

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fourth Session — Thirteenth Legislature
14th Day

Tuesday, March 1, 1960

The House met at 2:30 o'clock pm.

On the Orders of the Day:

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Hon. J. Walter Erb (Minister of Health): — Mr. Speaker, before the orders of the day, I should like to draw the attention of the House to the exceptionally fine group of students in the gallery to your left. These are Grade XI and XII pupils of the Pangman High school, and are accompanied by their principal, Mr. Reiter, and Mr. Jones, of Pangman. The boys and girls came in this morning, and to make their trip worthwhile, they were at the Mounted Police Barracks to go through the museum. Out of the 13 students, none were detained at the barracks, which suggests they are all law abiding citizens. We hope they all enjoy their stay with us; that they will find profit and pleasure in the moments they spend here and that they will come back again.

Mr. A.T. Stone (Saskatoon City): — Mr. Speaker, before the orders of the day, I also have a group of children from Saskatoon — from St. John's separate school — and their teacher, Mr. Provost. I am sure all hon. members will join with me in saying how happy we are to have them with us, and hope they will return again to the capital city.

BUDGET DEBATE

The Assembly resumed, from Monday, February 29, 1960, the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Fines: That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair. (The Assembly to go into Committee of Supply).

Hon. C.G. Willis (Minister of Public Works): — First I would join with the other members who have spoken in this debate in congratulating the Provincial Treasurer on the presentation of his 16th successive budget. These budgets have been forecasting surpluses, and that is, indeed a remarkable record. That these forecasts of surpluses have been borne out by the following Public Accounts, makes the record all the more impressive, and they are indeed a tribute to the care and the ability with which the Provincial Treasurer has prepared his budgets.

Like the previous speakers, too, I would express my well wishes to those who are retiring from this Legislature this term — those who are retiring voluntarily, and I can assure you that at times those of us who will be making an attempt to return will cast envious eyes in your direction.

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In the meantime, the presentation of my Department program to this Legislature gives me much pleasure.

Public Works' capital budget, as the House was informed last Friday, totalled \$5,294,000. Along with the \$2,686,000 on ordinary accounts, Department of Public Works will be responsible for spending \$7,980,000 in the coming fiscal year, in comparison with a total of \$8,849,000 for the current year. This reduction of \$869,000 is mainly due to the fact that money for the construction at the University, this year, totalling \$1 1/2 million is included in the vote for Education. In the past, major capital construction at the University of Saskatchewan has been the responsibility of Public Works. In future years, this responsibility will be assumed by the University itself. This is a logical step in that the University has a building department of its own, headed by an engineer, who will be able to give on-the-spot planning and supervision directly under University authorities. This is a logical step, too, in that the University has commenced to raise funds for its building program, and, in the future, a large part of the cost of its capital projects will be assumed by the University.

Buildings currently under construction by my department include two at the University — the Arts Building, and the Biology Building. The contract for the Arts building was let in two sections. The classroom wing was completed last summer and is now in use, and the remainder of the building, namely the office and auditorium sections, will be completed in this coming fiscal year. The Arts building, with its five-storey office section, will be the highest building on the campus and, when completed, will certainly be one of the most outstanding. The classroom section of the Biology building has been in use since last fall. The remainder of this building, the lab section, will be ready for use by this September. The total cost of the Arts building will be \$2,700,000 while the Biology building, when it is completed, will cost \$1,800,000.

Among the highlights of the capital program of Public Works is Saskatchewan's Technical Institute building at Moose Jaw. This, when completed will cost \$2,400,000. Originally it was intended that the construction program for this building would be spread over a three-year period. When tenders were received however, it was found that by entering into a single contract a savings of \$600,000 could be effected. The single contract was accepted with the result that work is proceeding more rapidly than first anticipated. The shop area is completed and in use, and the entire building should be finished this year. This year's budget contains the sum of \$1 million which will substantially complete payments on this building.

Under construction, too, is a new Court House building for the city of Regina. Started last October, this building is approximately 20 per cent completed at the present time, and is expected to be finished by May, 1961. The total cost will be \$1,800,000, of which \$1 million is provided in the coming year's budget.

A 100-bed geriatric centre will be built at Swift Current at a cost of \$1 million, of which \$500,000 is being provided for the coming year. This will bring to five the number of geriatric centres in the province, with total bed capacity of 748.

Provision I made, too, for a 148-bed mental hospital at Yorkton. Because of this province's advanced mental health program, the province has been able to attract the services of able and dedicated psychiatrists and workers in the field of mental health. From these men have come the plans known as the 'Saskatchewan plan' for a small community-type hospital for the treatment of mental illness. This is the type of hospital that will be built at Yorkton at a cost of \$1 million, of which \$500,000 is contained in this budget.

The budget provides \$50,000 for the completion of the hospital and nurses' residence at La Ronge. Total cost of this project will be \$450,000. There is provision, too, of \$250,000 for the creation of a Government garage in Regina. As members know, our present Government garage is situated back of the Regina College building. With an anticipated expansion of Regina College there will be need of this building by the University, and we are making plans to move our garage into a new building.

New boilers will be installed in the power plant on the Legislative Buildings grounds, and the anticipated cost is \$191,000. We also plan to renew boilers in the power plant at the Weyburn hospitals, the cost of which will be \$104,500. A provincial office building will be constructed at Meadow Lake at a total cost of \$200,000. A start was made on the renovation of the ventilating and heating system in the Legislative Building, which it is estimated will cost, this year, \$251,000. A storage building will be built for the Saskatchewan Research Council on the University Campus at a cost of \$60,500. At Saskatchewan House in Regina, landscaping will be carried at an estimated cost of \$10,000. At the School for the Deaf in Saskatoon, repairs and renovations will be performed at a cost of \$33,600, while at Saskatoon Teachers' College, renovations to the extent of \$23,300 will be carried out. A 40 x 60 foot heated and insulated steel storage building will be built at Meadow Lake for the Department of Highways at an estimated cost of \$32,000. For the Department of Natural Resources, \$60,000 is provided for the construction at Prince Albert of a central stores building, to store firefighting equipment. Major repairs and renovations will be made at Camp Easter Seal, Manitou Beach, Watrous. As members know, the government-owned buildings at Manitou Beach, including the chalet and dining hall, have been leased to the Saskatchewan Council for Crippled Children and Adults. With the Government assuming responsibility of major renovations there, \$21,900 has been provided to complete the program agreed upon for 1960-61. For provision of the preparation of plans for future construction, there is the customary amount of \$50,000.

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Mr. Speaker, I must take the financial critic of the Opposition to task for one statement he made yesterday. I am sorry to see that he is not in his seat now; but the statement which he made yesterday was that since 1944, \$15 million had been spent on renovations and major repairs at the two mental hospitals at Weyburn and North Battleford. This is definitely not true. There has been spent on these two buildings by the C.C.F. Government the sum of \$3,523,000. At North Battleford, a necessary power house extension was made; a laundry building was provided, as well as a filtration plant; a new 120-bed geriatric unit; and extensive repairs to the main building accounted for most of the \$1,800,000 spent at the hospital. At Weyburn, extensive attic area reconversions took place. These, with ward alterations, immensely improve the existing space. There is a new wing to the T.B. annex at Weyburn; an addition to the power house, a nurses' residence and a water project, also among the major expenditures. All of these provided much-needed improvements so that both the efficiency of the staff and the comfort of the patients were improved. I am pleased that a Saskatchewan-planned small community hospital is being built this coming year, but certainly the money spent on renovating and improving the older hospital buildings has not been wasted.

The latest Annual Report of my Department contains a picture on page 22 of the "new look" at the Weyburn Hospital. I particularly draw to the attention of the members the sentence in the second paragraph on page 23, which states that, "when completed, the roof renovations will contribute to an integrated, functional hospital, where all space is being used to maximum advantage." A picture of the new geriatric unit at North Battleford is shown on page 24 of the same report. I believe a visit to any of these hospitals would be of benefit to any of the members for comparative purposes, as between conditions existing now at these hospitals and what existed formerly.

Total expenditures of the Department of Public Works on capital projects for the Department of Public Health are approximately \$15 million, but this includes an expenditure of \$8,137,000 on the Saskatchewan Training School at Moose Jaw, as well as other expenditures for the Physical Restoration Centre, and the hospital now under construction at La Ronge. Besides, smaller amounts for health centre buildings were spent throughout the province.

