

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
First Session — Fifteenth Legislature
25th Day

Wednesday, March 10, 1965

The Assembly met at 2:30 o'clock p.m.

On the Orders of the Day:

FINAL WHEAT PAYMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Hon. W. Ross Thatcher: (Premier) — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day, I have something which I think may interest the house. This morning, Trade Minister Sharp telephoned the information. Hon. members know that cheques in the amount of \$188,000,000, representing the final payment of last year's crop will be paid to Saskatchewan farmers. Now, these payments are being sent out, and the minister informs me that all Saskatchewan cheques will be in the mail by Monday next. This final payment, of course, is the highest in history and we anticipate that it will have a very buoyant effect on the Saskatchewan economy.

Mr. R.A. Walker: (Hanley) — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with, I would like to draw attention to a press report in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix of March 9th, Tuesday, reporting the debate on the purple gas bill before the house. I would like to point out that the report was partial and biased. It referred to the absence of CCF members of the house when the vote was taken but made no reference to certain members of the other side who were absent. I would like to say, that as an officer of the court, as every practicing barrister is, there are some occasions when it is impossible to harmonize those two duties and to be in both places at the same time.

I want to say furthermore that had I been here, Mr. Speaker, I would have been pleased to vote for the bill and fight like the devil in the committee to remove some of the iniquitous provisions from it, and to make it fair and equitable to all people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

WELCOME TO STUDENTS:

Mrs. Sally Merchant: (Saskatoon city) — Before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with, Mr. Speaker, may I call the attention of the house to the presence here today of some grade seven students from one of the schools in Saskatoon. Our visitors are from Churchill School. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Chernoff. We are, I know, delighted to have them and wish them a very happy day.

Mr. Harry D. Link: (Saskatoon City) — Before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the four members from Saskatoon, sitting on this side of the house, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the students from Churchill School and their teacher, Mrs. Chernoff. I hope their stay in this legislature will prove very interesting and educational.

Hon. Members: — Hear! Hear!

QUESTION RE PURPLE GAS REPORT IN GAZETTE

Mr. Fred Dewhurst: (Wadena) — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the government. The other night when we were debating the purple gas bill, I asked if copies of the Gazette, with the regulations in, which pertained to that bill, would be supplied to each of us because our copies went home.

Mr. Thatcher: — Mr. Speaker, I would be certainly pleased to look into the matter and if it has not been done, I will certainly see that it is.

REPORT IN SASKATOON STAR PHOENIX RE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE

Hon. A.H. McDonald: (Minister of Agriculture) — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with, there is an item in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix of Thursday, March 4th, concerning the Government Insurance Office that I would like to deal with.

This item in the issue of March 4th is similar to some statements I have heard from our radio stations concerning the Automobile Accident Insurance Act, administered by the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office.

This article is headlined: "S.G.I.O. Shows Sixth Straight Deficit". Well, this is not quite in accordance with the facts, Mr. Speaker, The S.G.I.O. have not had a deficit during this six year period, but it is true that the Automobile Accident Insurance Act fund has had a deficit for these six years, and I want to point out to all hon. members and to the press, again, that there is no relationship between S.G.I.O. and the Automobile Accident Insurance Act, other than the Government Insurance Office administers the A.A.I. Act, and I want to point out again, that the only revenues that are available to the A.A.I.A. is the premium income for the compulsory automobile insurance, plus the interest earned when this premium income is invested, and if the Automobile Accident Insurance Act has a loss, that loss has no bearing on the Government Insurance Office and it has no bearing on the Treasury Department of Saskatchewan.

If there is a loss, then rates are increased to offset that loss; if there is a gain in the operations of A.A.I.A. then it has been the policy to reduce the premiums on our automobiles. Again, I want to make it abundantly clear, that there has been no loss to the Government Insurance Office and the loss in the Automobile Accident Insurance Act has no bearing on the operations of the Government Insurance Office as far as finances are concerned.

I hope we can finally get that into everyone's head.

STATEMENT OF POLICY RE SALE OF GRAZING LAND

Mr. McDonald: (Moosomin) — While I am on my feet I would like to acquaint the house with a policy concerning the sale of grazing land as administered by the Department of Agriculture.

A few weeks ago I had the privilege of announcing in the house a new sales policy with regard to cultivated leases, and we are now in the position where we can announce a policy with regard to the sale of small grazing leases.

The purpose of this policy is to provide for the sale of parcels of crown grazing land, up to one-half section in size, to lessees where the permanent addition of this parcel can contribute to the stability of an economic farming enterprise. In order to qualify for eligibility for sale is as follows:

1. The sale must be considered as contributing to the permanent stability of an economic farming enterprise, which would generally be considered to consist of a unit within an assessment range of \$5,000 to \$15,000.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, you must have an assessment range including the assessment of the land you are purchasing, within a range of \$5,000 to \$15,000.

2. Proximity to other lands owned by the lessee may be a factor in determining eligibility for sale.

I think that is self-explanatory.

3. Parcels will not be sold
 - (a) where the soil type or topography is such that the continued cultivation could result in damage from soil erosion to adjoining water forces or roads, or consistent P.F.A.A. payments.

(b) Where it appears probable that the land may be required for land use, water conservation or recreation projects.

In other words this provision is very similar to the provision in the policy for the sale of cultivated lands, if we anticipate that certain lands will have a higher economic value for other uses, then the Department would not be interested in disposing of these parcels.

