

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Second Session — Thirteenth Legislature
26th Day

Thursday, March 20, 1958

The House met at 10:00 o'clock a.m.

On the Orders of the Day:

CONGRATULATIONS TO REGINA PATS

Hon. C.M. Fines (Provincial Treasurer): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with, I am sure that all hon. members will want to join with me in congratulating the Regina Pats on being the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey Champions and in sending them our very best wishes for a very successful play-off season. They will now be going to Alberta, then east to Manitoba, and we hope they will capture the Memorial Cup trophy for this province. Last year Flin Flon took it, and they, of course, are in Saskatchewan as far as hockey is concerned.

I would like at this time, however, to assure the hon. member for Cumberland (Mr. Berezowsky) that his Flin Flon team did put up a wonderful battle and to express our regrets that Prince Albert passed out of the picture so early.

MUNICIPAL REORGANIZATION

The Assembly resumed from Tuesday, March 18, the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Gardiner, as amended:

"That this Assembly recommend to the Provincial Government that, before any basic change is made in the organization of Municipal Government in Saskatchewan, consideration be given to the report of the Continuing Committee on Local Government, and consultation be held with local government organizations regarding the best method of ascertaining the wishes of their ratepayers."

Mr. J.W. Horsman (Wilkie): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak a few minutes on this amendment . . .

Mr. Speaker: — On the motion as amended.

Mr. Horsman: — Yes, on the motion as amended. I understand that no

March 20, 1958

reference can be made to the former motion, is that correct?

Mr. Speaker: — That is correct.

Mr. Horsman: — It seems a little difficult to argue a question like this unless you can refer to the source from which this amendment was made.

Mr. Speaker: — You could have done that by participating in the debate before the amendment was passed.

Mr. Horsman: — I am going to refer this much to the former resolution. I am going to state that there was only one simple request made in the original motion, and that was that people should be given a vote on this question before there was any change made in municipal boundaries. This amendment was drafted to cut that part of the motion out, and it asks that "consideration be given to the report of the Continuing Committee on Local Government and consultation be held with local government organizations regarding the best method of ascertaining the wishes of their ratepayers."

Still it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that this could be argued from the point of view that the best way of ascertaining the wishes of the ratepayers would be to let them have a vote on the question. I see no other way of arguing this thing unless I am allowed that much latitude. A few days ago, as a matter of fact last Friday, there was a resolution introduced into this House by the Premier, a resolution to set up a Committee to investigate certain phases of the liquor sales and so on, in this province. Everyone agreed with the Premier's remarks, that day; I am sure everyone in the House did, but he laid great emphasis on the fact that before anything like this could be done the people should have a chance to vote on it; should have a chance to decide by plebiscite whether they wanted any changes made or not. He emphasized very clearly that in a democratic country it was a democratic right of the people to make their own decisions on matters of importance to them. So I see no difference between these two things; they are parallel, to me. It seems to me that the people who will be mostly affected, and directly affected, by this matter under discussion, this morning, are the people who should have the opportunity to make their own decision on the matter.

Now we have a Committee appointed here — and I have no criticism to offer to the members of this Continuing Committee. I have their names here; but, in looking over the list, it seems to me that it is very evident, before the report ever comes in, as to what that report will be.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order!

Mr. Gardiner (Melville): — That's his opinion.

Mr. Horsman: — I am just expressing my opinion on that. When I look over the list of the members of the Committee, it looks to me that it is pretty well loaded against the rural people. We have representatives from the municipal associations, from the urban associations; there are four Cabinet Ministers on that Committee, and the opinion of the Cabinet Ministers is well known on this subject. For many years this Government has favoured changes in municipal boundaries. I can remember when the hon. Mr. Brockelbank was Minister of Municipal Affairs, quite a few years ago. Even at that time he was very much in favour of changes in municipal boundaries, of larger municipal units. It was not passed in the House because it never came up in the House; but the reason it wasn't put in long ago was because of the determined opposition of the municipal men in this province. I think it would have come in long ago if it had not been for that. I think that on a matter of so much importance to the local people, they should at least have a chance to vote on the matter.

I am not going to say very much about this because I haven't got very much range, but I am going to move an amendment to this amended motion.

I am going to move, seconded by Mr. McFarlane, (Qu'Appelle-Wolseley):

That all the words after the words "method of" in the fifth line be deleted, and the following words substituted therefor:

"conducting a plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the ratepayers."

The amendment will read as follows:

"That this Assembly recommend to the Provincial Government that, before any basic change is made in the organization of Municipal Government in Saskatchewan, consideration be given to the report of the Continuing Committee on Local Government, and consultation be held with local government organizations regarding the best method of conducting a plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the ratepayers."

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I am not asking

March 20, 1958

Your Honour to be able to make a snap decision by just looking at it, but I would submit that this amendment simply says what the motion before us says, in slightly different words.

The motion before the House that "consideration be given to the report of the Continuing Committee on Local Government, and consultation be held with the local government organization regarding the best method of ascertaining the wishes of the ratepayers". This amendment says the same thing: "that consideration be given to the report of the Continuing Committee on Local Government, and consultation be held with local government organizations regarding the best method of conducting a plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the ratepayers." With the exception of the word "plebiscite" it is the same thing. It is simply a matter of how you interpret the best method of ascertaining the wishes of the ratepayers. I submit that this is not a proper amendment.

Mr. Speaker: — In considering this proposed amendment to the motion as amended, it can only be regarded as an amendment to the amendment which the House has already passed, the other day; and consequently I must rule it out of order for that reason. It is an amendment to a decision already arrived at at this Session by this Assembly, and any amendment which would be in order would be to the original part of the motion which does not include the amendment already passed. I must rule the proposed amendment out of order.

Mr. G.H. Danielson (Arm River): — Mr. Speaker, you are ruling that no one can amend an amendment.

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Mr. Danielson: — I am in order.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I should, perhaps, make it more clear. This amendment would have been in order if it had been offered before the amendment to the motion was passed. Then it would have been in order. But after the House has made a decision at this Session to introduce an amendment which would alter that is not in order.

Mr. Danielson: — Mr. Speaker, then what are we debating the amendment for? If it has already been passed?

Mr. Speaker: — We are not debating the amendment. We are debating the motion as amended.

Mr. Danielson: — It should be appealed.

Mr. Cameron (Maple Creek): — Mr. Speaker, I would like clarification

as to why, you ruled it out of order. Was it because the amendment had been passed, or because it is an amendment to an amended motion? I am not just clear on it.

Premier Douglas: — Because it simply raises . . .

Mr. Cameron: — It is, Mr. Speaker, I am asking.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! The House has already passed an amendment and this proposed amendment would reverse the decision of the House on the previous amendment.

Mr. McDonald: — But, Mr. Speaker, I . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order! The hon. member may appeal from my ruling but I am not going to argue about it here.

Mr. Danielson: — I just want to ask one question . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order!

Mr. Danielson: — My question is this: When the amendment was passed, it replaced the original motion; is that not correct?

Hon. Mr. Fines: — No, no.

Premier Douglas: — It didn't replace the whole thing. It just replaced the last part.

Mr. Danielson: — Well, that is what I mean. It took things away and put other things in place of it.

Premier Douglas: — That's right.

Mr. Danielson: — And that is the amendment. And now this discussion is in order, otherwise this whole discussion is out of order.

Mr. Speaker: — The discussion was on the motion as amended and the amendment had already been passed. If the hon. member for Wilkie had submitted this amendment before the House had adopted the amendment, it would have been in order, but at this stage it is not. Is the House ready for the question?

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say a word about the motion as amended. The member who just took his seat (Mr. Horsman) made two references about which, I think, I ought to comment. One is to the effect that this motion as amended is somehow or other denying to the people the right to express

March 20, 1958

their opinion, or to have a vote. He made reference to another debate when we were talking about a Committee to study the liquor question, at which time I said that I hoped that Committee would keep in mind the proper and inalienable right that people have, to express their opinion on this question, because it affects everyone; and he felt that this motion as amended was denying this fundamental right.

I want to point out, of course, that it does nothing of the sort . . .

Mr. Danielson: — Yes, it does.

Premier Douglas: — What it says is . . .

Mr. Gardiner: — Why did you vote against us?

Premier Douglas: — If my friend will listen, he will learn something. That is why has two ears and one mouth. If he would use the former more than the latter, he would learn something.

Mr. Gardiner: — You'll hear a little more after, too.

Premier Douglas: — It says "that consideration be given to the report of the Continuing Committee on local government" — that is the first thing. That we wait until we get that report and that we study it. Now when that report is available and has been made available to everybody concerned, that report will not only come to the Government and the Legislature, but the representatives who are on that Committee came on that on that Committee on the distinct understanding that they would take this report back to their respective provincial organizations and that those provincial organizations would have to concur in the report. So, that is the first thing: there will be consideration given to the report of this Committee.