Among other major expenditures by Public Works on buildings since 1944, were those which occurred at the University. On page 41 of the Annual Report to which I have referred, the list of buildings completed since 1944 shown here would include, if we had this year's list, the Arts and Biology buildings, which are under construction now. The total spent on University buildings from 1944 to February 29, 1960, is now \$23,155,000. February 29, 1960, expenditures for new buildings by this Government since totalled \$56,561,000. The expenditures for the Department of Public Health and on university buildings, which I have just outlined, make up

\$38.2 million or about 70 per cent of the total.

Other major buildings constructed during this period include the new 300-bed geriatric centre here in Regina, built at a cost of \$2,142,000; a 150-bed geriatric Centre at Melfort, at a cost of \$1,035,000; the cost of the Saskatoon Court House completed two years ago, \$1,192,000; the Museum of Natural History here in Regina, at a cost of \$1,230,000. That this Museum is popular with the people of Saskatchewan is shown by the large number of visitors attracted to it. During 1959, attendance at the museum was 218,910.

My Department has spent to date \$1,391,000 on the Saskatchewan Technical Institute at Moose Jaw. When this is completed, a total of \$2.4 million will make this one of our major buildings, cost-wise. The Provincial Laboratory here in Regina cost \$920,000.

There exists a great deal of confusion in the minds of members opposite as to the uses to which our Provincial Government buildings are put. The statement was made, this Session, that a total expenditure of more than \$50 million was for office buildings, to house the expanding civil service. That this is not true is shown by the information I have just given. Of the \$56 million spent by Public Works on new buildings since 1944, not more than \$8 million has been spent on office buildings. The major expenditures for office buildings are for the Administration Building here on the grounds, which cost \$3,485,000, and the Health and Welfare Building alongside of it, at a cost of \$2,715,000. There is also a provincial office building which was constructed at Prince Albert at a cost of \$378,000 and the new provincial office building at North Battleford, which cost \$601,000.

It is interesting to note that since 1905, when the province became property owners by purchasing 11 buildings from the Federal Governments, a grand total of \$81,277,000 in capital costs has been spent for our public buildings. Of this, \$24.7 was constructed before 1944, and \$56.5 million constructed after 1944.

When the C.C.F. Government came into office in 1944, a decision was made to finance capital expenditure for highways and public buildings as far as possible, from current revenues. That this was a wise decision is shown by a study of the amount actually spent on behalf of public buildings before 1944. The original expenditure of \$24,700,000 of construction before 1944 was financed by borrowing. Expenditures for debt charges on this amount, up to 1944, amounted to \$24,300,000. Although an amount almost equal to the original cost had been paid in debt charges, the Province still owed, in 1944, the sum of \$23,419,000 for public buildings. Although the greater part of this amount has been paid off since 1944, interest charges are continuing to add to the original costs of these early buildings. This Government has paid an additional \$12,500,000 in interest charges on these buildings since 1944.

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To recapitulate, Mr. Speaker, on the original capital expenditure of \$24,700,000 for public buildings prior to 1944, debt charges up to 1944 were \$24,314,000 and after 1944, \$12,500,000 or a total of \$36,800,000 in interest charges alone. This makes a grand total of \$61,500,000 as the overall cost of buildings constructed up to 1944, or two and one-half times the first cost. Before the debentures are entirely cleared off by 1968, this total cost will be even greater. This clearly indicates that the pay-as-you-go policy of the C.C.F. re 'deadweight' debt pays dividends in lower costs to the taxpayer.

Because the question is often asked, I thought I should put on the record the cost position of this Legislative Building in which we are meeting, this afternoon. The first capital cost of the Legislative Building was \$3,536,000. Interest charges up to 1944 were \$3,800,000, and interest paid following 1944 on the debentures was \$1,166,000 or a total in interest charges alone of \$4,900,000. The total cost, interest plus capital, of the Legislative Buildings up to the present then is \$8,504,000. Debentures still outstanding as at December 31, 1959, totalled \$605,000.

One item I wish to comment on is the effort made by my department to combat seasonal unemployment. In place of closing down construction during the winter, we have been continuing throughout the winter months to provide employment. Indeed, many of our building projects are scheduled for start in the fall, so that as much employment as possible may be provided. Our Annual Report is especially interesting in this regard, showing as it does, pictures of construction proceeding on many buildings under winter conditions. Here in Regina, work on our Court House commenced last September. Up to last week, up to 20 per cent of the total work had been completed. Not only does this mean we will get our building about six months earlier than if we had waited until spring, but employment has been provided for many construction workers and others who would have been laid off during the winter.

A complete record has been kept of the work provided on this one job alone. This shows that up to 71 men have been working on the Court House, with an average of about 45 men employed throughout the winter; 29,831 hours of work have been provided up to last week on this one building alone. Buildings currently under construction by the Department of Public Works at which winter employment is provided are: the renovations at the Saskatchewan Hospital, Weyburn; the La Ronge hospital, and the nurses' residence; the Saskatchewan Technical Institute at Moose Jaw; the Court House here at Regina; the Arts building and the Biology building at the University.

However, in spite of greater productivity, the majority of our farmers are affected by the cost-price squeeze. Hopes that something finally would be done by the Federal Government, to provide farmers with a fair share of the national income have dwindled over the past year. While there is interest in the coming announcement by the Prime Minister — the expected

coming announcement, in answer to the western Canadian farm delegation's brief, which set out the case for deficiency payments, nothing is anticipated that will basically remedy the farmers' plight. To add to the general hardship facing our farmers in the north, early snows of last fall resulted in about 54 per cent of the wheat crop in the north-eastern Saskatchewan being left in the field. It is expected that this will be harvested this spring, but not without the farmers taking a major loss in quality and quantity.

On behalf of my constituents with snow-covered grain, I wish to thank the Minister of Agriculture and his officials for the prompt manner in which emergency acreage payments were made. The councils of the various rural municipalities too, deserve credit for a difficult job well done. There is, too, general satisfaction in my area with the various activities of the Provincial Government. The newly-formed Melfort-Tisdale Health Region is meeting with widespread approval.

The Region has already set up 40 health centres and has started on an immunization program in addition to its other preventive services. My constituency is well-served by two hospitals situated in Melfort and Tisdale, both of which are constructing additions this year. Grants from the Department of Public Health total, for Tisdale, \$82,000 and, for Melfort, \$67,400. The 150-bed geriatric centre at Melfort is filling a need in the north-eastern part of the province. A highway storage building at Tisdale serves the maintenance crews of the Department of Highways in that area. The town of Tisdale and adjoining municipalities have constructed a fine senior citizens' home, in Tisdale. Grants for this home, on a 20 per cent of capital cost basis, amounted to \$46,100. Melfort and surrounding municipalities have made a start on a similar senior citizens' project, and will be receiving a capital cost grant of \$52,000. Both these groups will be pleased with the increase in operational grants from \$40 to \$60 per bed per year.

The first community pasture in my constituency came into operation last year. This pastures the Chagoness community pasture, comprises an area of 5,900 acres. Farmers north of Melfort, at Fairy Glen, are well pleased with the flood control ditch which is now nearing completion. This ditch will relieve flooding on an estimated 2,000 acres. Highway improvements in my constituency have been very well received. There are approximately 32 miles of pavement in the constituency now, as well as 44 miles of oil-treated highway. We in the constituency are confidently looking forward to an extension of this highway improvement, to provide dust-free highway connections west to Prince Albert and Saskatoon, and south to Regina. The Lake Hanson Road to Flin Flon has opened a whole new recreational area to tourist traffic, while the Choiceland iron ore deposits, just across the Saskatchewan River from my constituency, have raised hopes of a major mineral development in the area.

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Along with highway improvements have come improved municipal roads, as more and more mileage is constructed to grid standard. Municipal authorities in my constituency will be pleased to learn that the Provincial Government is increasing assistance for grid roads over that provided in the current year's budget. Assistance for the re-gravelling of grid roads will be especially welcomed. Grants to municipalities in connection with grid roads are reaching a now high, undreamed of 10 years ago.