4. In general, isolated quarters, half-sections or parcels of grazing land may be purchased by lessees where such parcels form an integral part of the economic farming unit, and where such a sale is consistent with the land use program of the Department:

5. Purchasers should not be more than sixty years of age, except where it is reasonably evident that the farm unit would be passed on to an heir;

Terms and Conditions of Sale.

1. The price shall be determined by appraised formula as established by regulations, subject to annual adjustments according to market prices, but not less than \$10 per acre for any land. The basic formula will be the number of cow-months per quarter section multiplied by 30 cents to give the per acre price. Arable land in grazing leases will be appraised and sold as such;

2. Lease rentals and taxes must be paid up before entering a purchase agreement;

3. Down payment of 33 1/3rd per cent of the appraised price, remainder payable in six equal installments with interest on principal only at five per cent;

Of course, there is provision to pay cash in the event that any person would prefer to do that.

4. Payment of the current year's rental will be required for purchases made between July 31st and the 31st of December of any calendar year.

Members will note that there is a considerable difference between this policy and the policy that was announced a few weeks ago with regard to the purchase of cultivated land. One of the main reasons for this is that in a vast majority of cases, the ranchers and farmers that will be purchasing this type of land will be making an addition to an already existing unit, and, therefore, the conditions of purchase are a little more severe than they are for cultivated land because in many instances where they will be purchasing the cultivated land, they will be purchasing a complete unit, and that is not the case as far as the small parcels of grazing land are concerned.

But I am sure that many farmers and ranchers will benefit from this policy in that it will give them a more economic unit and that they will be the owners of that unit.

Mr. Martin Pederson: (Arm River) — Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question? I noticed on the classification of prices, you are using the figure in this question of arriving at your price, the number of cow-months, at five head times seven. Can you explain to the house what the meaning of the figure seven is, in all of these formulas?

Mr. McDonald: (Moosomin) — Seven months grazing period.

Mr. Pederson: — I see.

Mr. I.C. Nollet: (Cut Knife) — May I ask the hon. minister a question? In connection with the minimum price of \$10 per acre for grazing land, it is, of course, common that many cultivated loose parcels also have contained within them land that will never be suitable for cultivation but will, in fact, be grazing land. Now what is the minimum price where a farmer buys his cultivated lease land, and where there is grazing land, what is the price for that grazing land? In the case of a cultivation lease, does the minimum price . . .

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Mr. McDonald: (Moosomin) — When I announced the policy with regard to the sale of grazing land, I announced the minimum price would be \$16 an acre. This is for the minimum price of the cultivated land within the parcel, there may be a quarter-section with eighty acres cultivated. The minimum price would be \$16 an acre for eighty acres.

Mr. Nollet: — This would be a minimum price of \$16 an acre, whether the land was cultivated or broken, or whether it was considered arable.

Mr. McDonald: (Moosomin) — If it was considered arable, yes, but if it was considered that it is not arable, then the minimum price of this policy would apply to those acres within the cultivated group if it is non-arable land.

STATEMENT RE STAR PHOENIX

Hon. D. McFarlane: (Minister of Municipal Affairs) — Before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with, a statement was made in this house that a certain newspaper was biased because it did not indicate the members on this side of the house who were absent the night that the vote was taken on purple gas. I just want to clear the records of the house by indicating that the Votes and Proceedings show that every member on this side of the house was in his seat when the vote was taken, so, therefore, the report was not biased.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thatcher: — Stick around when we do things, Robert.

The assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Thatcher for second reading of Bill No. 30 — An Act to provide for the Appointment of Legislative Secretaries to Members of the Executive Council.

Mr. A.E. Blakeney: (Regina West) — Mr. Speaker, I really do not want to say a great deal about this bill. I am confident that some other members on this side of the house will have something to say about it. The bill itself is short and provides for the appointment of Legislative Secretaries, six of them, and I think that the bill is remarkable primarily for what it does not say, rather than what it does say.

Mr. Speaker, what does the bill provide for? It provides that the Lieutenant Governor In Council may appoint up to six Legislative Secretaries who will be members of the legislative assembly and who will carry on such duties as may be assigned to them by a member of the cabinet. The particular words are “a Legislative Secretary to a member of the legislative council shall assist the member in such manner as the member may direct”. Now, Mr. Speaker, where did the idea come from for Legislative Secretaries? I think the only precedent for having Legislative Secretaries in Canada, is in the Parliament of Canada. I am aware of no province which has Legislative Secretaries, the Parliament of Canada has Legislative Secretaries, or Parliamentary Secretaries as they are called, and a reference to the acts of the Dominion of Canada for the year 1959, Chapter 15, indicates that the Saskatchewan bill is closely patterned off the federal bill.

But, Mr. Speaker, the circumstances under which there would be Parliamentary Secretaries are very different, indeed, from the circumstances under which we might need Legislative Secretaries. Parliamentary Secretaries to a minister of the Crown, in the federal government, are necessary or at least desirable, because of the duties which the Minister of the Crown has to perform. A federal minister has a department to supervise or superintend; he very frequently has duties which call him away from Ottawa to the farthest corners of Canada, and, indeed, to many distant parts of the globe.