Then, assuming that the Government, the Legislature and the provincial organizations represented are all in agreement on the proposals, we would then consult with these provincial organizations regarding the best method of ascertaining the wishes of their ratepayers.

There is a very strong possibility that when those discussions are held, a plebiscite or a vote, of that sort, will be what the provincial organizations will recommend. How it will be taken or by what method it will be taken, will be for them to make suggestions to us about. As I pointed out the other day, there are very practical difficulties as to how you take it and how you assess such a plebiscite.

This is not ruling out a vote, however. What it is

saying is that we ought, in all fairness, do the two things which the Government has committed itself to do: first, to take no action until we receive a report from this Continuing Committee, and secondly, to consult with the provincial organizations on that Committee as to what they think are the best procedures to be adopted in respect of ascertaining the wishes of the ratepayers. So, when gentlemen opposite say this motion as amended is denying the right to vote, they are simply not in accordance with the facts. They are suggesting that, when these provincial organizations are consulted, they will be opposed to any kind of a vote. I don't think so. They are suggesting that the provincial — that is the S.A.R.M, the town and village section of the S.U.M.A., and the Trustees' Association, and the health regions and hospital districts, who are represented on that Committee — when those are consulted, they won't have as much concern for properly ascertaining the wishes of the rate-payers as they have. Now I am just not prepared to agree with that. I think these provincial organizations will be just as anxious, indeed more anxious than any one of us to see that the just democratic procedure that can be devised will be utilized to ascertain the wishes of the ratepayers.

The other thing the hon. gentleman said which disturbs me a good deal, and I think it will disturb some of the provincial organizations, was when he said that the Continuing Committee on Local Government has been loaded against the rural people. Let us look and see who is on this Committee. May I point out, again, Mr. Speaker, that the Government did not appoint this Committee.

Mr. Danielson: — Huh!

Premier Douglas: — The member for Arm River laughs, and he has already got into a little trouble by laughing, because he has already made some of the provincial organizations very angry with the insinuations he has thrown at them.

The Government appointed its own four representatives — the Minister of Education, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Provincial Treasurer and myself. All the other members on the Committee were appointed by the provincial organizations, who were asked to name people they wanted on the committee to represent them. The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities put three people on this Committee — their president, Mr. Garland, Mr. W.J. Irvine and Mr. Stan Ferguson, their provincial secretary.

The Saskatchewan Trustees' Association also put three people on — Mr. A.B. Douglas, Mr. G.J. Hindley and Mr. J.A. Trew, — all farmers. So there you have six farmers already.

The Association of Urban Municipalities put on

March 20, 1958

Mayor McAskill, of the city of Saskatoon, Mayor Maher, of the city of North Battleford (a former member of this Legislature, who did not sit on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker), and Mr. H.J. Partridge of the town of Gull Lake.

Mr. Cameron: — Is that four urbans, Mr. Premier?

Premier Douglas: — No, three — McAskill, Maher and Partridge. There are three from the S.A.R.M., three from the Trustees', and three from the Urban.

Then the health regions and hospital boards of the province were allowed two. The health regions are represented by Mr. C.J. Fahlman of Kronau, also a farmer and a former reeve of a municipality; and the hospital boards are represented by Mr. E.S. Bourassa of the Grey Nuns Hospital here in Regina.

I submit that that does not look very much like a Committee which has been loaded against the rural people — three S.A.R.M. people who are farmers, and three trustees who are farmers; and you have the health region representative who is a farmer. So, the farmers are the predominant group among the members of the Committee.

In addition to the members I have stated, who are voting members, there are associate members, who have no vote but have a voice. They are there to protect the interests of the groups they represent, and to give such technical assistance as they can. The associate members are: on behalf of the Larger School Unit Secretaries, Mr. R.J. McKinnon of North Battleford; on behalf of the Rural Municipal Secretaries, Mr. G.E. Cripps of Wolseley; and on behalf of the Teachers' Federation, Mr. G. Eamer of Saskatoon. These, of course, are associate members and not voting members.

I think this Committee is a very representative Committee. I say again, apart from having four members on the Committee, the Government appointed none of these people. They were selected from their own organizations. I want to say that this Committee, when it was appointed . . .

Mr. Danielson: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would like to ask a question. What is the Premier debating? Is he debating the amendment which you already ruled out of order?

Premier Douglas: — No, I am debating the motion as amended, and I am replying to the remarks made by the member from Wilkie (Mr. Horsman), who said that this Committee was badly loaded against the rural people. I am simply pointing out that the rural people have a predominant membership on the Committee. I am

pointing out that members on that Committee were nominated and selected by their provincial organizations.

I want to make one more point: that that Committee itself, when it held its first meeting on 24th June, selected its Chairman. The Chairman was not selected by the Government. The Chairman was selected by the Committee, and they selected the mayor of Saskatoon, because he was persona grata to all the various groups and also because he was able to give a considerable amount of time to the work of the Committee. I want to say, with some regret, Mr. Speaker, that some of the remarks made, the other day, about him being picked by the Government and being a sort of a rubber-stamp for the Government, have not had very good repercussions, and the Chairman of this Committee feels that, in the interests of the usefulness of the Committee, he ought to withdraw as chairman. The S.A.R.M. and other organizations have asked him to continue, and whether or not he will continue I do not know. But I do want to say that he has done commendable work during the period he has been the Chairman, and I hope the Committee will be able to persuade him to his work.

Unless it is for the purpose of creating fear in the province, I can see no purpose in constantly raising this question about votes and plebiscites. The Government has made it abundantly clear, first of all, that we have no intention of doing anything without a report of this Committee; and, as I said when the Conference was here, we don't want a report in which the Committee is split seven to three, or something of that sort; we want a report which will recommend itself to all the groups represented. Secondly having received the report, we will consult with the different organizations represented on that Committee. The Government, of course, can make no changes without coming to the Legislature. We also consult with the provincial organizations represented on the Committee, not only regarding the report, but regarding the best method of implementing any report which may be made and the best method of ascertaining the wishes of the local ratepayers.

It seems to me that the motion as amended now expresses some confidence that the Continuing Committee will endeavour to bring in a reasonable report. They may not be able to reach any agreement, in which case we won't have any report; but if they can reach some area of agreement and bring in a report, this is expressing some confidence that the report will be a sane and reasonable one. Secondly, the motion as amended is expressing confidence that, if the Government consults (as it will) with the provincial organizations, those provincial organizations will make suggestions as to the best methods of ascertaining the wishes of the ratepayers, and that they will do so with a full sense of their responsibility and of their desire to see that local ratepayers do not have anything foisted upon them against

March 20, 1958

their wishes.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be most unwise for us to do anything other than express our confidence not only to the Continuing Committee, but in the provincial organizations whom they represent.

Mr. Cameron: — Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment or two on this motion as amended, just to deal with some of the things the Premier said. It was rather disturbing to me when he left the inference that we were not in favour of the Continuing Committee as set up, and that they were receiving criticism, so much so that the Chairman of the Continuing Committee was ready to resign. If that is so, it is regrettable that he should take that attitude. With the exception of a couple of remarks that were passed, the other day, I don't think anyone in this House has criticized in any way the members of the Committee or the work they are attempting to do; or has said, in any sense, that they did not have confidence in the report which this Committee might submit.

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege. My hon. friend listened to the member for Wilkie when he said this Committee was "loaded".

Mr. Cameron: — I am coming to that. You pick up every little opportunity, every little loose word that is dropped, and play it up into something big; and such remarks as the Premier made today are adding to the very thing he is criticising these particular members for having done.

The member here, as I heard him, said that there were four Cabinet Ministers on that Committee, and that the Cabinet Ministers, with their prestige and their position, should exercise considerable weight on that Committee. That is the objectionable feature that he was pointing out. Let us keep the record straight. Because of the attitude of the Government, he feels that the Government stands for a progressive move towards some system of larger municipalities, or the county system. I want to go on record and say this: that at no time did I ever, in any words that I have spoken, say anything other than that I have complete confidence in the Continuing Committee, and I speak on behalf of Mr. McDonald, the Leader of the Official Opposition. I want that understood.

Premier Douglas: — Do you speak for your colleagues?

Mr. Cameron: — It is a strange thing that in a House with 53 members, someone would think that, because some remark was passed by one or two members of a House of 53, the situation is such as to disturb the whole harmony and the work of the Continuing Committee. I think that is drawing lines just a little bit too fine.

Now, speaking on the motion itself and on the amendment, the original motion, as you will recall, Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — You are debating the motion as amended.