It is interesting to compare assistance given to municipalities for roads today, not only with that provided by the Liberals when they were in office before 1944, but also with the assistance provided since 1944 by the C.C.F. It was not only the amount of grants provided before 1944, but the policy followed by the former Liberals, which met with dissatisfaction in the past. Before 1944, grants were paid to municipalities in election years. Following the 1944 election, a \$500 grant was made to every municipality in the province by the C.C.F. Government. Equalization grants came into being, with municipalities with greater need receiving the greater assistance. Then the grid-road program was introduced, with the Government assuming 60 per cent of the cost on a provincial basis.

The grid road program, is very popular with the municipal officials, and well it should be. Construction has increased over the years and consequently, grants paid have also gone up. For example, one rural municipality in my constituency, No. 457, received for grid construction assistance in 1956, \$3,400. In 1957, it received \$30,000, and in 1958, \$47,000 making a total of \$82,000 in those three years to one municipality for grid roads alone. Similarly, Willow Creek Municipality No. 458 received in 1956, \$6,000, and in 1957, \$26,000 and in 1958, \$63,000 or a total of \$96,000 in the three-year period for grid roads. This \$96,000 for Willow Creek municipality in the last three years was just \$4,000 less than the grants received for roads by the eight municipalities in the Melfort constituency in the 18-year period, 1934-1952. For grid roads alone, the total grants received by the nine R.M.s wholly or partly within the present Melfort-Tisdale constituency over the past three years, totalled \$445,000. This is assistance for municipal roads of which our Government can be proud.

Govt. Members: — Hear! Hear!

Hon. Mr. Willis: — And, also, assistance for educational purposes shows just as spectacular a growth. In 1943, education grants for schools making up the Melfort school unit, were \$34,000. By 1956, operating grants totalled \$92,000. In 1959, they were \$241,000, an increase from \$92,000 to \$241,000 in only three years. The Tisdale Unit, which includes Tisdale town, received a grant of \$168,000 in 1956 and in 1959 received \$293,000 for operating purposes.

I must make mention, too, of the coming of natural gas to my constituency last summer. Three towns in my constituency — Melfort, Tisdale and Star City — were connected to gas in 1959, and at present there are over 600 natural gas users in these centres. The action of the Power Corporation in taking gas to north-eastern Saskatchewan is appreciated, especially in regard to the fuel-saving involved. One person in particular, who had been heating with propane prior to natural gas, informed me that his gas bill for the entire period from October up to the end of January this year, was less than his bill for any one month in the last three winters. The Saskatchewan Power Corporation, too, has practically finished its farm electrification program in my constituency. In the nine municipalities in Melfort-Tisdale constituency there are now 1,453 farm connections receiving the benefit of electricity.

In conclusion. Mr. Speaker, may I refer to a remark by the financial critic of the opposition in connection with the oil industry in Saskatchewan. The member for Maple Creek was quoting from 'The Leader-Post' and I think he has been quoted correctly here in this regard:

"Oil and gas production in 1958-59 rose 13 per cent, but provincial revenues from this source are down 15 per cent. Revenues from exploration, bonus and lease rentals, dropped 26 per cent."

Those facts; are true. Mr. Speaker. Gas production is up; the revenues for exploration, bonus, etc. are down. The member for Maple Creek went on to say:

"Expenditure on exploration in 1957-58 was \$133,500,000 in 1958-59 it dropped to \$87 million. There were fewer wells drilled to completion in 1958 than there were in 1954."

That, too, is true. But what escaped the financial critic's attention is that there is a logical explanation for these facts; but he did not search for that logical explanation. In place of that, he said, as quoted by 'The Leader Post':

"The alarming decline could not be attributed to exhaustion of reserves, since there are great possibilities and formations which had hardly been tested."

He went on to say that the oil industry in this province had been strangled by Government bureaucracy, regulations and control imposed upon them, which are unknown in any other area of Canada. This, Mr. Speaker, was his explanation for the drop in the oil industry here in the province. Surely the member for Maple Creek has not been deliberately trying to misinform the Legislature. It is true that exploration is tapering off. It is true that staff is being laid off. But does the hon. member claim that this is happening

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only in Saskatchewan? Mr. Speaker, this is not true, nor are the other reasons true which he has given.

I have here a copy of 'The Albertan', a Calgary newspaper, published Monday, February 29, 1960. The heading of this article, which I am going to read, says: 'Oil Industry Faces a Job Crisis'. (This is not referring to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but to Alberta). This is what it says:

"Difficulties confronting the oil and gas industry leading to an unemployment crisis, will be described in this two-part series by Mr. Carl O. Nichol, Calgary oilman. Mr. Nichol, an authority on the oil industry . . .

rather the article quotes him as saying:

"The oil and gas industry in Alberta in faced with the most serious unemployment problem experienced in many years. Delay of gas export is considered partly to blame."

In Alberta, it is not that the government policy is handicapping the oil industry. The article here says that the delay in gas export is considered partly to blame.

"Official figures giving a complete picture of the extent of the crisis are not available. However, there are 17 geologists registered with the National Unemployment Service in Calgary. Formerly there was no unemployment noted, except three or four registrations, believed to be geologists changing jobs."

The article goes on to say:

"Now oilmen estimated unemployed geologists and geophysicists may reach 150, while lay-offs of all personnel classifications are considered to be higher. It is understood one Calgary-based company released about 125 staff members recently, and there were 93 applications for vacancies for geologists on the National Energy Board. Three or four years ago, practically no geologists were available.

"The Alberta Society of Petroleum Geologists drew to the attention of I.N. McKinnon, Chairman of the National Energy Board, the unemployment problem.

According to information obtained by the society, over two dozen petroleum geologists have been released.

John Proctor, General Manager of Canadian Petroleum Association, said the situation is considered serious by many leaders in the industry, and he is quoted as saying: "I understand from conversations with company officials that the scope of their exploration has, for lack of gas and oil markets, been reduced and that there has been corresponding reduction in staff."

Mr. Speaker, the term 'political dishonesty' has been bandied about this House, this Session. I would not go so far as to say the member for Maple Creek was being dishonest, but he was certainly distorting the facts so as to gain political advantage, which is closely akin to political dishonesty.

Mr. Speaker, I will support the motion.

Mr. E.I. Wood (Swift Current): — Mr. Speaker. In rising to take part in this debate, I would like first of all to associate myself with those who have, during this Session, complimented you on the way in which you have fulfilled your duties as Speaker in this House. As the mover of the Address in Reply to the speech from the Throne, at the first Session of this Thirteenth Legislature, I was probably the first to offer you in this Chamber, congratulations upon your receiving this appointment. Let me assure you that you have amply fulfilled our high expectations in the capable and fair way in which you have handled this high office.

I would also like to compliment the hon. Provincial Treasurer both on the Speech that he gave, and on the Budget which he presented in this House, Friday. I deeply regret his announced intention that this will be his last budget, because his guidance through the years in provincial finance has meant a great deal to the people of Saskatchewan. It is quite apparent that he has not allowed this decision to discontinue his interests as the Treasurer to diminish in any way his interest in provincial matters, because this Budget which has been brought down is, I think, one of the most progressive and one of the most forward-looking budgets ever brought down in this House.

Mr. McFarlane (Qu'Appelle-Wolseley): — He's looking forward to the election!

Mr. Wood: — One of the items which the Provincial Treasurer specifically referred to in his address, and one which I strongly concur in, is that which proposes to have voted during the coming Session, some \$42,000 for the setting up of an Advisory Planning Committee on Medical Care. I would

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like to go on record as being heartily in favour of a province-wide contributory and universal medical plan. I cannot but feel that such a proposal is sound in principle. We cannot very well say what the final outcome of the decisions of this Board that is being set up will be. It is up to them to make decisions as to the different phases, and different ways in which this plan will operate. But in regard to their terms of references, it is rather apparent that what we would expect them to have in mind would be something along the line of a universal contributory medical plan, and I think the principle of this is very sound, in which the well people are expected to pay, or help pay, for the cost of treating the ill people. I think such a principle is sound; indeed anyone who professes to believe in "the strong bearing the infirmities of the weak" must, I think, subscribe to such a plan.

I am especially interested in this thing because of the connection we had through the years with the Swift Current Health Region. This Swift Current Health Region, as we all know, is a contributory, compulsory health plan. The first municipal health plan in this province was set up in the municipality of Sarnia, away back in 1915, and we had . . .