You would say, “Well, this may be, but Saskatchewan cabinet ministers frequently have to leave the province”, but the difference, of course, is this; — that when a Saskatchewan cabinet minister leaves the province, it is highly unlikely that the legislature will be in session, because the legislature only meets for perhaps eight or nine weeks of the year, where the Parliament of Canada meets perhaps eleven months of the year.

The principal duty of a Legislative Secretary is to represent

the minister in parliament when the minister cannot be there, because his duties as a department head call him to the department, or to some distant point in Canada or the globe. This is highly unlikely to happen in Saskatchewan, because as I say, the legislature, for ten months of year, does not sit.

There is a further reason why Parliamentary Secretaries are necessary and Legislative Secretaries are not. It is the custom of the Parliament of Canada for the house to sit and for committees of the house to sit at the same time, so that on occasion a minister should be in a committee, which is considering a matter with which he has a vital concern, and he should at the same time be representing his department in the House of Commons. Obviously he isn't twins — this problem has been met by having a Parliamentary Secretary.

We, in Saskatchewan, have not found it necessary to schedule our committees to sit while the house is in session, so this reason for having a Legislative Secretary is not valid. Indeed, none of the reasons which are ordinarily advanced for having Parliamentary Secretaries at Ottawa are valid in a provincial government such as Saskatchewan, which has a short legislative session.

It is really highly unlikely that a minister of the crown in Saskatchewan, and I speak from some short experience, will find it impossible during the eight or ten weeks of the legislative session, to attend to his duties in the house and at the same time attend to his departmental duties. We are in the happy position here of having our offices, our administrative offices, close to the Legislative Buildings, — very much different in this regard than circumstances at Ottawa, where if a minister is with his department he is sometimes four, or five, or ten miles from the House of Commons. We are in the happy position here of having administrative offices clustered around the Legislative building, so that a minister can, in the ordinary course of events, attend the house and still be reasonably accessible to his department officials if some matter of urgent concern arises.

In point of fact, a minister only on the rarest of occasions finds that he must be outside this chamber because of the pressures of legislative duties. Obviously, it happens for a day or two. The Minister of Education may well have to attend the Trustees' Convention, or another minister may have to be away a day or two at Ottawa. But this is comparatively rare and I think the rarity of it is amply demonstrated this session. We have already sat for four weeks, and how many ministers have found it necessary to be away from their place in this Legislature for any extended period of time? Very few, and I commend ministers opposite on their attendance at this Legislature — but I think their diligence makes it clear that it is quite possible to carry on legislative duties efficiently, and still be in the house.

I am not here to say that the ministers opposite are making a hash of their departments while the session is on; — I doubt that this is the case. I believe they are carrying on as efficiently as they do other times of the year, but this has not prevented them from being in their places in this chamber.

No other provincial government in Canada, so far as I am aware, has found it necessary to have Legislative Secretaries, and, of course, you will find this remarkable because a good number of the provincial governments meet for much longer sessions than Saskatchewan does. The Legislatures of Ontario and Quebec meet for many months, unlike our situation where we are able to dispatch our public business in perhaps eight to ten weeks.

So, Mr. Speaker, if the Legislative Secretaries are not going to carry on the functions which Parliamentary Secretaries carry on at Ottawa, or at least are alleged to carry on at Ottawa, what duties are they going to carry on? Well, I think we can get some inkling of this from the terms of the bill itself. The remuneration to be paid to the Legislative Secretaries is comparatively modest, \$2,000 per annum, so I think we will not look to that particular provision of the bill to explain why these people may be appointed. I think it would be much more prudent to look to section 5, which provides that they will receive their travelling expenses as they travel about the province.

Now you may wonder why these particular Legislative Secretaries will find it necessary to travel about the province. I am, as a matter of fact, not in as much doubt as some others may be on this score. I suspect

Mr. Speaker, that the duties which will call the Legislative Secretaries about the province will be the same sort of duties which many of them have carried on prior to their election to this house.

I have already referred to the hon. member for Last Mountain (Mr. McLennan) and his very great skills in a particular area of endeavor, and I am sure these won't be over-looked by the Premier in making his selections.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am not suggesting that the \$2000 provided for in this bill will remunerate the member for Last Mountain (Mr. McLennan) as well, or as handsomely as he was previously remunerated, according to the figures which I have at hand. But I do not know what may be coming to him under the provisions of section 5, which allow Legislative Secretaries to be reimbursed for their travelling and other expenses, as the marginal note says.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that it is all too clear what duties these gentlemen will be called upon to perform. After all, what duties can they usefully perform? Let us review a bit the functions which they might be called upon to perform.

Firstly, it is my submission that they have no really useful role to play, with respect to this chamber. I believe that on most occasions the minister will find it possible to be in this chamber, and when, because of pressure of public business, a minister finds it impossible to be in this chamber, or at a committee of this legislature, we have found it possible in the past to rearrange public business so that the minister's convenience or necessity could be accommodated. If the Minister of Natural Resources found it necessary to be at Ottawa, it was usually possible to schedule debates on bills affecting Natural Resources, or the estimates of the Department of Natural Resources at a time when it was convenient to him. This has been the custom in the past, both the government and the opposition have found this not to be inconvenient in the past, and I have no reason to believe that it will be any more inconvenient in the future.

Well then, if the Legislative Secretary is not to perform particularly useful functions with respect to this chamber, what duties will be performed with respect to the department as such? Well, he obviously cannot be part of the administrative structure of the department. In a department of government, the deputy minister must have a relationship, and a personal relationship with the minister, and I suggest to you that if a Parliamentary Secretary, or any other elected official finds himself in a position where he is interposed between the minister and the deputy, even with respect to one segment of the operations of a particular department, the administration of the department will suffer.