Mr. Cameron: — . . . simply asked that we, as a Legislature, assure the people that, in the event of reorganization, they would have a vote in the area in which the people are vitally concerned. That was, in simplicity, exactly what the resolution asked; no more, no less. Now the amendment goes back to this: "That this Assembly recommend to the Provincial Government that before any basic change is made in the organization of municipal government in Saskatchewan, consideration be given to the report of the Continuing Committee on Local Government." We have no objection to that. They have to consider it: "and consultation be held with local government organizations" — that is an accepted fact. You couldn't have a report unless you had consultations with the local government officials. Here they have a Continuing Committee which is coming to the Government and submitting its report. They could not submit a report unless they were in consultation with them. That is a foregone conclusion; consultations are going on constantly with the Committee because you have four Cabinet Ministers sitting with them. "Consultation will be held with local government organizations regarding the best methods of ascertaining the wishes of their ratepayer" — of course, it will be. There is no question about it because you are sitting on the Committee.

When the Committee submits its report it is going — (let me put it this way): it is going to suggest to the Government whether or not it considers a plebiscite is necessary. So you can't do otherwise than consult with the local officials, the governing bodies, as to the best way of ascertaining the wishes of the people. Nobody says otherwise. It has to be done, or you would have no Continuing Committee.

But this resolution as amended, in simplicity says this: "that the Government may, or it may not, give a plebiscite depending upon their views after consultation with the executives of the local organizations." That is the key thing: "we may or we may not". There is no guarantee that you are going to. The Government proposes to consult with regard to the best method of ascertaining the wishes of the ratepayers. There is a possibility that there may be a vote; but it is only a possibility. There is no guarantee that there will be a vote. It is all right for the Premier to say this shows lack of confidence in the Continuing Committee. He has been building that up all this Session. It does not show lack of confidence in the Continuing Committee. We asked for a simple commitment that we would guarantee the local people in those local areas the right to have a vote, if an enlarged municipality was to be created, or the county system or something which affected them vitally was proposed.

March 20, 1958

That is all that the resolution asked for.

This, in my opinion, would have aided immensely the work of the Continuing Committee, because it would have dispelled a great deal of apprehension that is rampant throughout the province in all municipal organizations.

Hon. Mr. Brown: — Who created it?

Mr. Danielson: — You did.

Mr. Cameron: — And it would have aided the Committee in that assurance that a vote would be given and the people would be in a receptive frame of mind to accept some of the recommendations, and there would not be this amount of resistance towards any thought of change that you find today.

For that reason, because the amendment says the Government may or it may not. It is possible we will. It is equally possible we won't; so this amendment doesn't suggest or solve anything.

Hon. Mr. Brown: — What amendment are you referring to?

Mr. Cameron: — This motion as amended doesn't solve anything. You ask us to go along and say to these people in the rural areas; we will leave it to the Government, after consultation with the local authorities, their Executive, as to whether we will or, whether we won't give you a vote. Possibly we will, possibly we won't, and that is exactly the substance of this motion as amended.

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege. Where does it say the 'Executive'? We say, "consult with the provincial organizations", and we mean the provincial organizations, and they have already gone on record as saying that these reports must come back to their annual conventions, not to their Executives.

Mr. Cameron: — That's right. But you are not dealing with the people at the local level. You are dealing with the municipal organizations, the trustees' organization. I don't know whether they call it their executive, but presumably it would be to their executive officials.

Premier Douglas: — To their convention.

Mr. Cameron: — Pardon?

Premier Douglas: — When it says here we will consult with the provincial organizations, we are talking about their provincial conventions, not their executive.

Mr. Cameron: — Not necessarily so, no. It may be submitted to a convention. You are consulting with the provincial organizations, but it does not say you are going to call them all into convention to consult with all their delegates.

Premier Douglas: — They appointed their representatives to the Committee . . .

Mr. Cameron: — All right, Mr. Speaker. Never mind what they said. Sure they are guaranteeing their people that before they take a step they will call a convention and put it before their ratepayers. That is their commitment, but that isn't yours. Your commitment is that you will consult with the officials of these organizations; so I say that this motion as amended has not added one thing to the situation in the province. It has not clarified the Government's situation. It has just left things hanging in the air. The Government says: "We may or we may not; it is possible, possibly not". That is the way it hangs. It has not clarified anything. It hasn't given any reassurance to the local people. It hasn't induced them to look with a more receptive mind at some proposals that might be made, knowing that they will have the final judgment in the matter. Because of that, Mr. Speaker, I am going to vote against this motion as amended.

Mr. G.H. Danielson (Arm River): — Mr. Speaker, the Premier has made a speech on my remarks, the other night, and he is welcome to do that, because the more he speaks and the more noise he makes these are all created to try to blot out the facts that this Government and this Legislature, ruled by the C.C.F. party, has voted down a motion which would have granted the right to the people and the ratepayers of the province to decide for themselves what they want to do.

I said something in regard to that Committee. I am not denying the fact; and I am not the only one. Let me tell you that, Mr. Speaker, that I am not the only one. We sat here a year ago, last fall for three or four days, and saw the circus and the performance that was going on on the floor of this House; and any man who had some understanding of the issues involved could see clearly what was going on. Everybody, so far as I have been able to find out, both by printed words and utterances made in this House, makes it obvious that they are in favour of this thing; that their minds are made up before the report of this Committee will ever come before them, so far as the Cabinet members of that Committee are concerned.

We have had a Royal Commission appointed that was going around the length and breadth of this province telling the people that this has to be done and that the people would have no right to vote. That Commission was appointed by the Government and evidently all the recommendations are going to be accepted by this Government. Do you

March 20, 1958

wonder, then, that the people of the province do not trust this Government? What did you do with the Larger Units? There were 28 Larger Units that petitioned for a vote and how many petitions, of these 28 were in order? All except two. Did they vote? Oh, no! It didn't please the Minister . . .

Hon. Mr. Lloyd (Minister of Education): — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, that statement is completely incorrect. No such comment was ever made.

Premier Douglas: — It is just his imagination . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Mr. Danielson: — Mr. Speaker, I am going to bring in a report to this House and show you.

Hon. Mr. Lloyd: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege again, I assure the members of the House that in every instance where the petition was that which was prescribed in the Act, a vote was taken. Mr. Speaker, I am making this statement. It is correct; but I don't expect the member for Arm River to accept it. He isn't that kind of person.

Mr. Danielson: — Mr. Speaker, I can ask your permission to bring the proof into this House. I haven't got it with me. I think can find it in the Journals of this House . . .

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Go ahead and search them!

Mr. Danielson: — . . . and you can find it in the public press, but you can deny it now if you wish to.

Hon. Mr. Nollet: — Get the journals.

Mr. Danielson: — That's all right . . .

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Oh, he's just having, a pipe dream!

Mr. Danielson: — Here is what they did, Mr. Speaker. They didn't let them vote then, but they did say "you can vote five years from now."

Premier Douglas: — They could have voted then.

Mr. Danielson: — And during that period every schoolhouse they could sell was sold, fences were torn up; the barns at the schools in the rural areas were hauled away and sold too.

There was nothing left of the old establishments as far as the local school districts were concerned. This Committee or Board or whatever it was had ceased functioning in these districts and everything, was gone. There was nothing to go back to. And I wouldn't be surprised to see the same thing happen here, unless there is some provision made. But they will say, "we will try this thing out, and in four or five years if you don't like it, we can go back to the other system." There was some hint by the Premier when he spoke, a few days ago, not directly but indirectly . . .

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is not going to put inferences or hints in my mouth. If he is going to quote me he can quote from the transcript of the record. Otherwise he will not quote me or make inferences which are unwarranted.

Mr. Danielson: — I think we will do it when we get the transcript.

Premier Douglas: — By next year he will say I said it, and by the year after that he will be absolutely sure I said it.

Mr. Danielson: — That is your method. You have practised it here for 14 years now.

Premier Douglas: — I am not going to stand for this falsification of facts. You have specialized in this for years.

Mr. Danielson: — This systematic story is one of your methods. I can bring in piles of your statements.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! The hon. member must speak to the motion.

Mr. Danielson: — Yes, I am going to speak to the motion. This motion that has already been passed.

Premier Douglas: — Stop manufacturing statements.

Mr. Danielson: — Now, there has been nothing said here that would insult anyone on that Committee; but the Premier tries to magnify these things; and he is an artist with words, with sneering words. And if he can get anybody, by any stretch of the imagination, where he can make it sound bad and smear a person, that is his long suit.

This motion of substitution means one thing, and one thing only; that this Government says, "so far as we are concerned we are not going to give the people a chance to vote."

Premier Douglas: — Nonsense.

March 20, 1958

Mr. Danielson: — That is what it means. We voted one motion down and an amendment that brought this same principle back into this amended motion was ruled out of order by this House. That is what I have to say. I am not afraid any of the remarks I have made about that Committee.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — You'd better be.