Mr. Korchinski (Redberry): — No, no. Not 1950!

Mr. Wood: — 1915. I believe the records show that was when the first municipal doctor plan was set up in Saskatchewan. I said 1915 — I don't know how I can say it any clearer. The first health region which proposed, or purported, to give a certain amount of preventative care in regard to a medical program was set up back in 1929 in the Gravelbourg area, and lasted for some three years. I believe there was some permissive legislation put on the books in the matter of a Health Act during the last Session of the Ninth Legislature early in 1944; but when this Government came into office after the election of 1944, they started to act on some of these things, and one of the first acts was in July, 1944, engaging Dr. Sigerist of John Hopkins University to chair a Health Services Survey Commission which, among other findings, recommended the setting up of a Health Services Planning Commission. This was done, and that Health Services Planning Commission was set up, in the fall of 1944, with definite instructions to organize a prepaid medical care program in a health region in the province.

Due to some of the activities of some of the municipal men in the area which now comprises the Swift Current Health Region, some of the municipalities thereabouts were influenced to petition that the Government would set up this plan in this area; and it was thus that a vote was held in November, 1945, and the area was declared as a Region in December, 1945.

I think the record will show that it was through the actions of the C.C.F. Government that a medical care program such as this was finally brought into being.

Govt. Members: — Hear! Hear!

Mr. Wood: — But politics have long since been a thing of the past with regard to the Swift Current Health Region, in the Swift Current Health Region. It is accepted by all people of every political belief. I am personally acquainted with members of the Board, and I know them to be men of various political beliefs. I also know them as being conscientious, hard-working men who have done a great deal for the Health Region of that area. In fact, I would say we are deeply indebted to these men. and to the doctors and to the Health Region staff, for the success which the Health Region in the Swift Current area has turned out to be.

My reasons for dealing with this topic at this time is because I have been asked so many questions concerning the Swift Current Health Region, and how it has worked out. If I, as the elected representative of the Swift Current area in which the head offices of this region are located, while others are referring to the Swift Current Health Region and it is being discussed in the press, and elsewhere, were to keep quiet on the subject, some people would begin to think that possibly there was something I was trying to hide, or that the Swift Current Health Region had not been a success. But it has been a success!

Govt. Members: — Hear! Hear!

Mr. Wood: — As an M.L.A. for that section of the country, I have many different complaints brought to me concerning various programs, but that isn't to say that these programs are not a success, or that they are not generally accepted; but people have the opportunity to talk about them and talk against them; but with the Swift Current Health Region, I don't get any complaints. It is the best accepted Government program in that part of the country — or at least one of the best. There are others that are equally successful perhaps, but with this one we just don't have any complaints concerning it.

Why? This program is universal. With some small exceptions, everyone in the area is covered. There are some who are covered under other public plans, such as the R.C.M.P., and those are the ones to which I refer. Even though you may have an incurable chronic ailment which goes on for years, you are still accepted under this plan. There are no lines drawn. In these voluntary plans it is quite necessary and normal that these should exclude those whom they know, before they come in, have this sort of trouble. They are held responsible to pay for illnesses that may occur during that term of coverage under the plan for things, diseases, they had contracted, or had been troubled with, before they came into the plan. That is quite natural, but we do not have that in the Swift Current area. Everybody is covered. Everybody is compelled to be covered, and everybody is covered. That is one of the things of which the people of Swift Current are very much in favour.

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The people of the Swift Current Health Region area like the plan because it relieves them of any worry over medical bills. It is true, there are some deterrent charges from \$1 for most visits or minor surgery in a doctor's office, to a high of \$3 for a complete history or a complete physical examination for a new patient, or a midnight house call. Three dollars is the most you can be charged for anything in the Swift Current Health Region. It is the most, and the highest. Drugs, appliances, mileage on home calls, and ambulance calls are not covered. On referrals or emergency sickness outside the region, 50 per cent of the 1959 schedule of fees is paid.

There is no limit to the time or the money that may be expended on any one beneficiary. You can be at the hospital for as long as you may be there, and for years, and the bill may run to hundreds or thousands of dollars; but there is no limit, no maximum upon what may be paid out for any one beneficiary in the Swift Current Health Region. Another reason why the people of Swift Current like it is because, even though they have these small deterrent charges, there is no worry in connection with any illness they may have in regard to medical care.

Another thing they like about the Swift Current medical plan is that we have absolutely free choice in regard to our choice of doctors. We can go to any doctor we like in the region. The doctor, of course, has the same opportunity to refuse a patient, as he has anywhere else. We have exactly the same relationship between the doctors and the patients in the Swift Current Health Region as is had anywhere else in the province. The only difference, Mr. Speaker, is that when we go to the doctor in the Swift Current Health Region that little matter of the bill doesn't come between us at all. The question of whether I can pay the doctor, or the question of the doctor, "Will this man pay me?" never comes into the doctor-patient relationship in the Swift Current area. That's another reason why we like the Swift Current health plan.

I firmly believe that the doctors of the Swift Current region are in favour of this scheme. Through the 13 years that this program has been in operation, the relationship between the medical group and the Health Region Board and the public has been good, and the doctors are well-respected members of our community. It is true that the doctors of the region only received 80 per cent of the 1959 schedule of fees, but they have no collection charge; they have no bad debts, and I believe that taking these into consideration, their remuneration is on a par with that received by doctors elsewhere in the province. Although they possibly may give more services, I understand that the average income of the doctors in the health region is higher than the average for doctors in the province as a whole.

Despite what people might have you believe, Mr. Speaker, from my personal knowledge of the situation (which is not insignificant), I believe that the medical men of the region are quite reasonably satisfied with the conditions therein. And my opinions in these matters are not unsupported by the facts. The number of doctors in the Swift Current Health Region has

more than doubled since it was formed. There were 19 when it was formed, and there are 41 now. I just don't think that the number of doctors in Saskatchewan, as a whole, has doubled in the same length of time.

Opposition Member: — Hear! Hear!

Mr. Wood: — The taxpayers are not dissatisfied. I have here a copy of the last issue of 'The Swift Current Sun' and on the front page, under the heading 'Health Plan Pleases', it reads as follows:

"Dr. Robert Badley, medical health officer for the Swift Current Health Region, says he has found no serious criticism of the medical care scheme now in force in the region. Dr. Badley, along with Stuart Robertson, secretary-treasurer of the Regional Health Board, has returned to the city after four days of district meetings with health boards throughout the region.

"We found no serious criticism of the health region by those paying the shot", Dr. Badley said. "They seem to feel that they are getting a good deal."

District meetings were held with the various local boards, Monday at Leader, Tuesday in Maple Creek, Wednesday at Shaunavon, and Thursday in Swift Current. Mainly, the business of each of the meetings was the discussion of the health region's medical care program."

There are other evidences that the people of the Swift Current Health Region are satisfied. When this region was first set up in 1945, when the first vote was held, one rural municipality and part of two others, and part of a local improvement district, elected to stay out; but since that time they have all petitioned to come in, and last fall, in the R.M. of Coulee No. 136, five of the six divisions voted overwhelmingly to come into the region. We hear a lot about some votes being held in various parts of the province where they have voted not to form a health region, but where the people know what this thing is all about, where they have seen it, where they have had active and personal experience in connection with it, they not only vote to come in, but they want to keep it after they have been in.

With such a program as we have, there is no doubt about it, it is bound to have a price tag attached. At the present time the personal tax is \$24 for a single person, and \$40 for a married couple, and \$50 for a family of one or more children. The property tax varies in the different municipalities and, in Swift Current, for instance, it is 2.17 mills exclusive of the 5.3 mills which is levied to raise the approximate 50 cents per capita, which is levied throughout the province and in other municipalities for public health services. The property tax for the Swift Current Health Region is approximately one-third as much as the personal tax. Besides there were grants

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given by the Provincial Government last year, which will average out to about \$1.25 per beneficiary. The total cost of this program in 1959 was approximately \$17 per beneficiary. In view of the service given, with no maximum placed thereon, no reservation as to the medical history of the beneficiary, I believe that these figures are hard to beat elsewhere.