I think, therefore, that the Parliamentary Secretary cannot really have any very continuous or continuing dealings with the deputy or with any other senior branch heads; — otherwise the administrative structure of the department will be under-cut. The Legislative Secretary must, therefore, be in effect a staff man, who assists the minister.

Now, I am not denying that the pressures of a ministerial office are at times heavy, and I am not suggesting that a Legislative Secretary could not perform some function, which might on occasion be useful in attending a semi-ceremonial function, such as the opening of a school, or a hospital, or some like function, where the primary duty sought to be fulfilled is the representation of the government, rather than the representation by anyone possessing a particular group of skills, or a particular position of authority, such as the minister does. Therefore, there is a sort of a narrow area where he might perform a useful function. In the past, it has been found quite possible to have this function performed by the Deputy Minister in many cases or a senior official of the department. In many cases indeed, I suggest that this is a very excellent way to have the government represented because frequently the people who are at such a function are people who will have continuing relationships with the department, and for them to meet with and discuss the problems surrounding this particular institution with a senior official of the department, makes for better continuing relations between that public body and the department.

So there is a narrow area there. But I suggest it is very narrow. The man serves no useful function with respect to this house or very little. He performs no useful function with respect to the administrative structure of the department, or very little. He has some small role in performing certain ceremonial duties which a minister of the crown is called upon from time to time to perform.

But I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that this bill is not brought in so that we may have four or six people who might be able to go about attending openings of schools and hospitals however desirable that may be. I rather think that when these gentlemen go out about the country, they will find other duties to occupy their time. Now, the nature of these duties is, I think, amply illustrated by the nature of the duties performed by their counterparts at Ottawa. I think we know what the parliamentary secretaries, or at least some of them, at Ottawa have been doing.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Pederson: (Arm River) — . . . there too . . .

Mr. Blakeney: — That is right. A lot of guys there as they said.

Mr. A.R. Guy: (Athabasca) — . . . pronunciation . . .

Mr. Blakeney: — Yes, well, the hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Guy) is quibbling on a basis of pronunciation but . . .

Hon. D.V. Heald: (Lumsden) — A contribution to biculturalism!

Mr. Blakeney: — Yes, his contribution to biculturalism. I am having all sorts of witty suggestions coming from the left and from the right. I suggest that this is going to be a very stimulating debate as soon as these people find their feet.

Mr. Pederson: — No charge by the member for Arm River.

Mr. Blakeney: — “No charge by the member for Arm River”, he says.

But my point of course, is that the experience at Ottawa is all too instructive as to the duties which these Legislative Secretaries will be called upon to perform.

I do not want to suggest that all the Parliamentary Secretaries at Ottawa represent the same point of view with respect to their duties to the public, as for example, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister. I do not want to dwell too extensively on this. We all know it is the subject of an inquiry by a Commission headed by a judge. But I think that we can make this observation, very fairly, and I think eminently fairly, that the Parliamentary Secretaries at Ottawa have been attending to what are essentially political duties of the ministers.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Blakeney: — And I say that is a very considerable understatement, as to what they have been doing.

I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan should be called upon to pay the salary, which I suggest is modest, and the expenses which I suggest will not be modest of six Legislative Secretaries who will carry on duties which I believe will be very similar to the duties of the Parliamentary Secretaries at Ottawa — that is the political duties of the ministers to whom they are secretaries.

I believe that it has always been considered in the past that the minister, as an elected official, naturally has his political duties to perform but he also has public duties and he must divide his time as he sees fit. He is paid out of the public purse. It is not always easy, I suppose, for a minister to decide what is a political function and what is a non-political function. But, by and large, I think ministers in the past have been relatively scrupulous in collecting expenses out of the public purse for public functions and not collecting expenses out of the public purse for political functions.

Mr. L.P. Coderre: (Gravelbourg) — Oh. Oh.

Mr. Blakeney: — Oh. Oh. You have the books at your disposal and you

will be able to refute me if you find that to be in error.

Mr. C.G. Willis: (Melfort-Tisdale) — He found a car.

Mr. Blakeney: — But I want to say this. I would like to know how the same standards will be or could be effectively applied to legislative secretaries who I suggest will be spending most of their time on what are essentially political duties.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Blakeney: — I suggest that we will see these gentlemen going about performing some public functions but performing a great number of other functions which are of benefit, not particularly to the people of Saskatchewan, but more particularly to the party in power. I see no basis, on the basis of precedent across Canada, or on the basis of the functions which Parliamentary Secretaries are allegedly performing at Ottawa, or on any other basis, for encumbering the government of Saskatchewan with four, or five, or six other people who will be carrying on these functions. If a province, like Ontario, has not found it necessary to have such secretaries, why are they necessary in Saskatchewan? If they are not necessary in Quebec, why are they necessary in Saskatchewan? If this is true in British Columbia, or in Alberta, why are they necessary in Saskatchewan?