Mr. Danielson: — I still don't see why the Mayor of Saskatoon should be the Chairman of a Committee which deals entirely with rural matters. I said that before. There are thousands of farmers in the province of Saskatchewan saying that same thing today, Mr. Speaker.

Premier Douglas: — You said more than that. You said the Government appointed him.

Mr. Danielson: — No, I didn't say any such thing. Anybody could see the machinery working here, a year ago last fall, when that Conference took place; and they could understand, and see through what they were doing.

Again I say that this Government has denied, and is continuing to deny a vote to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers who have built up this country, have built up their local services organizations through the municipal secretaries and their municipal offices. There are very few in this country, or sitting on the floor of this House, who haven't been in municipal work; and they should really understand the tremendous service and usefulness of the municipal offices in this province. The local secretaries are the trouble shooters for everyone. Everybody comes in and asks them about anything; and the secretaries are well-informed, well-educated gentlemen, who are able to give correct information.

I was in municipal work for about 16 years before I came into this House, and I know something about it. Now that local service is going to be taken away from the people, if Mr. Baker's Commission recommendations, which have been accepted by this Government, are put into effect — and there are four Cabinet Ministers sitting on this Committee as pre-judges of this thing, before any report of the Committee is brought in, there is going to be no indication in regard to the acceptance of the proposed measure by way of letting the people say themselves, "we want this thing", or "we don't want it."

Premier Douglas: — That is nonsense.

Mr. W.J. Berezowsky (Cumberland): — Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say a few words on this motion. It seems to me that we are getting all excited and mad about just a little matter.

It seems to me that the only difference between the thinking on the opposite side and this side of the House is this whether we should tell the people (which is the opinion on the other side) what this Government is going to do now, before there has been any decision on whether we are going to have larger units of administration or not. The hon. members opposite would like us to go and tell the people that is such-and-such a situation should develop. If such-and-such a recommendation is made to this Government, then we are going to do it this way. I think what the Government would like to do is to find out first what the wishes of the majority are. To me it seems that is the only difference on the thinking opposite and the thinking on this side.

I think the democratic way, of course, is to ask the people for guidance — tell them that there has been a recommendation by the Continuing Committee that we should have certain action taken and ask what is the public's opinion. So I don't think we should be prepared, at this time, to say that the only way a decision will be made is by a vote of the electorate. Maybe that is a very good way, it could possibly be the best way. But are we in a position, at this time, to tell the people, as the Liberals have always told the people. This is the way it is going to be done. I think we should be able to tell them we want to find out how they want this problem settled. One of the reasons for my argument is that in the northern part of Saskatchewan I know there are certain areas right now that are ready to join a larger unit of administration without any vote. They have already decided.

Mr. McCarthy: — Where?

Mr. Berezowsky: — Right in my own area.

Mr. Cameron: — Would you permit a question? Would you name that area?

Mr. Danielson: — Give us the municipality or local improvement district.

Mr. Berezowsky: — I am saying it is the general opinion of people I have met.

Mr. Cameron: — Oh! That's different.

Mr. Berezowsky: — They are favourable towards the Larger Unit of administration, and the hon. members in this House know why. When you have small municipalities whose administration costs are high, notwithstanding what the council of a municipality may think, the fact is that the people realize that if they are to save money in their administration, the way they can do it is by having a larger unit of administration.

In any event, that is all I wanted to add to this

debate. To me it is only a difference of opinion — the democratic way, which is suggested by the Government, and the less democratic way which is suggested by the Opposition.

Mr. L.N. Nicholson (Nipawin): — Mr. Speaker, I didn't intend to take part in this debate; it is getting down to pretty small details as far as I am concerned. When we stop to consider that we are arguing over one little point, which is whether or not the people who will be concerned should have the right to vote, I don't know what we are arguing about. It is the natural and the only reasonable way to arrive at a final decision.

Now with reference to what the member from Cumberland (Mr. Berezowsky) has said, that he knows the north is ready to enter into the larger municipalities . . .

Mr. Berezowsky: — Mr. Speaker, I did not say the north. I said in my area, where I live.

Mr. Nicholson: — All right, your area adjoins mine. We have two very large municipalities in our area. Through circumstances, unfortunate weather and so on, those municipalities are in very bad shape. I have been talking to the municipal men who are in this town right now. I had two different groups in my room, last night. Both happened to be from municipalities that are in good condition, and they outwardly opposed this idea. I want to concur with what the hon. member from Maple Creek said a few moments ago, that, if they knew, today, that before any final decision was made that those concerned would have the right to have a vote on it, I believe things would be advanced much faster, and they would not have the fear or the feeling that they are going to have it shoved on them, whether they like it or not.

Hon. Mr. McIntosh (Minister of Municipal Affairs): —Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member from Arm River made it quite clear that the hon. member from Maple Creek was speaking for himself and not for all of those sitting on your left. Undoubtedly, in view of what the hon. member from Arm River had to say this morning, this whole question will probably receive further consideration at other provincial-municipal conventions that are going to be held in the near future. We take the position that the people to consult are the elected officials of the ratepayers, in the final analysis in other words, the local municipal council. My hon. friend from Arm River stated that he had spent 16 years in municipal business, and after 16 years in municipal business he now shows up the total ignorance he has of the right by legislation that the rural municipal councils have.

There has been some alteration in boundaries over the past few years. The hon. member from Nipawin made mention of one. When that area was organized into a municipality, there was a vote taken by the people. When a change was made in the of R.M. of Lacadena, No. 228, the local elected officials decided they would like to get an expression of opinion from their ratepayers before they made a final decision, and a plebiscite was taken by the officials of that municipality. There was also a vote taken in R.M. 249, when additional territory was added thereto; and you go to R.M. 276 and R.M. 306, you will find the same condition there. That, then, does suggest that the local municipal councils have the right for an expression of opinion by a plebiscite, if they so desire. Yet my hon. friend from Arm River, after 16 years in rural municipal business (and I am familiar with his association with his local municipality), should have, at least before he got up in the House here this morning, taken a look to refresh his memory as to the rights of the ratepayers as spelled out in the Rural Municipal Act.

Ratepayers can make two approaches. The ratepayers can petition the local council for a vote. A hundred ratepayers can petition the local council to take a plebiscite on this particular question; 20 ratepayers can petition the local council on any matter which they feel is of vital interest to the ratepayers.

So there are at least two approaches whereby the ratepayers can come to their local council, and the local council has the right to take a plebiscite, as has been demonstrated over the past few years by the municipalities I have mentioned.

The amended motion now before the House simply suggests that, when the Continuing Committee makes their recommendations to the Government, the Government is committed, and the Continuing Committee is committed, to have those recommendations go before their provincial conventions, either a regular or a special provincial convention, to discuss the recommendations of the Committee. Then, beyond a question of doubt, it will move from there to the local governing bodies individually or collectively within areas, in order to get an expression of opinion. Then, Mr. Speaker, if the local governing bodies decide that, rather than they themselves making a decision on behalf of the ratepayers, they should take a plebiscite, provisions are made in The Rural Municipal Act for the local council to take a plebiscite. That is the approach of the Government. The provisions, therefore, are made, and have been in the Act, for a good many years, for the local ratepayers to petition the council, and the council, on its own initiative, can ask for a plebiscite.

So I see nothing wrong with the motion as amended. I think it is keeping within the practice that has been followed over

the years, and I have no hesitation in saying it is quite democratic.

Mr. Danielson: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Minister a question: if this is in the law now (which he knows it isn't), what is the purpose of discussing it now. It has nothing to do with this resolution, or no connection with it. If it is in the Act now, why did you vote against it?

Hon. Mr. McIntosh: — If it's in the Act now, why — I didn't get that.

Mr. Cameron: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister one question, if I may. I was interested, and it was news to me that 50 or 100 ratepayers could at any time petition the council for a plebiscite on any matter. I am not too familiar with this. I thought it was only restrictive fields, such as debenture issues, and other things of that nature.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I think the hon. Minister can get in touch with the hon. member later.

Mr. John Thiessen (Shellbrook): — Mr. Speaker, I had no intention of getting into this discussion here, but I have been with municipal work pretty nearly all my life, too. I have spent the last 25 or 26 years as a councillor or reeve, and as a municipal secretary. I am a municipal secretary at the moment, and I do not think anyone needs to be afraid of this resolution, because rural people have the best guarantee they could get right in this resolution, and that is the local government organizations. Taking a look at my own constituency, who are the local government organizations? First of all I have one L.I.D. with four representatives and a secretary; I have the R.M. of Canwood with six councillors and a reeve, the municipality of which I am secretary, and I don't think you need to look any further for better men than we have in our municipality. They will never let the people of the R.M. of Canwood down on any count, regardless of what it is, whether the Government would propose this scheme or not.