The cost of the medical services in the region is based upon a certain percentage of what the doctors are charging elsewhere. As these charges go up across the country invariably they will rise in the Swift Current Health Region. In 1947 it cost some \$11 per beneficiary, and it now has risen to approximately \$17. Although, as I have said before, the people of this region are quite prepared to accept these costs and are well satisfied with them, yet it must be noticed that, if the costs go higher and if the personal tax becomes oppressive, this health scheme could lose a certain amount of its value if the poorer people found it hard to be able to pay the personal tax. We all know that all property taxes throughout the country are becoming plenty high; so I do think that the people of the Swift Current Health Region are well advised to bear that in mind in the years to come, when they have to look to some other way of financing our health region.

Occasionally through the years, Mr. Speaker, various people of various political beliefs have come to me and said. "Why can't we have such a thing as the Swift Current Health Region throughout the whole province?" We are proud of our Swift Current Health Region, and I, and many more, see no reason why its principles cannot be applied throughout the province. Mr. Speaker. I will support the motion.

Mr. John Thiessen (Shellbrook): — Mr. Speaker, I, too, wish to associate myself with those who have been handing around bouquets to yourself, to all the various speakers, also to the speaker who preceded me this afternoon and especially also to the hon. member from Bengough (Mr. A.L.S. Brown), who, in my estimation, yesterday made a very good return to the financial critic of the Opposition. I felt that he covered these items that the member spoke about very thoroughly. He made a very good job of it.

In speaking about the budget, I am glad that the budget has got the increase which it has got, but I wish that it could be quite a bit larger than it is. At the moment with the \$148 million, we find that agriculture is probably contributing about 45 per cent of this budget. If the Federal Government policies on the agricultural industry had been such that the industry could have held its place, we could have had a \$220 million budget very nicely, where they would have held their 85 per cent of the revenue of a budget. Then we could have very easily had medical coverage, such as the Member before me spoke about; we could have said we would put \$2 million into telephones; we could have put \$15 million into grid roads, as has been spoken about. We could have done all these things, but for the reasons of federal economic policy to our agriculture, we are not able. I could have

gone to my constituency in Shellbrook, and I could have said: "The Minister of Highways will construct our bridge this year, whether P.A. bridge is completed or not. We will also construct the connection between No. 11 and No. 40 Highways. However, those things will have to come in another year, when we have completed the P.A. bridge. I hope my constituency will not be forgotten, and that we can begin the bridge at Petrofka, and also the connecting links in there."

I would like, Mr. Speaker, to spend a few minutes on agriculture. There are a number of items which interest me. One of them is that this is the highest agricultural budget which has ever come out of the provincial House. We have some \$7 million in the general budget; we have 66 million in the Supplementary Estimates, making a total of \$13 million for agriculture, which has never happened before, even though the Federal Government will probably contribute some \$3 million to assist, and that is to cover the acreage payment on unthreshed grain.

This policy has been very severely criticized in this House and possibly by some people outside of the House. I probably have done a large enough part of criticizing this policy, too. However, after putting it into operation and studying it a little bit, I find that, in my own municipality, out of about 800 farmers, 600 of them are going to divide about \$175,000, and I feel that having done this program we have done something for the farmers which was very necessary and which we needed at that time.

In listening to the Opposition, those people who sit on your left, they cried very loud and very long about the slowness of this Government going into this thing, of the arrogant way that we treated the farmers, and all these other things. I would like to take you back a number of years when something just about calamitous happened to the farmers in through the 1930s. It took so much longer then. We know in July, at that time, that there wasn't going to be any crop, and we had the Premier coming to a Wheat Pool picnic in Rosthern, and I was delegated as one of the councillors to go down and meet the Premier of the province that day, and lay our ills before him, which he did. I think the town hall was pretty well filled up. We asked the Government at that time whether they could do something about the seed situation, and he said that all action would be taken by the Government because we had in our municipality, at that time, enough seed so that we could carry on. But there wasn't any move made by April of the next year to take any of that seed. That seed had to be sold by farmers for 65 cents a bushel in the fall and the rest of the farmers who took it in as relief seed, the next spring, paid up to \$1.65 and \$1.85 for wheat that was shipped in, when we could have had it in the fall for 65 cents.

What happened this year? When the snow struck, there were payments out to farmers within three-and-a-half months. We had a bylaw passed in the municipality, who were authorized to pass this bylaw so that people could buy seed or fodder under the 1937 Seed Grain Act that was set up. We have in our municipalities at the moment lists in every municipal office, where farmers of those municipalities can come in and see where there is food available, where there is pasture available, and all these things. These have

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been looked after.

Going back again to the time when this was done by a former Liberal Government, we had farmers lined up a whole block long in the morning, waiting to get into the office to get their little bit of aid, to get their little bit of seed, and to see whether they could get their seed grains. At five o'clock (there had been a municipal inspector there, and the municipal secretary) they locked the door, and a lot of the farmers went home without anything. The same thing happened when they dished out the carloads of fish, etc. They talk about arrogant government! I learned to know arrogant government long before these fellows were talking about this government being so.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in the unique position of having a brother running as a Liberal candidate in the next coming provincial election. This, of course, is somewhat a unique situation. We are brothers actually, but there is also a little distance between us. I am the first, and he is the tenth. Then there is another difference . . .

Mr. McFarlane: — He's smarter than you are.

Mr. Thiessen: — Maybe a little smarter, but not very wise. Then there is another difference, Mr. Speaker; I learned to know the Liberal and the Conservative parties by their actions; he has only learned to know them by their promises, and he's going to learn a lot.

Often in the years that we have just gone through, we spoke about the South Saskatchewan Dam. We heard about it and we spoke about it, and we were hoping in those days that eventually a government would take over which would do something about it, which would stabilize the feed situation which we went through in those days, which would stabilize the seed situation, employment and all the rest of these things. It has finally taken a C.C.F. Government to get this thing started, and possibly a Conservative government at Ottawa. Now they are looking for votes as well as the rest of them but they have given us a chance to do something with Saskatchewan which has never been done before. This half-million dollars which has been set aside for irrigation, or for irrigation studies, can in the future bring in such things as canneries, and possibly sugar beet factories — all these things, and it is another policy of the C.C.F. Government to do things which will make Saskatchewan a permanent place of residence of all classes of people, and to have the policy which will guarantee that we can have \$200 million and \$250 million budgets in the future.

Then this farm family improvement program — I'm not going to dwell upon it as it has been dwelt upon at great length. Suffice it to say that in many municipalities this has already taken place. Even in the north constituency which I represent, a number of farmers have already installed water and sewer because they have been able to have power. Years ago, again, we could not get power. We were told that it would never be possible for Saskatchewan to have it. At the moment we've got it and, as the hon. member

from Bengough said, in ten years from now we may have water just like we have the power now.

I would like to touch a little upon education for just a few minutes. In this budget I see an increase of \$4.5 million in grants to schools. Just a little while ago, I was told in my constituency that this did not amount to too much to our ordinary schools, and that the universities might take up most of this. I notice in the budget set-up that this \$4 1/2 million increases the grants to schools to \$28.5 million, and does not include any grants to the university in this allowance. I find an item later that the grants to the university will be \$3.2 million, and that this is an increase of about half a million dollars from what it was last year. The total grant for education purposes runs nearly to the amount of \$40 million. This, again, is a very large program and, when listening to the school teachers of the other side of the House talking about the slowness of the Government, the things we didn't do, it made me think of the school teachers who taught school not too long ago. We had a district in the municipality that I used to be reeve of, where one school teacher tried to teach 72 children; 72 children in a school that was built for thirty-some pupils, and he received \$700 for his pains. I thought these teachers, who were speaking very loudly, very expressively, with their Leader sitting in the back watching them, if they had gone through what that teacher went through, they would not have the power to get up and speak at all. They would have been very sorry by this time.

However, this man was only teaching part of the children in that district. He had been trying to teach 72 of them, and there were 27 children living out of range along the river, moved there for the purpose of not sending them to school. They had built a school on which they still owed over \$2,000 of debentures, and they did not have enough taxes levied to cover those debentures, and the superintendent used to come in and say, "you've got to get them to build another school. There are 27 children who are not getting educated, and they have to have another school." I told him the minute the Government is ready to grant these people some assistance towards construction of a school, the operating of a school, then we can do it. This is an area where there is light soil, large families and small holdings, and they definitely can't do anything about it alone. I maintain that, if the Government at that time saw fit to go out to the Indian reservations and other places and educate those children, then was no reason why the Government of the province couldn't do something for our white children, too.