Each of these provinces, is far larger, — Alberta is about the same size in area, the others are larger in area, — and all of them are larger in population than Saskatchewan. They have, by and large, more diverse interests represented. They have more people living in remote areas and greater distances between the capital and areas of considerable population. Indeed, they have all the attributes which would suggest that Legislative Secretaries are necessary but they have not been found to be necessary. I suggest that they have not been found to be necessary because, in those provinces, the parties in power and the members of the executive council have decided that they can adequately carry on the political functions of the party which they represent, without calling upon the Legislative Secretaries to augment those functions.

Now, if this is so in all the provinces of Canada, and if the experience at Ottawa is something less than such as to commend itself to this house, and if the circumstances in Saskatchewan are far easier for a minister of the crown in terms of meeting both his departmental and his legislative commitments than they are in almost any other province of Canada, I am at a loss to know what rational reasons could be advanced for having Legislative Secretaries in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Blakeney: — I know, Mr. Speaker, that reasons can be advanced, but I come back to the reason which crosses my mind continually, and Mr. Speaker, it is not a reason which commends itself to me. I believe that on a basis of experience all across Canada and on the basis of our customs in Saskatchewan for short sessions, there is no justification for having Legislative Secretaries. Whether it is true or not that they will engage in political activities, there will certainly be an ever present suggestion that this is their function, and even the suggestion is undesirable, from the point of view of the image of government in this province.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I find myself unable to support this bill and I will most certainly oppose it on second reading.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Martin P. Pederson: (Arm River) — Mr. Speaker, I too would like to discuss something of the principles that are lying behind this bill and the proposition being put to this assembly that it is necessary in the province of Saskatchewan for ministers of the crown to have, as is stated in this bill, Legislative Secretaries.

The first point that I want to make, Mr. Speaker, has to do with the question of economy. Although this may be a minor point, I think that it is one thing that should be taken into consideration. This was a government who were elected, partially at any rate, on their pledge of effecting economies in government. There were some people who thought that with

the reduction in the number of portfolios, the reduction in the number of cabinet ministers, that perhaps they were going to apply this economy to themselves as well as the people of the province, as well as to the people in the civil service. but now it becomes apparent, with the introduction of this bill, that they had no such an intention. They have managed to reduce, quite true, the number of portfolios, and I am most certainly one of those who support that. But they are offsetting it by the introduction of this bill, if it is approved. I believe that this is a move that will indicate to people that this new government are prepared to exercise economies on other people rather than on themselves.

I doubt very much, Mr. Speaker, if any member of the cabinet has to work so hard that he needs this type of an assistant. I am quite aware that they must have a tremendous amount of work both as a private member and as a minister, but I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that members on this side of the house, in particular those of us who must carry on the duties as a party leader as well as a member, also carry an extremely heavy load. And if it is reasonable to suggest that a minister needs a secretary appointed from amongst the membership of the government, than I would suggest, Sir, that it is equally reasonable for the Leader of the Opposition to be allowed to appoint such a member, and I most certainly do not think that that would be proper.

As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, appointments such as this, could not of necessity only go to members who live here in Regina. What then would be the situation? I would suggest that from the noises that we have heard in this session, that, as for an example, the hon. member from Athabasca (Mr. Guy) might be one of those who would be looking at one of these positions. Would he then have to move to Regina so that he could perform his duties the year round? Or would he, in fact, perform his duties only for the couple of months that the session is being held? Or as one of the hon. members for Regina East suggested, would he have about four to six weeks of work in the house for which he would receive remuneration of \$2,000 over and above the regular indemnity?

Are the taxpayers of this province to be called upon to give approximately an additional \$1,000 to members who are going to perform only for a couple of months? Surely this does not make common sense. Do they wish to provide a training ground for some of the backbenchers for cabinet posts? Perhaps such members would be ambitious enough to operate as a Legislative Secretary without salary. Why not? Many times you hear the complaint from backbenchers that they are not given sufficient responsibility, particularly on the government side. I believe that this might be a good training ground and those who would take on this task without salary certainly, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, would show more honest endeavor than the carrot being dangled at \$2,000 to help induce them into this task.

Now, I must say that I am in accord with the hon. member from Regina West (Mr. Blakeney) in holding grave doubts and reservations about the activities of these people in between sessions. I noticed a provision in the bill, Mr. Speaker, for the payment for travelling expenses as was referred to by the member from Regina West (Mr. Blakeney) How much travelling expense will be allowed? What are the limitations? How far ranging are these provisions going to be extended to the so-called Legislative Secretaries? Will we be faced with perhaps an undisclosed amount running into several thousands of dollars, to cover the activities? I have grave fears, Mr. Speaker, that these activities will be more political than legislative. I think that the members who would receive such appointments should receive them purely on the legislative side of the ledger. Certainly, I believe that there are certain types of political functions that ministers of the crown, due to their position as members, must attend and find impossible to do so. Exclusive of those though, I believe that many of the Legislative Secretaries will be doing nothing more or less than organizing for the party that they represent in this house. I do not believe, Mr. Speaker, that the taxpayers of this province should be asked to underwrite the campaigning costs of any political party as opposed to any other political party in that fashion.

I am rather interested, Mr. Speaker, and I am going to pay very strict attention to how many will speak from the other side of the house in support of this bill. Outside of those in the front bench, I am watch those who will rise in support of this bill, because I think this might be an indication of who the hopefuls are. I would imagine that . . .

Mr. R.A. Walker: (Hanley) — Make them work, Ross.

