it but again I want to emphasize, while you are taking these off and it's the popular thing to do — you promised to do it and you are doing it — you had better start looking for some other way to control these costs or it will wreck the economy of this Province. You can't find enough money, the people haven't got enough money. Let's not kid ourselves, you are going to take it from the rich. There weren't that many when we left office and there weren't that many when we came into office and there won't be that many when you leave office. Where will you get it? You will get it where every tax collector gets the money — from the ordinary people, the working people. Let's not fall into this trap of saying that if we can somehow get the money from Ottawa that it doesn't really count. Because, after all, I still hope we are all Canadians, there is still only one taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious problem. You are taking a very historic and a very serious step. You are going to have to replace this income — \$7.5 million or it might be \$8 or \$9 million, I don't really know. We've estimated it at something between \$7 and \$8 million, it might even be more than that. Now, you'll pick up some of the money and the added money you will earn on the agreement between the government of Saskatchewan and Ottawa on some new tax-sharing plan. I hope you do, we are all citizens of this Province. You still won't get enough. And I predict here today if you don't change your attitude about bringing industry, then you are going to have no place to get it outside the pockets of the working people that now live in this Province. Let's not kid ourselves, let's not disillusion ourselves.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — We have to get diversification in this Province. We've got to bring industry in. We have to get to bring more people in to try and share this tax load if we want, as a Government and as an Opposition, to continue to give the people of this Province the kind of services they expect and the kind of services they

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look forward to. Mr. Speaker, I don't know where you'll get the money. If you follow through with the promises you have made, I predict tonight that the people of Saskatchewan, in four years, will be the highest taxed people anywhere in Canada and in any time in our history. I predict here tonight that you may have to do something about the premiums - \$72. It is now about the lowest in Canada, it was \$72 when we came into office. You have said you'll reduce it.

Mr. Blakeney: — It was \$52 . . .

Mr. Steuart: — It was \$72 when we came into office. Oh, you reduced it just before the election but you always do that. You used to put it down before an election and then put it right back up after the election. The people will remember that. It's much lower today in Saskatchewan than it is over in the great Utopia, Manitoba. Lower than it was in British Columbia, lower than Ontario. You've got another tiger by the tail. Look at all the other health plan promises that you have made.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we will support this legislation but let the Government be under no illusion, we are here to remind you day in and day out, month in and month out, of those fantastic promises you made; not only in the field of health but in the field of education, about the tax burden that you are going to take off the people. You better believe it! Four years from now when you answer the people it may, and I think it will be, a different story.

We will support this legislation, of course, we will support it. And as far as we are concerned, as I said, when we are elected again, as we will be in four years, utilization fees are finished.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — I almost forgot the last of my most important lines. I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

The Assembly adjourned at 8:20 o'clock p.m.