However, this situation remained. Then, when the C.C.F. Government came in, and the larger school units were organized, the first thing we did — a school was moved into this area, (we have to move it 35 miles); a teacher was hired, and there were 28 children in that school, 14 of whom had never been to school before in their life, including four boys 12 years of age. That was the situation in education. We were not in an area that was destitute, either; this was just a small community. The school just east of there, Corn Valley District, was running on two and one-half

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20 to three mills. That was their maximum and they paid their teacher another \$700; but our district had too light a soil and all the rest of it, and there was just nothing anybody could do about it. I want, even to this day, to thank the Government for putting in larger units and giving children an opportunity to get an education so that they could go out into the world and do something for themselves.

Next I did want to cover a bit on grid roads, but the hon. member for Melfort-Tisdale did a good job on that, and I notice there is an increase of \$1 million for this. I want to congratulate the Government again for increasing this. As I said once before in this House, it is going to bring farmers to within three and one-half to four miles of a good road anywhere in the province.

The Department of Social Welfare to me is a very important department because, in our part of the country, there is quite a bit of welfare. We had a meeting last fall in Prince Albert, where my constituency was represented, and also part of the Turtleford area. I found, with all the area being represented there, that our own municipality had three-quarters of the social aid recipients in that whole constituency. It is very important to us in the north, because we have a lot of Indian reservations, and when you have Indian reservations you have the white people and you also have the Metis problem. We have a lot of Metis people in our part of the country who are farmers, and good labourers, as good as anybody at anything else; but we also have others who are not so good to themselves or to anybody else. These people must be taken care of. These people and their children must all be looked after, and we find that, under the present program of assistance, we can give them assistance so that they feel sort of self respect for themselves.

Again, I want to go back to years gone by when we couldn't do too much of this, not only during the Liberal Government but the beginning of the C.C.F. because it took some time to establish something where we could assist these people to do the things they wanted to do. At the moment, the problem is still large, but I see that we have quite an increase in the grant for this, and I think that most municipalities and most L.I.D. areas will make good use of this money and enable these people to go on. Some of these people feel that we have our granaries full, packing plants full of meat, racks full of clothes, while they go around in rags and we can't give the children meat, clothes and all the rest of it. I feel the Government is doing a good job of this.

The Department of Public Health, I see, too, has a \$2 million increase, and this is necessary. I would like to associate myself with the hon. member for Swift Current, and so does my constituency, on a program of medical coverage which the Government intends to go into which is going to be studied and laid before us to enact legislation from.

Going back to Welfare, I want to go back to a story. In the Throne Speech debate we heard a story of an elderly couple who, for some reason or another, had lost their medical services card. The old gentleman

was in the geriatric centre and he had a quarter-section of land from which he had harvested sufficient grain so that the supplementary and the medical services card were taken back. Personally, I feel sorry for any old people who lose anything which they have, but I realize that lines must be drawn somewhere, and that people just a little bit on one side or the other of this line may qualify or may not qualify, as the case may be. However, these people had a geriatric centre to go to; they still had a quarter-section of land from which they could draw a little and they had a house in town in which they were living, and they were getting whatever assistance they got from the Federal Government. I suppose \$55 a month.

I want to draw you a picture of an old couple who were not quite as old as these people were, of some years ago. This old couple did not keep their quarter-section; they were old and they had worked hard — Mr. and Mrs. Zimm. I know them well; they were there when I was a councillor, and this old couple lost their half-section to the mortgage company. They took the land back from them. They had built a nice house and barn, on this land, and the mortgage company were very good to them and gave them two acres in the corner of the quarter-section and they allowed them to put two granaries on this in which they could live. The old gentleman was over 70 years old and qualified for \$20 per month; his wife was not quite that old. He came to me during the winter and told me they had definitely to have something for aid. He said, "I get \$20 a month; our medicine between my wife and me costs \$11, which leaves me \$9 a month to live on for myself and my wife." I thought, as I was a kind-hearted councillor, that I would take it up with the Council and get them some assistance. At this time I am in the unique position of having a brother running for the other side of the House, but at that time I was a councillor and my dad was the Reeve of the municipality. I took this up with my dad going to town that morning, and he said, "You won't get very much." I said, "Why not? These people are starving." He said: "Anything our council is going to give there people is going to be taken off their pension cheques." I said. "Surely they would not do that." But when we got threshing through this thing we found that was the way it was. We could have given these people another \$20 a month, and their pension would have been cancelled. In the case of the other elderly couple — I feel sorry for them, definitely I feel sorry for them as I do for all old people; but when I think back to what these old people had to go through to get to the position where these people are today who go to a geriatric centre — our old people were living on \$10 and \$20 a month, and today we have these people living under a Government which has seen fit to do something for them the people who need it.

Mr. Speaker, I will support the budget.

Hon. Walter J. Mr. Erb (Minister of Public Health): — Mr. Speaker, I too, would like to join with my fellow members who have already expressed their sentiments upon your planned retirement. May I say, Sir, that you will leave behind you a splendid record of service to your community and to the people of the province, not only as a member of this Legislature and as a Minister of the Crown, but as Speaker of this Assembly. It was probably through the years in which you have held your present high office that your personal attributes were best revealed to the members of this House, for indeed, you brought to your office integrity, an inordinate sense of fairness, personal charm and dignity. Because of these characteristics you have commanded our utmost respect and esteem. It is, therefore, with real regret that we have learned of your pending retirement; but I hope, and I am sure that my colleagues and all members of this House hope, that the years ahead will be kind to you, and that you will find a great sense of happiness and sense of achievement in pursuing your favorite avocation. I know that photography is one of your favorite hobbies, and we hope that all your pictures turn out well, that your golf is not too much above par, and that the big ones won't be strangers at the end of your fishing line.

I should at this time like to congratulate the Provincial Treasurer (Hon. Mr. Fines) on his exceptionally fine budget address. The clear and ordered thinking displayed in his sixteen consecutive budget addresses have characterized the manner in which, throughout the years, he has discharged his onerous responsibilities. I know of no man who has served his day and generation with greater integrity, brilliance, diligence and devotion. No words of mine and, I believe, no words of any other, could adequately assess the great contribution he has made to our province. He has written his name large in the financial history of our province and of our country, and I believe that ours is indeed a richer and a fairer province because of his being here. Therefore, not only we who have been so intimately associated with him, but I am sure all the people of this province whom he has served so well, view his retirement with great regret. I know that when I speak my sentiments, I speak those of my colleagues in this House, that we will always cherish the association we have had with him and that our best wishes and, I am sure, the best wishes of a grateful province shall follow him through the years.

I want, at this time, to congratulate the financial critic, the hon. member for Maple Creek (Mr. Cameron) for the forthright manner in which he delivered his speech, yesterday, in this House. I am sorry that the gentleman is not in the House, because it gives the feeling that you are talking behind a fellow's back.

Mr. A.H. McDonald (Leader of the Official Opposition): — On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker. I would like to inform the House that, yesterday, after the financial critic had finished his address, he was urgently called to his home and that is the reason for his absence.

Hon. Mr. Erb: — I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, and I trust that he finds everything well at home, but it is always best to have the people you are going to talk about facing you. As I say, I don't like to talk behind a person's back and what I am going to say I hope isn't going to be too severe.

I want to congratulate him on the forthright manner in which he delivered his speech yesterday. Having said that, however, I want to say that the lack of logic in his speech can never be compensated by emotions or verbosity. Mr. Speaker, the giggling of my hon. friend for Melville (Mr. Gardiner) should not be mistaken as a sense of humour. Well, my hon. friend for Maple Creek yesterday seemed quite perturbed that oil was only once mentioned by the Provincial Treasurer in his budget address, and uranium was not mentioned at all. He then proceeded to spread a mantle of gloom on the oil picture in Saskatchewan. Because two office employees had left Saskatchewan, he received the impression that the oil industry generally was on the verge of folding up.