Mr. Pederson: — I would imagine that certain

hon. members, who will remain nameless, have quite lengthy notes prepared and are ready to go at a moment's notice. But I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that before a movement is made in this direction, that the onus must be on the government and the proposers of this bill to explain in a far more tangible fashion than they have so far, exactly why we need this type of assistance for our cabinet ministers.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if any members of the cabinet are afraid of hard work, and think that they need all of this extra help, then they should not be in the cabinet. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if any of them find that the job is too onerous, that they step aside and let some of those with a lot more pep and vinegar who sit behind them take over and let them carry the very heavy duties of cabinet ministers. Surely in a province of a population of under one million, with a budget as limited as ours, surely it is not necessary to provide this assistance from the public purse.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I most certainly will oppose a second reading of this bill.

Mr. Ed. Whelan: (Regina North) — Mr. Speaker, when the party opposite sat where we are now, they said that we had too many cabinet ministers. And when they are at full strength and when they have not suffered a defeat in a by-election, they have thirteen, two less than the previous government. Now, to suggest, after taking this position that they need six part-time assistants, I suggest it is hypocritical and contradictory.

One of the things about this bill that worries me is that there are no duties listed. I was thinking of some duties that might be listed or might be explained to us. They might have one of these assistants file wastepaper basket letters. One candidate is extremely good at this. Perhaps one of the other duties might be to fan the cabinet ministers in warm weather. We might have one of them set aside to polish their automobiles. Another might chauffeur the cabinet ministers around the province. Another might-one might light their cigars.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: — Mr. Speaker, I think that we should not try and kid one another here in this house. The real duties of these people will be that of paid organizers. The reason I say this is because it suggests that they will assist the members of the executive council, and I think it says in the bill, as the members of the executive council may direct.

They may direct them to pick up memberships. They may direct them to organize meetings. They may direct them to meet people in motels who are seeking bail.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: — Mr. Speaker, what about the expenses? The expenses are going to be established by the lieutenant governor in council, I believe the bill says. There is nothing to say what they are going to be . . . it says reasonable. This means that there is to be no restriction on the duties and on the expenses. Just a wonderful set-up for six organizers to roam around and do a good job.

Mr. Speaker, this blank check is the sort of thing that we have to object to as an opposition. We are obligated to object to this. This brazen political activity, and that is what I predict it will be, represents an unnecessary expenditure at public expense.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is a bad precedent, as my colleague from Regina West (Mr. Blakeney) just said — a bad precedent for every legislature in Canada. We can only conclude that this is another first for Saskatchewan. This is another first. It is the first time that Saskatchewan citizens have paid for political organizers under a thin disguise.

Mr. Thatcher: — How about Woollam?

Mr. Whelan: — This is the first time that it has happened in Saskatchewan where members — elected members, sitting in the provincial parliament who are not cabinet ministers, have carried on political activity.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that not only members on this side of the house, but those who are not going to be appointed on the other side of the house, let their conscience be their guide, and vote against this bill.

Mr. F.A. Dewhurst: (Wadena) — Mr. Speaker . . .

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Dewhurst: — Was he closing the debate?

An Hon. Member: — No, go ahead.

Mr. Dewhurst: — Mr. Speaker. This is an amazing situation which we just saw trying to be performed right now.

An Hon. Member: — What did you see?

Mr. Dewhurst: — The Premier introduces a bill to appoint up to six Legislative Secretaries. There is not one of his colleagues on that side of the house, after questions have been asked by members on this side of the house, who has risen to join in the debate. But the Premier was prepared to try and get the floor, get your eye, Mr. Speaker, so that if we were not quick on the draw, that the debate would then be closed. I think that is a shameful . . .

Hon. A.C. Cameron: (Maple Creek) — On a point of order here. As a former speaker, he knows better than that. The speaker always warns the members when the mover is about to close the debate and thus they have an occasion to rise. I am surprised that you as a former speaker, would try to mislead the house to that extent.

Mr. Dewhurst: — Mr. Speaker, the point that the minister (Mr. Cameron) raised would be valid had you intended to do so but I did not say that you did so. I said that the Premier was attempting to do so. And the point that was raised by the Minister of Mineral Affairs (Mr. Cameron) was very rude to raise in this manner and I will just consider where it came from.

Mr. A.R. Guy: (Athabasca) — Well of all the . . .

Mr. Dewhurst: — Now, we see here a bill which is brought down before the members of the house, asking the legislature to pay \$2,000 plus what they call reasonable travelling expenses and other expenses. Well, what is reasonable? It depends upon who is the judge as to what is reasonable.

We see expenses for travelling could be anywhere from ten, eleven cents a mile on car expenses. We have seen hotel bills, as was mentioned on the Pierre Burton show just recently, of a commissioner from Edmonton going to Japan for nineteen days and costing \$7,000. They were considered reasonable. I would like to know what the definition of reasonable is.

We also saw last summer that the government of this province refused to allow approximately \$500 for two delegates from our parliamentary association to go to Prince Edward Island to join in the Parliamentary Commonwealth Association conference which was their Centennial down there.

Mr. Thatcher: — Figured you were freeloading long enough.

An Hon. Member: — That is what you call it. It is freeloading eh?

Mr. Dewhurst: — That is a very interesting statement, Mr. Speaker, coming from the Premier, figured we had had a freeload long enough. Very interesting. Whom is he trying to freeload now? Six of his backbenchers?

An Hon. Member: — His own words.