Then I have the R.M. of Shellbrook. We had the representation in here yesterday, and those fellows are there for the ratepayers, not for the Government, nor anyone else. They are there to see that the ratepayers get the best deal out of any deal, whether it is federal or provincial issues. Then we have the R.M. of Leask, with Mr. Elder as secretary. I know those fellows, all of them, and they are there for the same purpose. Then I have the biggest part of Blaine Lake municipality, and I know those fellows; I met some of them here yesterday. They are going to watch the interest of their ratepayers in any move that might come from this side of the House, or any other side of the house, from this Government. Then, if we take a look at the larger

school unit (my constituency is practically all in one school unit), we have six school unit trustees, and those trustees there are definitely not going to take anything that is not good for the ratepayers of the district, either. They are there to guarantee they are going to get for their ratepayers that which is just and which is right.

Then, we have the Union Hospital Board, and we have 14 members on this, who are elected or appointed by council, and some elected. Those fellows are not going to let anything be slipped over on the ratepayers. They are going to be there, and that is the guarantee we have in this resolution, "held with local government organizations regarding the best method of ascertaining the wishes of their ratepayers". I don't think that any rural people or anyone else is going to ask for any more guarantee than what they are getting in this resolution.

Mr. M.J. Willis (Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I think this motion as amended is going to fall in with the wishes of the people, because rural and urban councils will see to it that no government provincially will push them around. In reply to the member from Arm River, I was quite interested in what he said about the larger school unit. All the time since 1944, we have heard this story about the larger units, and on the other side of the House there hasn't been one member who has got up and said they were for or against it.

Mr. McCarthy: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege, I have declared myself on different occasions in this House . . .

Mr. Willis: — But they have continually sniped at it and all its weaknesses . . .

Mr. Gardiner: — Keep to the truth; that's what we're here for.

Mr. Willis: — Mr. Speaker, the gentlemen across make me smile. The member for Arm River is worrying about the right of the people to vote. In 1938 he was elected for a term of five years and remained one extra year in this House. These are the people now who are worried about the right to vote.

Mr. Gardiner: — Watch your blood pressure.

Mr. Willis: — Lest the people forget, they would have been turned out a lot sooner if the people of this province had to put up with a Government that was bankrupt of ideas in 1943, and had to wait another year, and the hon. member from Am River was one of those who saw that the people of this province didn't

March 20, 1958

have the right to vote that year.

Mr. Speaker, I shall support the motion as amended. As a member of this Government we shall see that the people have their rights when the proper time comes.

Mr. McCarthy: — Rights! Don't say 'vote'.

Mr. Isaak Elias (Rosthern): — Mr. Speaker, would a question be permitted? I have with great interest listened to the debate. I want to ask a question of the Premier, just to clarify in my own mind, because I think we are all confused . . .

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member would be out of order . . .

Mr. Elias: — I cannot ask a question?

Premier Douglas: — . . . unless the House by unanimous consent allows a reply. I have already spoken in this debate.

Mr. Speaker: — Does the House agree to allow the hon. member to ask a question?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Mr. Elias: — My question is this: The motion as amended, does it give the people the guarantee that they will have a right to vote on this question before any change is made in organization? That is my question. Does it give the people a guarantee that they would have a vote, or not?

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, it is a guarantee that the Government will consult not only with the Continuing Committee, but with the provincial organizations which they represent, and with the local governing bodies. We will consult with them as to the best method of ascertaining the wishes of the people. If they want it on a local option basis, or on a general plebiscite, we will give this undertaking to whatever they want; we will follow that procedure for ascertaining what the people want. What are you talking about? Are you talking about a general plebiscite over the whole province, or are you talking about a local option in each municipality, and in each school unit? You have to define what you mean. We would want to sit down with these people and say, "How do you want to find out the people's opinions?" As I said the other day, you could use a string of townships which should go into this area, and the rest of the municipality go into that area; the townships and municipality may both go in here, but the string of townships may not want to go.

Would we take the vote of the whole municipality, or do we take the vote of just the string of townships?

It is a complicated question, and I am saying that we are prepared to consult with these organizations, and whatever method they feel is the best method of ascertaining the wishes of the people, the municipal people we will follow that method. I think we can trust to protect the interests of their people and to make suggestions to the Government that will be workable and democratic.

Mr. Douglas T. McFarlane (Qu'Appelle-Wolseley): — Mr. Speaker, I hadn't intended taking part in this debate because I think all the views have been pretty well discussed during the two opportunities we have had to discuss them. But, I don't to take issue with the remarks made by the member for Elrose (Mr. M.J. Willis), and of the cross-fire across the House when the statement was made that, even though the Liberals support some of these ideas, we still criticize them. Well, if there is one thing I want to emphasize here this afternoon, for the benefit of those opposite it is that we will continue to criticize regardless of whether we support them, or whether we don't support them; if we think there is room for criticism, you can rest assured that there will be constructive criticism.

That is why, over the period of history, the Liberal party not only in Great Britain or Canada, but in any other country, has remained the greatest party throughout the history of the world because of that principle.

Premier Douglas: — They're sure doing well in Great Britain these days.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order! Will the hon. member speak to the motion.

Mr. McFarlane: — I was quite surprised to hear the Premier of the province take issue a few minutes ago with some of the statements by the member for Arm (Mr. Danielson). If the member from Arm River had made statements with which the Premier did not agree, I believe that is the privilege of the member from Arm River. I suggest that nobody has to be more concerned than the Premier of this province, when he made the statement at that convention a year ago, to the effect that, if the municipalities want to continue 'muddling' along the way they have been doing, then that is their business. So I suggest if there was ever an aspersion cast on the people of the municipalities of this province, I don't think there was ever a greater one cast than when he used the term 'muddling'. So I would say that possibly one of the reasons why the Government opposite has never been able to influence, and has never been able

to control the municipal men of this province, is because of the attitude they have taken.

I would suggest that, in all sincerity, regardless of whether we have had a sub-amendment to the motion or not, if they had had the best interests of the people in this province at heart, they would have made sure the people got the right to vote. Now they have come up with an amendment which says they may or they may not. If they had been sincere with themselves, they would have said, "You will have the right to register an opinion on this very vital subject."

In the debate, the Government have negated the original motion which we had felt should have gone through this House without too much discussion in the interests not only of the Government, but in the interests of the ratepayers in the municipalities. Now that there is no definite guarantee to the people in my part of the province, and no definite guarantee to the ratepayers in other parts of the province, that they will have the vote, Mr. Speaker, I cannot support the motion as amended.

Mr. Kuziak (Minister of Natural Resources): — Mr. Speaker, I too was not going to take any part in this thing and I'm going to be very short. I have been in municipal work and a municipal secretary-treasurer for the past 17 years, and I want to say that this resolution as amended absolutely takes the rural municipal men into our confidence. In other words, the Opposition has no confidence in what the municipal men are prepared to do. We are taking them democratically into our confidence, and will with them work out a way. As far as I can see the Opposition have no confidence in the municipal men of this province. They think they can serve their interests better than will the municipal men of this province. I have confidence in the municipal men of Saskatchewan, and am going to support the motion as amended.

Mr. McDonald: — You should go up and talk to the municipal convention.

Mr. E. Kramer (The Battlefords): — There is only one thing I want to say in regard to some of the inferences which have been cast on this Continuing Committee by some members opposite. We have two members on that Committee from my constituency. One is an ex-member of this Legislature and a man whom I opposed in the political field, and I certainly want to say that I have every confidence in his stewardship of Mr. Irwin, Reeve of the Douglas municipality also on that Committee. I resent anything that is said regarding these people in this House.

Mr. Karl Klein (Notukeu-Willowbunch): — Mr. Speaker, before the member got up to speak I

was going to ask the Minister who spoke just prior to him (Hon. Mr. Kuziak), if he would permit a question. I would like to know who were the first in this province to recognize the need for municipal reorganization? Was it the municipal men who thought they needed the reorganization, or was it the Government?

Mr. Speaker: — Any answer on any question permitted must be very brief indeed . . .

Mr. Kuziak: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to reply to that question. I know that I attended municipal conventions 16 years ago and municipal men were talking about reorganization then. I believe it is the progressive municipal men of this province who have been seriously thinking about that particular problem.

Mrs. Mary Batten (Humboldt): — Mr. Speaker, I just want to clear up one or two impressions which might have been left that I don't think are quite correct. The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs (Hon. Mr. McIntosh) pointed out that, under the Act as it presently stands, ratepayers in the municipality can ask for a plebiscite. He is quite correct, but that in the first place, does not guarantee, of itself, that there is going to be a vote taken, or that for some reason or other things won't become so confused that that request will never be made. In the second place, the mere fact that that is the law today does not mean that will be the law next year at this same time. Although I have all the confidence in the world in the local governing bodies, I have not all that confidence in this Government, and I certainly cannot rely on them keeping those provisions in the Rural Municipal Act and in The Town Act that are there at present for the protection of the ratepayers, if they should see fit to change it. They could very well introduce legislation in the next Session and do exactly that, and there would be absolutely no commitment from them that they are not going to do that; there would be no guarantee absolutely to the municipal men and to the ratepayers that they would have a vote.