Of course, we have listened to the prophets of doom in the Liberal party for a great number of years. In 1948, their duly chosen leader shed many a crocodile tear because industry would not come to this province under a C.C.F. Government; between 1948 and 1959 — and they have had three new leaders in this interim — they haven't varied one bit on this theme. It is customary for one who becomes adroit at using a musical instrument that he is able to make some variations on the theme, but we haven't seen any variation on the part of them at all; it has always been the same theme, in all these years. In spite of all their prognostications and predictions of gloom, neither the people of Saskatchewan nor the captains of industry have been impressed by their efforts. Of course I don't have to try and prove here that these prophets of gloom are wrong. The facts, of course, speak for themselves. But by their actions, one can only conclude that the Liberal party leaders would rather see no development in Saskatchewan at all, than see development take place under a C.C.F. Government. If the Liberal party did nothing to encourage industry coming into this province it would be pardonable, but to try to discourage industry from coming into Saskatchewan, which has been done over the years, particularly by the leaders of the Liberal Party, is unpardonable indeed.

The fact that we have \$148 million budget is an indication in itself that there has been tremendous industrial activity in Saskatchewan. The Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Willis) gave a good account of what is happening in . . .(They are giggling again, Mr. Speaker) . . .the oil industry, and I would like to point out the situation in another way. I don't think we can look upon Saskatchewan in isolation to the other provinces. We have Manitoba to the east and Alberta to the west, and neither have a Liberal Government, and you would go far afield today to find one. You can't go west to find one, and you have to go considerably further east to find one.

Well, what is the situation, Mr. Speaker? I will read from the 'Monetary Times' for November, which is very close to the end of the year:

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"Alberta's oil production is expected to average 350,000 barrels daily this year, compared with a present potential of about 800,000 barrels daily."

Then on the next page, 'Fewer Completions', I quote:

"Well completions are running behind last year. There were 709 wells completed in the first half of 1959, a decline of six per cent from the 752 wells drilled in 1958."

Then, what is the picture in Saskatchewan?

"Saskatchewan in September of this year was able to announce that the number of wells in the province capable of producing oil had reached the 4,000 mark, the oil well tally finds, and drillers continue to bring in new producers, but when the production record for the year is known it is doubtful that the 1959 output will show much advance over the previous 12 months . . ."

They talk of an advance, in Alberta it was a drop.

"Saskatchewan's oil industry, like that of Alberta, has far more oil underground than they can sell. Lack of markets is restricting production. The Canadian crude supply is more than adequate to meet Canadian demands but some 30 per cent of this demand is supplied by crude imports from other countries.

"Saskatchewan's oil industry has had a phenomenal growth and no other single development has made such tremendous impact on the provincial economy. From a mere handful of oil wells a little over a decade ago, the industry has developed to the point where its annual production is reckoned at more than \$100 million."

Now, further I quote:

"Despite the general indications of reduced activity, the current oil play in 1959, statistics for the first eight months of the year suggests that in some areas of the industry advances were made over the previous year.

The number of producing wells completed in the first eight months of 1959 totalled 490. This compares with 525 completions, oil or gas wells, for the entire 12 months of 1958.

"Footage drilled for eight months of 1959 totals 2,177,911 feet . . .

I would like the hon. members to note that, for, if I remember the member for Maple Creek, the financial critic, indicated that drillings were down from last year . . .

". . . a substantial increase over the 1,798,335 feet drilled in the same period of 1958."

Now, quotes from the Manitoba picture. Mr. Speaker:

"Manitoba's oil industry has reached the stage where annual yield is rapidly decreasing, exploration activity negligible compared to four or five years ago, and depletion of existing wells going on at a faster rate than their replacement by new ones coming in to production.

On basis of returns for the first seven months this year, 1959 production will be at least three-quarters of a million barrels less than in 1958. Up to July 31 it was down 566,062 barrels from last year; 2,969,790 barrels as against 3,535,852 for the corresponding year a year ago."

Quoting on:

"The predictions are coming true, in every month of 1959 monthly production has been less than in the corresponding month of 1958.

Wells completed in 1959 have been less than one-third the number in the same period of 1958. Wildcat drilling has fared a little better. With the falling off in yield of older wells daily average production rates have been slipping."

That is the picture of the oil industry across the three prairie provinces.

Mr. G.H. Danielson (Arm River): — What about Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Erb: — As I pointed out, you have no Liberal government in Saskatchewan, none in Manitoba, none in Alberta; but yet my friends across the way would want to make it appear, and would want the public to believe, that somehow the political climate that this Government has created has, in some way, interfered with the oil picture, and that we are alone in an isolated situation with respect to the decreasing activity in the oil industry. From what I have read. Mr. Speaker, you will note that

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the activity in Saskatchewan has held up very well indeed against what has happened in Manitoba and what is happening in Alberta.

I was very glad to hear the hon. member for Maple Creek, the financial critic, say that he was in favour of the erection of small community mental hospitals, and I appreciate his interest in mental health generally. I am sure all members of this House are interested in the good mental health of the people of this province. But for the hon. member for Maple Creek to say that the money we have spent in renovating the Saskatchewan Hospital at Weyburn has been a waste of money is an indication that he knows not whereof he speaks. The fact is that, structurally, the Weyburn Hospital was in excellent condition. It warranted a renovation program. As the Minister for Public Works pointed out, there is a better utilization of the facilities there as a result of that renovation. The Saskatchewan Hospital today is almost unrecognizable from that which was observed only 10 short years ago. The record at the Saskatchewan Hospital, Weyburn, insofar as renovation and program development is concerned, has been so outstanding that two years ago, the Saskatchewan Hospital at Weyburn won the American Psychiatric Association award as the hospital making the greatest progress over a three-year period. That would certainly not indicate that the money we have spent on this institution has been wasted, in any sense of the word.

We hope eventually that we will be able, as the years go by, to build more of the small community mental hospitals. I should like to think that we would look upon the mental hospital at Yorkton, which is being erected, as a pilot plan; that from it we will gain information as to how efficacious as a hospital it will be in a community setting, and any further improvements that we might make to it may be utilized in this connection. Indeed, it is my hope, if it proves successful and I have every reason to believe that it will, that we will have many more of these small, community mental hospitals throughout the province at strategic places. When that comes we will have to look at alternative use to be made of the Saskatchewan Hospital at Weyburn and possibly North Battleford. I think by that time we shall be ready to use these kinds of buildings for an alternate use. Certainly at that time the money we have spent on these buildings will have been more than justified.

Mr. Speaker. It is customary for a Minister, I suppose, to review in detail his Department, but I should like to point out that, for a good and complete review the members of the House, and particularly my friends in the Opposition, should consult the Annual Report of the Department of Public Health in which they will get a fine review, much better than I can give in such a short while, of programs and policies of the Health Department.

I should like to spend the time that I have to discuss some of the main problems which seem to be confronting us today, and to make plans as to how best we are going to meet these problems. I think it is wise that we periodically take an inventory of our stock, look at our assets and liabilities, and forecast our future course. To do this we must identify some of the problems, note the trends for the future, and, indeed speculate a bit

to what the future trends are likely to be. I see that we usually take such an approach in business, and I propose in my remarks to try and evaluate the health status of the people of Saskatchewan in a similar way, to note some of our current problems, and to look at the progress we have made, and to indicate some of the future trends.

At the outset, I would address my remarks to general considerations about the nature of health and disease. As we are well aware, there has been gradually increasing concern by the people of the western world and by Canadian people about the fact that it is no longer possible to think of health services only in terms of the cure of disease or the repair of injury. Perhaps this statement is best summed up by the preamble of the Health Organization of the United Nations. In that part of their preamble to the Constitution it is stated — and for brevity and clarity I would paraphrase what it says: Health is not merely the absence of sickness but it is the maximum state of physical, social and emotional well-being of which the individual is capable. This idea that health is more than merely the absence of illness or disability is now becoming better understood by everyone. An understanding of this concept has very real implications in the role of the Public Health Department and the various groups who provide health services. No longer is it possible for us to be concerned with waiting for a break-down of health before we utilize our resources to cure the disability. The concept which must be accepted by all persons working in the field of health, and by the public as well, is to seek to maintain the highest state of health and well-being, to prevent injury and disease, to provide for early recognition of disease and, when these fail, we must be prepared not only to apply the techniques of treatment, cure and rehabilitation and restoration, but we must also try to do everything we can to bring about the best state of healthiness of the individual again.