Mr. Dewhurst: — His own words. Freeloading. That we had had the freeload

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long enough, now he is going to make sure that six of his fellows have a freeloader. As far as the parliamentary association was concerned, it was always carried on in proportion to the membership in the house — no free-loading whatsoever.

We see all the members over there sitting back, saying nothing on this bill — a bill, as was pointed out by the member for Regina West (Mr. Blakeney) and the member for Arm River (Mr. Pederson) which is in itself a dastardly principle to say the least, to be kind to it. And yet none of them are prepared to get up and defend it.

Mr. Dewhurst: — Is this, Mr. Speaker, a way of the Premier keeping his backbenchers in order, so that each of them would be fighting for this plum that they do not dare kick over the traces?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dewhurst: — Is this a way of using blackmail on them, because the bill says that the term expire at the end of December each year or unless sooner authorized?

An Hon. Member: — . . . little chance . . .

Mr. Dewhurst: — So he could say to any parliamentary secretary who did not do what he was told when the whip was cracked, “your term is cancelled”, and put a fresh one in.

An Hon. Member: — Yes, you freeloaded long enough.

Mr. Dewhurst: — You freeloaded long enough so put in another freeloader.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Dewhurst: — Let us have a freeloader for everyone — twenty back-benchers! Then you can change them all three times a year and have them all freeloading!

An Hon. Member: — . . . naughty . . .

Mr. Dewhurst: — Now I think that this is a type of bill that demands more explanation than to allow the mover to get up and close the debate at this time. I think that the Premier and his colleagues who have been responsible for drawing up the budget, owe it to the people to give us something of what they have in mind, more than just a few words saying it shall be done as on the instructions of their ministers or by orders-in-council.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support this because it is vicious and wrong in principle and a bill that is making provision for freeloaders.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Arthur Thibault: (Kinistino) — Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a few words about this bill. I think that the party opposite is in a sort of a dilemma. At one time, they could depend on the Star Phoenix to sell their material but, during the Hanley by-election, it was proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Star Phoenix was no longer effective because on one hand, they talked about Pinder and on the other hand, they talked about the parliamentary assistants at Ottawa. So this defeated the whole issue.

Now, I think that this was a vote of non-confidence in the Star Phoenix that is being put in here and they are now going to use, in my opinion, six paid organizers throughout the province to replace the Star Phoenix. So I think if you play with the Star Phoenix a little better, maybe they will treat you a little different but they will have to smarten up too. So that is all I have got to say about the bill. You simply want six political organizers. And who is going to pay them — the taxpayers of the province? That is the only light in which I can see this bill.

Mr. W.A. Robbins: (Saskatoon) — Mr. Speaker, in rising to

say a few words on Bill 30 with regard to Legislative Secretaries, I would like to point out that not a single minister on the government side has arisen and stated that he requires assistance from a Legislative Secretary.

If their duties are so onerous, you would think some of them would be stating that they required secretaries and giving some information that this was needed at this time. I think I am quoting the hon. Premier correctly when I say that he said when introducing this bill on first reading, "that Ottawa's system has worked very well". Well I suppose a lot depends on the interpretation you place on it. I do not know whether members have ever heard this story, but I hope they will bear with me for a minute or two, which gives some indication of how interpretations may vary.

They tell the story of a minister who was near the end of his preaching career, and who went to a small country charge to preach. He got along very well in this small community and the people liked him very well, but he had one very severe problem. He had difficulty reading the scriptures on Sunday morning because the light in the church was rather poor.

He embarked on a program to get a chandelier installed in the church, but he was not successful. Three months went by, six months, nine months, a year, and finally he said to the gentleman who was the head of the Board of Stewards, "I have a severe problem here and I cannot understand why I cannot get some action on it. I have been trying now for a year to get a chandelier in this church and have been unsuccessful. Can you give me one good reason why we cannot have a chandelier in this church?" The gentleman said, "I can give you three good reasons. First of all, we have not got anyone who knows how to spell it, to order it, and secondly, if we did get it, we do not think anyone would know how to play it, and thirdly, what we really think this church needs is better lights."

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — So you see a lot depends on the interpretation that is placed on things.

I think it should be remembered that the Liberal party in the election campaign promised that it would have a cabinet of twelve. I heard this quotation from many platforms. The Premier did not promise a baker's dozen. Now it's true, he lost one of them, but nevertheless, the anticipation is that this appointment will later be filled, and we would have a cabinet of thirteen and six Legislative Secretaries, presumably.

Now what does the bill say? The bill says that the appointments shall terminate on the 31st day of December each year. Well perhaps, this is one way of keeping the Guys and Gals in line. It also says that they shall be paid a salary of \$2,000 a year and shall be paid in monthly installments, \$166.66 a month, presumably \$166.74 on the last day of the year to bring it into line at \$2,000. Other members have commented on the expenses. It says reasonable expenses. But again, this is subject to interpretation. Now, Mr. Speaker, I realize that this is an extremely onerous task for the Premier, in terms of selecting Legislative Secretaries, and if I may, I would like to present to him and to members on the government side, a little bit of assistance from the opposition side. We are concerned of course that he makes the best possible selections.

Hon. A.C. Cameron: — You do not want any . . . so why suggest them?

Mr. Robbins: —

LEGISLATIVE SECRETARIES

Ottawa has its Guy Favreau,
 Montreal has its Guy Rouleau,
 Also Guy Lord and Guy Masson,
 The federal Liberals are rolling along
 From enquiry A to enquiry B
 Furniture, extradition and fiddle-dee-dee.