I agree with the hon. member from Nipawin (Mr. Nicholson) that it was such a simple thing that was asked — just a vote. It certainly wasn't enough to bring in a complicated amendment and to bring in this motion amended. There's no reason why everybody cannot support this motion in itself. It's merely — there's not a single thing in it.

Mr. Klein: — It just ties the hands of the municipal men.

Mrs. Batten: — Certainly this Provincial Government would not have gone to the trouble of calling Conference and setting up the organization of a committee without giving some consideration to the report of that committee when it is made. Of course you are going to consult with local government organizations

March 20, 1958

regarding the best methods of ascertaining the wishes of the ratepayers. Everybody in Saskatchewan takes it for granted that this Government is going to do those things. They are so self-evident it's foolish to put them into a resolution. There is absolutely nothing in that resolution except the very obvious fact that you have a Continuing Committee; that that Committee is going to bring in a report; that you are going to consider that report, and that you are going to consult with local governing bodies. But I would like to . . .

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend should finish the sentence. She says, "to consult with them", but she does not say what we will consult with them in regard to what.

Mrs. Batten: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to be free of interruption unless it is on a point of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, that is a point of privilege. The hon. member may not know it, but if she would study the rules, she would find out that you cannot quote part of a resolution and leave it there, and leave the inference that that is all there is to it. We say we will not only consult them, but we will consult them "as to the best means of ascertaining the wishes of the ratepayers." That is an important point.

Mrs. Batten: — I read the resolution, Mr. Speaker. I believe I read exactly that part.

Premier Douglas: — One would never know it!

Mrs. Batten: — And I went on to talk about it, and certainly I don't understand this point of privilege that the Premier mentioned. Maybe it is true that the Premier of this province has the right to stand up and speak on a point of privilege whenever anything is said about the Government . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Any member of the House has a right to raise a point of privilege, if the quotation is not complete.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Mr. Speaker, what is your ruling on the point of privilege raised by the Premier?

Mr. Speaker: — I think the point of privilege was well taken. If it is true that the hon. member from Humboldt did not complete that quotation, I am quite sure that that is . . .

Mrs. Batten: — But Mr. Speaker, I'm not disputing your ruling. I

agree with you, whatever your ruling may be; but I want to ask you this, Mr. Speaker, and I hope I'm in order to do so: I understood that a point of privilege was that any member could get up and speak on a point of privilege if there was a statement attributed to that member which was not true, or which he claims is not true. Now, I attributed no statement to the Premier of this province at all. I wasn't talking about him.

Premier Douglas: — I still has a point of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order! Will the hon. member proceed.

Mrs. Batten: —Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, in case there was any wrong impression left, let me read the whole thing again:

"That this Assembly recommend to the Provincial Government that before any basic change is made in the organization of Municipal Government in Saskatchewan, consideration be given to the report of the Continuing Committee on Local Government . . ."

I say, Mr. Speaker, and I think everybody in Saskatchewan must agree with me, that certainly nobody is going to act up and pay the expenses of a Continuing Committee; appoint or condone the appointment of people to this Committee; set up a secretariat which is costing the people of this province money; set up a system by which the various problems of reorganization can be studied, all of which is costing the taxpayer money, and not give it consideration. Of course, the report is going to be given consideration, not only by the Government of this province, but by everybody who is interested in the problems.

Now, to go on exactly from where I left off:

"and consultation be held with local government organizations regarding the best method of ascertaining the wishes of their ratepayers."

Of course that's going to be done. There is no question about it. But who are these local government bodies in the first place? I'll admit I was confused when I listened to the Conference that was convening, because it was not only the rural municipal that were here as representatives of local governments, together with the urban people; it was also represented by the School Trustees; there were also representatives from the Hospital Boards; also representatives from other groups. Now, those people are all being considered as part of the local government,

and I have no dispute with that; but in many cases these people represent exactly the same people. In fact, I would say in most cases. So where the School Trustees can say, "Our people don't want a vote", speaking about the very same people, your rural municipality executives may say, "Our people do want a vote." That's the whole problem. How much are you going to listen to one group of local governing body executives, and how much are you going to listen to the other? We have at no time denied the right and privilege and duty of this Government to consult with these local governing bodies as to how a vote should be taken. The very simple request that the original motion was for, and that this motion as it now stands is denying, is that people in Saskatchewan be guaranteed a vote.

Premier Douglas: — Nonsense!

Mrs. Batten: — We didn't tell them how to take the vote. It is up to this Government, and the local governing bodies as to how it is going to be done, and it is not fooling anybody to say that we cannot say right now, how it's going to be done; therefore, we can't guarantee it. That's a ridiculous statement, and I have never heard a more ridiculous statement all the time I have been in this House, (and I have heard some very foolish ones, Mr. Speaker), than the speech or statement from the hon. member for Cumberland (Mr. Berezowsky) when he said that it was "undemocratic to say to the people that you have to have a vote". Nobody but a socialist would make a statement of that kind.

Mr. Berezowsky: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege. I did not say it was undemocratic to give people a vote. I said it is undemocratic, in my opinion, for the people at the top to tell what should be done, instead of using the democratic way of asking people from the bottom to say how it should be done.

Mrs. Batten: — I have jotted it down; I must have taken it wrong, it was a "dictatorial stand, when you say people must have a vote," because you are telling them they must have a vote, whether they want one or not.

It is very easy for people to avoid that dictation, because even though they have a vote, they don't have to utilize it; they don't have to vote. But to give the opportunity to vote is as democratic as any other provision that we have for the governing of the people of Saskatchewan, and I think that this motion is denying that guarantee. It is not saying they are not going to vote. Of course it isn't. It's not saying anything except, very obviously, they are going to look at the report and they are going to consult with local governing bodies. And because, Mr. Speaker, this motion is utterly meaningless as it now stands, and because it deliberately evades giving people of Saskatchewan, particularly the rural people

the guarantee that their wishes will be respected and will be listened to by the pronouncement of the of their vote, I will vote against the motion.

Mr. E.I. Wood (Swift Current): — Mr. Speaker, I gather from the remarks of the members opposite that they are assuming that the only way to handle this problem, the only way to get a representative idea of what the people of the province think, is to take a plebiscite all the way across the province on this question.

Mr. Cameron (Maple Creek): — Here we go again. Read the original motion.

Mr. Wood: — I would gather that this method of doing things could not always answer the question correctly. I have had a certain amount of experience in municipal work, and, I find that things are not the same in all parts of the province at the same time. There may be a certain set of provisions in one part of the province that would not add to requirements of certain other parts of the province, and an overall plebiscite sent to all parts of the province might not be a satisfactory way of handling it.

I think it should be left to the members of this Committee and the local governing bodies of this province to say what the final decision is going to be, to find out what the people want and to express an opinion on the matter. I don't think we at this time can tie the hands of that Committee, or tie the hands of local governing bodies or the Government, to say it has to be done by one certain method. It would appear to me that the members opposite are adopting the principle that a promise is better than a record.

The member for Elrose stated that, the party which is represented by the members opposite back in 1943, flouted the rights of the people to express their wishes, and the party which sits on this side of the House has always respected the rights of the people in this regard, and I think we can have implicit trust in them and that the assurance they are giving is sufficient, and I will certainly support the motion as amended.

Mr. W.S. Lloyd (Minister of Education): — Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that the member from Maple Creek (Mr. Cameron) assured the Legislature and, I hope, the province, of their confidence in the Committee and the personnel of that committee, and its competency to study its particular problem. I sympathize with him when his address had to be following the words of the member from Arm River (Mr. Danielson) which somewhat upset that confidence perhaps; but knowing the member for Arm River I think we could have expected that, and nobody is going to be too much disturbed about it.

Mr. Danielson: — What did you refer to?

March 20, 1958

Hon. Mr. Lloyd: — I'm not going to enter into an argument with regard to larger school units at this point, Mr. Speaker. I do want to say, though, that the member for Arm River has, ever since I have been in this House, indicated on many occasions his opposition to that move; and he continues to indicate it, as he did this morning. It seems to me it is important, however that people who assume positions of responsibility are not content just to say that certain ends should be achieved in education, for example, and at the same time go on to say that you shall not use the only means by which these ends shall be achieved.

Mr. Loptson (Saltcoats): — That was compulsory.

Mr. Danielson: — That's right.