So it seems to me that, in looking at the role of health, in Health Department particularly and those services, in providing those services in general, we must look at our future problems in terms of maintaining health rather than solely looking at health in terms of treating disease. Perhaps I can make this more clear by tracing what has happened in the nature of developments over the past 20 or 25 years, and how our efforts as well as our problems have changed.

Health care has undergone a great revolution since the turn of the century. The discoveries of Louis Pasteur and those of Lister have revolutionized the concept of bacterial infection. Coupled with this was the realization of what the British call 'the great sanitary awakening'. This awakening was the realization that many of our diseases which were taking a large toll of lives and causing much invalidism, could be traced to bad hygiene and poor sanitation. The adequate disposal of sewage, the chlorination of water and the pasteurization of milk were all major steps in the effort to manage the sanitary environment. From the turn of the century to a period about 25 years ago, there were great developments in this area, in the immunization against a wide variety of diseases which became possible, and the great advances in surgical techniques came about.

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But there still remained the problem of a variety of infections for which there was no specific treatment, and the death toll from such diseases as septicaemia, tuberculosis, blood poisonings, were still very large. Then came the beginning of the antibiotic era, the beginning of the sulfa drugs, through the whole spectrum of penicillin and a variety of similar drugs which now are in effect against all types of infection. The results of the application of these new drugs was spectacular so that pneumonia and septicaemia and tuberculosis began to diminish in their severity as killers.

This brings us to the present day when we have a whole new series of problems arising. As these two great developments, the sanitary awakening and the antibiotic era made themselves felt, no longer did we find our children and young adults dying before or shortly after they reached young adulthood. The result is that life expectancy for the child of today is close to the biblical three score years and ten. And as people reach these older years we see a new type of disease taking over and increasing in importance. These are, in order of importance, heart disease, cancer and diseases of the blood vessels. I am sure, as the hon. members are aware, these are diseases that are associated with increasing old age. For example, heart disease caused 30 per cent of the deaths in the period 1932 to 1936 and 32.6 per cent of the period 1953 to 1958. Cancer deaths increased from 10.3 per cent in the 1932 to 1936 period, and to 16 per cent in the 1953 to 1958 period. Aside from the deaths caused, the amount of disability and invalidism is even more staggering. In 1950 the admissions to our hospitals for heart disease generally numbered 5,960 cases; by 1957 it had increased to 7,971 admissions.

The significance of the change is perhaps more widespread and much more complex than is generally realized. As our population becomes older, because of the limitation of early deaths from infectious diseases, it becomes obvious that our population will become even more subject to these diseases which tend to be chronic in nature. As the hon. members know, a conference was held in Regina last June 24, sponsored by the Government of Saskatchewan, which was specifically devoted to the problem of aging and chronic illnesses. One of the chief speakers on this occasion was Dr. Edward Bortz from the Lankeman Hospital in Philadelphia. Dr. Bortz is one of the outstanding figures in the United States, and indeed, in the world on chronic illness and aging. He had some comments to make about the future problem in North America and Saskatchewan society, and the problems we must face at that time. What he said was both hopeful and disturbing. He pointed out that there was good reason to believe that research into two important diseases and the causes of death would be productive in the next 10 or 13 years. These diseases were cancer and heart disease — if a cure for these diseases was found we could then expect to see the life span of the individual increased to 100 or 125 years. Such a development, of course, would be welcome, but we cannot escape the fact that it will magnify the problems which we already face in maintaining the health, in curing the sick and injured, and rehabilitating the diseased. In order to face up to the problems which will be created, a considerable degree of reorientation will be required in the years ahead, and it is about this, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to speak for a moment.

If we are to successfully cope with this challenge which faces us, we must, as I said, orient our thinking about how we deal with disease. If we continue to base our ideas of a health service on provision of cure and treatment method alone, we will find ourselves in danger of being overwhelmed. If, however, we can think of our problems in terms of keeping the body healthy, in terms of preventing disease and in terms of finding disease early, we cannot only cope with the problem, we will face it successfully, and we will have the additional dividend of healthier and happier people.

Our plans for meeting these problems are broad and comprehensive and I should like to mention how this Government plans to go ahead and meet the challenge of the future.

First, we have underway a special committee set up to study the problems of aging and long-term illness. This committee is sponsored by this Government and by grants from the Government of Canada under the national health grants program. The committee will be composed of persons representing all agencies and groups of people in the province, particularly those groups of people who are specifically interested in the problem of aging and long-term illness. A full-time secretary and the necessary research personnel are provided to enable information to be gathered. A preliminary study of the problem of aging and chronic illness would seem to indicate what is required most; that is, we need much more information than is currently available either in Saskatchewan or elsewhere. A few such studies have been made in isolated areas of Canada and the United States, but nowhere has a study been undertaken in such a large entity as in the province of Saskatchewan.

It seems to me too, that there is a very real need for much understanding about what can be done to maintain a state of health and well-being in the face of age. Chief among the needs are an examination of the reasons why some people maintain a high degree of healthiness into the eighties, nineties, while others begin to age and fall sick prematurely. A better understanding by the public as well as by persons working in the health field is required. In short, one of the main objectives of this committee will be to gather and disseminate information, factual data, on which not only to base social programs, but individual plans as well.

One of the principal activities of the committee will be the study of the kind of facilities we can expect to require in the next few years to deal with those who require care. Careful studies will also have to be made of the kind of treatment programs which will be most efficiently successful and to disseminate this kind of information throughout the province. To assist us in this task of making a sound and reasonable plan for the next several years, we have included in our budget an amount to bring out one of the outstanding men in the chronic field to Saskatchewan, as an adviser. This man is Dr. Thompson, who is a professor at Oxford University in England. Dr. Thompson has established a world-wide reputation for the preventive program he has established at Oxford, and we feel very, very fortunate indeed to have such a renowned authority take time off from his very busy schedule

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to come to Saskatchewan that we might learn from his great experience.

What I have said in the last few minutes, Mr. Speaker, is one of the major problems and one that not only we but other health jurisdictions face, and are vitally concerned with, for the reasons I have given. Because of the limitation of early deaths by the application of modern antibiotics and surgical techniques, people are living to older ages. Now, as a result, those two killers, heart disease and cancer, are making themselves manifest in this older group of people, and this is the problem that we have to face. This aging and chronic illness constitutes one of the really great problems.

The second phase of development in planning to meet the future needs for the health services in the province is the development of a medicare program on an insured basis for all residents. There has been much discussion about the reason why a provincial comprehensive medical care program plan is desirable at this time. The press in recent weeks has written much about the views of different people and certainly at the moment, it is the most timely subject to discuss. I want to congratulate the member for Swift Current (Mr. Wood) who, this afternoon, so very ably gave a discourse on the Swift Current health program.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to keep the remainder of my speech for tomorrow, and I now ask for leave to adjourn the debate.

(Debate adjourned)

SECOND READING

Bill No. 40 — An Act to provide for the Regulation and Sale of Alcoholic Liquors

Hon. Mr. Fines (Provincial Treasurer): — Mr. Speaker, you will recall that we made certain changes when we established the Liquor Licensing Act. We took out very large amounts of The Liquor Act and put it into the new Licensing Act. Now we want to consolidate it, and bring it all together. There are one or two minor changes such as banquet permits and licensing people who sell sacramental wines; but I think we can deal better with them all in Committee of the Whole, so I will move that the Bill be now read the second time.

The question being put, it was agreed top and the Bill referred to the next sitting of the House.

Bill No. 41 — An Act Respecting Interprovincial Steel Corporation Ltd.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Mr. Speaker, this Bill is to replace the one which was passed at the last Session. This is one that guarantees certain bonds of the Interprovincial Steel Corporation. The Interprovincial Steel Corporation and the Prairie Pipe are proposing an

amalgamation. This has been approved by the stockholders and the bond holders of both companies, subject to the approval by the Legislature of a Bill which will continue to guarantee these bonds under the merged company. There is no change in the amount; they are the same bonds exactly. I, therefore, move second reading of this Bill.

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

At 10:00 o'clock p.m. Mr. Speaker adjourned the Assembly without question put, under Standing Order 5(3).