Hon. Mr. Lloyd: — The big problem in talking about local government is to get people to look at the problems which it presents, without looking just at their prejudices. That was the reason, of course, that that conference was held. That was the reason why the Continuing Committee was set up. In other words, these moves were taken so that groups of people who were interested in, who were familiar with the problem, who have a legitimate right to talk about it, could sit down, could have the benefit of research facilities, and hope to come up with an answer to this extremely important problem.

With regard to the solution itself, I submit that there is only one question before this Legislature at the moment, and that question is this: are we going to attempt to spell out all the details now, before the Committee has had opportunity to complete its study, or are we going to wait until the Committee has completed its study, and at that point decide what action is to be taken? That is the only question before this Legislature: whether we are going to attempt to spell out the answers now that we want the Committee to find, or are we going to wait until the Committee has finished examination of the evidence and has made up its mind on it, and then we will take that into consideration in making up our minds?

In this regard, I think the action taken at the Conference of the Association of Rural Municipalities this week confirms the wisdom of the resolution, confirms the fact that this is in line with the thinking of those delegates. This is 'The Leader-Post' of March 19, and they refer in one paragraph (page 3, I think it is) to this action. They said:

"Initially, and with very brief discussion, the Convention tabled a calling for the Provincial Government not to proceed with the organization of larger municipalities until a vote of the areas concerned had been taken.

"The resolution went before that Convention, saying that there will be no action taken until a vote has been held, and the Convention said, 'We are not prepared to deal with that now'. We will table it."

In other words, the Convention (if is correct) is saying exactly the same thing that this resolution says, namely, that we will wait until this competent and representative group of people have finished their examination of their evidence. We will wait and see what conclusions they come to after that evidence, and at that point we will make up our minds as to how to proceed. That's all the resolution says; that's all that is before this Legislature at the moment.

The members of the Opposition who declared themselves as being prepared to vote against it are, in fact then, voting against this suggestion, which again simply says we are going to wait until all the evidence is before us and then make up our minds, and not make up our minds before we have examined the opinions and evidence of the competent group of people who have examined that evidence.

Mr. J.R. Barrie (Pelly): — Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to take part in this debate, but some certain observations have been made in this House. I think possibly I have to disagree with the hon. Minister of Education when he outlined what he considered was the crucial matter in connection with this item at the present time. I don't think any member in this House will disagree that, at the present time, there is a great deal of concern throughout all of Saskatchewan regarding this matter of effecting, probably at a later date, larger municipal units of administration. Otherwise, there would not be the jockeying around with the original motion that was made in bringing in this amendment. It is a matter that is being particularly discussed at this time in the city of Regina, where members of all the Rural Municipalities are meeting. It is not a matter of the original motion. The original motion was not a matter of telling when, how or what; but it would have allayed concern that is being fostered in the minds of (I would say) the majority of the people in the province of Saskatchewan. For one reason — going back to the Conference which was held in 1956 — it was very evident, so far as I was concerned in attending that Conference, that there was a very decided movement and support by certain members who spoke to that Conference, for a larger unit of municipal administration and more centralization of power. The Baker Commission — the Royal Commission on Rural Life — had a certain observation or statement in that particular report, which has caused this concern to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, because, when they discussed the matter of the larger units of administration, they made mention, and they warned against having votes taken by the people concerned — the ratepayers of the province — that this possibly should be put in without

a vote. I believe that is the basis of the concern which is being held particularly by the rural people at this particular time.

If our friends opposite had now wanted a vote to be taken, or were opposed to a vote, then they would do exactly what has been done; but if they weren't opposed to a vote, there was nothing tied up in the original motion that would have said how it would have to be done, or when it had to be done. This report will come in, and they will consider the report. Certainly they will consider the report, as the hon. member for Humboldt mentioned. But the thing is, they have destroyed the intention of the original motion, and I am quite sure, from discussions I have heard in the last day or so, particularly in this city, that there is a great deal of concern amongst the rural people of this province, and amongst the representatives of the rural people of this province, the municipal councils.

In view of that, Mr. Speaker, I will not support the motion as amended.

Mr. J.W. Gardiner (Melville): — Mr. Speaker, in rising to close the debate on this motion, it is very difficult for me to recognize this motion as the one I originally moved, some weeks ago. At the time I made the motion I did not feel for one moment that the simple little motion I moved on that occasion would generate the heat and the debate that it has in this Assembly. I felt at that time that every one of us, no matter what our political beliefs are, believed in the right of the people to a democratic vote in this province. But it appears from the actions of the members of the Assembly that they don't believe that the real way to get the wishes of the ratepayers, the people, of this province, is to ask them through a vote what they desire. It seems to me a year or two ago, when there was a very minor question, an issue placed before the Government of this province, the question of time was fought out. The Government was not prepared to put it into effect. They said that they wanted to see what the wishes of the people were in this regard, and they called a plebiscite. But here, on one of the most important issues that has faced the people of this province probably since 1905, with regard to local government organization in Saskatchewan, we are told that the Government of the province should not promise to the ratepayers and the people of this province a vote on this question.

My main objection to the motion, as we have it before us at the present time is that, all well and good, speakers who have preceded me have mentioned the fact that the consideration of the report of the Continuing Committee, and also the fact that the Government is going to take consultation with local government organizations, is well understood and well believed to be a fact. My objection to the resolution is that, while they have gone that far, they don't even

indicate that they are prepared to accept the advice that would be given either by the Committee or by the representatives of local organizations. All that is said is that they are going to consult with them. There is not even any guarantee that they will accept the recommendation of the local people after that consultation, and I think that is why as suggested by the member for Pelly a few moments ago, the municipal people at the present time, in spite of what the Minister of Education has said, have fear in their minds with regard to this issue, because the resolution as it appears here now has not given any guarantee whatsoever. In spite of what the Premier may have said in statements, it does not give any legislative guarantee that the recommendations of any group, local or otherwise, are going to be accepted. Even if they were to state that they desired to have a vote in this province, the Government is not prepared to accept that particular advice.

That is the main basis on which I believe the members in this Legislature should oppose this motion that is before us at the present moment. Someone across the way said that, after all, we should meet with them and decide what is the best way of taking a vote. In other words, he is more or less agreeing that perhaps a vote should be taken. But actually the original motion did not rule out the possibilities of the Government consulting with anyone with regard to taking a vote or a plebiscite, and, of course, the amendment that was suggested here, this morning, would have left definitely to the local people their right to advise the Government on the method of taking that plebiscite.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order! The hon. member may not speak on an amendment which was ruled out of order.

Mr. Gardiner: — Well, I think there has been reference made to it before I spoke.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to make one or two things clear before I take my seat. When this motion was originally moved by myself (the original motion), I don't believe there was anything said in it that referred to a possible decision that might be made by the Continuing Committee. I don't believe that, at any time, either through the press or in the proceedings of this House, have I attacked personally any individual sitting on the Continuing Committee, in spite of the inferences that may have been made by certain members of this House that might have been pointed at myself in that connection. Never at any time have I objected personally to anyone being on this particular Committee; but I would like to leave this thought in your mind at this time, because of the fact that it has been brought up here this morning; only six out of the 14 on the actual Committee can be termed rural representatives, or rural people. There are the four Cabinet Ministers, who admittedly are not representatives of farm people. They may be in their constituencies, to a certain extent; but

March 20, 1958

none of them are farmers or were farmers before coming into this House, at least not to my knowledge. The Urban Municipal representatives, all three are from towns or cities which, I think, will have very little chance or opportunity of being included in counties because of the size of those particular towns and cities.

Mr. Cameron: — Like Gull Lake!

Mr. Gardiner: — Gull Lake? I'm not sure of the population, but I think in recommendations that have been made, it has been suggested at conferences here, that possibly towns under 500 might be included under the possible county system; but towns larger than that, there is a very little possibility that they would be included.

I am quite prepared to admit the three school trustees are people from rural areas of the province, and, of course, can be included in the six, along with the rural representatives who are actually practising farmers and ratepayers in rural municipalities in this province.

Premier Douglas: — Has the hon. member forgotten the representatives of the health regions?

Mr. Gardiner: — I maybe should have mentioned, Mr. Fahlman — that makes seven. That would make half the Committee composed of men who are representatives of rural areas or are possible ratepayers in rural areas of this province. So we have 50 per cent of the representation on that Committee, which includes representatives of the rural ratepayers in this province, considering a question which affects almost entirely the rural people of Saskatchewan. That is the only objection whatsoever I would have to that Committee. I have no objection to any particular individual being on it. I don't care what individuals are on this Committee to bring down the proposals that we are to deal with, and the people of this province are to deal with, providing the people themselves, and the ratepayers, have the final responsibility to decide what form of government administration we are going to have in Saskatchewan.

As far as the consultation with local government organizations in the final analysis, and the statements that have been made by the Minister of Education, I would like to make reference again, as others have in this debate, to the larger school units. I know that in statements he made a few moments ago, he was probably making references to myself, but I believe I can state to the hon. gentleman that at no time to my knowledge have I actually stated direct opposition to the larger school units.

Govt. Members: — Hear! Hear!

Mr. Gardiner: — I have brought up objections to the system of administration and the method in which it was established in this province, and the method in which it is being handled in many ways in this province at the present time, but never have I made the statement that I am opposed to the basic idea of a larger school unit. In fact, I would remind my hon. friends across the way that it was no less a person than my father who put on the first enabling legislation to enable larger units to be established in the province of Saskatchewan back in 1927.

Premier Douglas: — What happened that they weren't established?

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order!

Mr. Gardiner: — Mr. Speaker, there is one indication I want to leave about the value the Government here gives to votes of the people in this province. It is an example I can take from my own area. I happened to be attending a meeting, which was considering the calling of a vote in the larger school unit area where I happened to live, a few years ago. Just prior to the taking of that vote, I was attending the meeting as secretary of our local school district. The school superintendent who was at that meeting made the statement that he thought it was a very democratic thing to have a vote on the units in that particular area. I agreed with him, but I said: "Isn't it true that a petition was presented to the Government, six years ago, asking for a vote on the larger unit question? He said, "Yes". I asked, "Why wasn't the vote taken?" He said, "They knew it would be defeated, and it would just be a waste of money." That was the statement that was made.

Hon. Mr. Lloyd: — Mr. Speaker, on a point, of privilege . . .

Mr. Gardiner: — What is the point of privilege?

Mr. Speaker: — Take your chair. Order! Order!

Hon. Mr. Lloyd: — In the first place I think it is rather unfitting of a member to quote a public servant without any proof of the fact that this is what the public servant says; in the second place, may I point out that the petition which was referred to was a petition asking that a vote be held before the unit was established; it is not asking that that vote be held at any particular time.

Mr. Gardiner: — I don't know, Mr. Speaker. It was at a public meeting I'm speaking of, and I am quite certain I can remember the words that were said quite well. The gentleman made them, and I am quite certain if I spoke to him today, he would

March 20, 1958

admit having made that reply to me at that particular meeting. And if we cannot make statements with regard to things that take place publicly in the province, I don't know what we are here for. That is actually what took place on that particular occasion. The vote was held, and I would just like to leave this idea in the Minister's mind that at no time during the course of that vote did I attend any meeting, did I ever indicate to anyone what my views were on the larger school unit issue. I think on three occasions I had people come into my office, not supporters of my party, but supporters of the party across the way. They were the only three that ever asked what my opinion on the larger school unit was, and I told them both the pros and cons — the only way I believe that it should be given to the people of this province.

I think, on this particular issue that we are discussing at the present time, that if the Government of this province has the faith in the people that it claims to have, it should have supported the original motion. But as I have already stated, there is no guarantee whatsoever; not only is there not a guarantee that a vote will be given, there is not even a guarantee that the advice of the groups that have been suggested in this resolution will be accepted by the Government of this province, that advice has been given. There is no guarantee of that in this resolution. So I can definitely state here now, Mr. Speaker, that for those reasons I definitely cannot support the motion as amended.

The question being on the motion as amended, it was agreed to by 27 votes against 17.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 87 — An Act to amend The School Act.

Mr. Speaker, most of this Bill can be properly discussed in Committee of the Whole. I have just one or two comments to make on it at this time.

One of the changes which the Bill makes is to increase the amount of fees which a school district may charge a student attending, who is resident in another school district. Hon. members will be aware of the fact that the costs of providing education have gone up very considerably, and this is simply a move to make it possible for a district to recover something more like the actual cost. The previous maximum fee for a high school student was \$70 per year; that is

being increased to \$100. The previous maximum fee for a public school youngster was based on 15 cents per day, per family. This is being changed to 25 cents per day in respect of one child, or 50 cents per day in respect of two or more children.

I would like to point out that this ceiling which is established here does not apply when one school district negotiates with another school district for taking care of the youngsters from that area. It applies only in those cases in which younger people go, on their own as it is, to another school district to obtain educational facilities there. There is no limit to the amount which can be charged when school district A sits down with school district B to say: "Well now, if you will look after the education of our youngsters, we will pay you a certain amount." They are not bound by these particular limits.

There is one other matter that should be referred to. We have been having a little bit of difficulty in some cases, due to the fact that titles to property on which schools have been built have not been obtained. In many cases, years ago, land was given to the school district in order to build a school at that particular point; and in a few cases the title was not obtained. A school house has been built and established on that property for 20 or 30 years. We have had a few cases in which the lack of title has proved rather difficult. We had one case, for example, in, which the school board now discovered that they had title, and the man who had the title to the land simply moved the school off it and made a granary out of it. In another case, I believe, one person moved it off and started a store in it. I think this is plainly not right and, in consultation with the Attorney General's Department, they have suggested a method whereby the school district could get title to this land, and that is provided for here. There will be a House amendment inserting that action can be taken only with the approval of the Local Government Board.

Those are the main items, Mr. Speaker; the rest, and they too, can be discussed in Committee.

I would move second reading of the Bill.

Mr. Gardiner: — Mr. Speaker, I would just like to ask a question of the Minister. When he is speaking about the moving of buildings, I understand there are one or two cases where, back in the old days, the school was built not only as a school, but more or less the community centre. In some places where those schools have now been closed, the school district never has title . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order! It seems to me the kind of question the member is raising is one which should

be asked, properly, in Committee. We are just dealing with the principle of the Bill.

Mr. Gardiner: — Well, I just wanted to know the recourse in this regard. He mentioned that that was one of the main things in the Bill — the matter of title. The titles, in these cases, have not been transferred to the schools and they are not in the name of the school; they are actually still in the name of the individual farmer. There have been attempts made to move the building and he has refused to allow it to be moved. Well, under this Bill would it give authority to the school board to insist upon that school being taken off the farmer's property, because there has never been any title in the name of the school as far as the Land Titles Office is concerned. The buildings on that property, I would imagine, would belong to the individual himself, and I would just like to know, first, if this could be a means of expropriation, of taking the buildings whether the farmer approved of it or not.

Mr. Speaker: — The hon. Minister may answer the question when he closes the debate.

Hon. Mr. Lloyd: — I am glad you said, Mr. Speaker, I may answer it, because for the life of me I really don't know what it is. He started at one place and went around . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order! It is my duty to inform the Assembly the hon. Minister is about to close the debate. Anyone wishing to speak should do now.

Mr. F.E. Foley (Turtleford): — I presume this discussion is referring to clause 53(a) of the Act. I would like a little clarification on this particular clause, Mr. Minister, where we have, in the principle of this clause, which states: "Expropriation of land on which school buildings are situated."

Now I presume that the board of a district in this case refers to the local school board, and I wonder if there is any provision in this Act where the local school board and the board of the unit are not in agreement as to disposition of school property, if there is any clause in this particular portion to set up a Board of Mediation. I know of one or two cases where, as I say, there has not been agreement between the local board and the unit board on the disposition or rural school property.

Hon. Mr. Lloyd (closing): — Well, Mr. Speaker, I am still very confused over the question which the hon. member for Melville, (Mr. Gardiner) attempted to ask, and all I can say is to repeat that the only purpose of this section is to take care of

those cases in which a school house or a school building has, for many years, been standing on a site which, it was supposed, had been the property of the school district, and it is now discovered that title had never been properly transferred. Everybody knows that the school was there and had been used for 20 or 30 years and, in an ordinary sense, is the property of the school district; but because of this technicality it cannot get the control of it; and because of this technicality the man who is still the owner of the site can take the building and, as I understand it, he can use it as he sees fit. This is simply to provide a procedure whereby, with the approval of the Local Government Board, the school district will be able to obtain title to this particular property.

With regard to the question of the member for Turtleford (Mr. Foley), this particular provision has nothing to do with that particular problem.

(The Motion for second reading was agreed to, and the Bill referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.)

Bill No. 90 — An Act to amend The Larger School Unit Act.

Hon. Mr. Lloyd: — Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill to amend The Larger School Units Act, and again I think most of our discussion can be properly and profitably held in Committee.

It does establish a slightly different date for nominations of Unit trustees in order to give a somewhat longer period of time between nomination and election.

The main provision in the Bill is, however, that one which puts into effect the grant changes to which I referred, in speaking in the Budget debate. Since I stated the general principle at that time, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I do not need to do so at this time, and we can continue the discussion on it when it is before us in Committee. I would move second reading.

(The Motion was agreed to, and the Bill referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.)

The Assembly adjourned at 10:00 o'clock p.m., without question put.