Saskatchewan has a legislature
 Occupied by persons of varied nature.
 The members on the government side,
 Want to take the electors for a ride;
 With a government crew — a Liberal band
 Legislative secretaries about the land.

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These guys and gals will get recompense
And travel about at government expense.

Who shall the honorable Premier select?
With proper grace and due respect.
Perhaps a consultation — a report from Berry
Will decide who shall be his secretary.
MacDonald of Milestone has staked a claim,
Classical elocution advanced his name.
Romuld performed — Red Skelton style;
Fascinating Mr. Premier, for awhile.

Dare he pass up MacLennan, the organizer,
Probably not, but would it be wiser?
Don't rush now, mustn't move too soon,
Perhaps the lady Merchant from Saskatoon;
Would add grace, composure and proper wit
But hold it now, just wait a bit —
Ottawa's method has worked very well
What about Gallagher, Radloff, Larochelle?

Possibly you could rotate this gallant band
And spread them all, all over the land.
But one must be careful, everyone knows
You may upset the member representing Elrose.
Then he'll decline the next nomination
Which will surely add to the consternation.

Have checked them all, what about Breker,
Couldn't he be secretary to the exchequer?
This is serious business, no time for joking
Rosetown will regret it, if you pass up Loken.
Is there no solution, darn that Berry
Why did he mention the word "secretary"?
Maybe call cabinet; 'stablish something preferential
Second thought, better not, best kept confidential.

Oh! what a problem, now perhaps, perchance
You could mull it all over back at the ranch.
And there 'neath the peace of earth and sky;
In a shady nook in the sweet bye and bye.
Shady, that does it, you wonder why
You didn't think of it before, leave it all up to Guy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: — Read it over again.

Mr. Steuart: — Will you table that?

Mr. Robbins: — Yes, I will.

Mr. A.N. Nicholson: (Saskatoon) — Mr. Speaker, I think that it would be of serious reflection on this legislature if the Premier was the only member on the government side to take part in this important debate. I am sure that on reflection, members of the cabinet will want to make some comment and the backbenchers will also have something to say, and so I beg leave at this point to adjourn this debate.

Mr. Nollet: — I would like to have it over with.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION RE ADJOURNMENT OF HOUSE FOR S.A.R.M. CONVENTION

The assembly resumed the adjourned debate on Item no. 3 on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. McFarlane.

Mr. J.H. Brockelbank: (Kelsey) — Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the other day when I was speaking in regard to this motion, that a number of members thought it would be a very good idea if we are going to take Tuesday off next week, that we take Monday off as well

Now this session started in good time this year, about a week

earlier than usual, and I think we have had more night sessions, we have worked hard and faithfully and the attendance at the session has been very good as well, and if it is all right to take off Tuesday to go to the convention, well it will not make much difference to take another day. A good many of the members in the north want to go home on the week-end and it would certainly accommodate them if they could take Monday off and then attend the convention on Tuesday and then come to the session on Wednesday. So I am going to move, seconded by Mr. A.H. Nicholson, that the motion be amended:

That the words "Monday, March 15th" be deleted and the following substituted therefor: Friday, March 12th.

If the amendment carries, then the motion would read:

That when this assembly adjourns on Friday, March 12th, 1965, it stand adjourned until Wednesday March 17th, 1965, at 2:30 o'clock p.m.

Now I would think that all members would appreciate taking this other day on this occasion and I hope all members will support this amendment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — The question before the house is on the motion of the hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. McFarlane):

That when this assembly adjourns on Monday March 15, 1965, it stand adjourned until Wednesday, March 17, 1965, at 2:30 o'clock p. m.

To which an amendment has been offered, moved by the member for Kelsey, (Mr. Brockelbank) and seconded by the member for Saskatoon (Mr. Nicholson) that the motion be amended by striking out the words Monday, March 15th and substituting therefor the following words, Friday March 12th.

That the words Monday March 15th, be deleted and the following substituted therefor: Friday, March 12th.

The debate continues on the amendment.

Mr. D.W. Michayluk: (Redberry) — I am one of the northern members, and usually like to go home for a week-end. The distance from the capital city to my home is approximately 240 miles. If this motion passed in this house in its original form, it would necessitate my leaving Regina at adjournment time on Friday, travel 240 miles, and come back on Sunday or early Monday morning. I would have to travel 160 miles to the city of Saskatoon, if I should want to attend the S.A.R.M. convention.

I think that the amendment in this motion is particularly of value to the members who have long distances to travel. Otherwise it would necessitate long travelling back to the legislature to sit for one day and then again travel back to the city and back again to be in the legislature on the following day. I will support this amendment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. R.H. Wooff: — Mr. Speaker, as a member that is perhaps the second farthest away from home, some 330 miles, I do wish to add a few words to what has been said by the mover of this motion on behalf of all members in fact. I have been home one week-end in six weeks. It takes practically all the time to go there and back. The last time I was home, through some unfortunate circumstances, we could not get away on time and we had to drive all night in order to be here on Monday. I think that the house has been sitting not only for a lengthy time already, but we have perhaps put in more nights than any session up to this time.

There is also a lengthy agenda ahead of us, and seeing that we are going to adjourn the house for one day and that Tuesday, I certainly, for one, would very much appreciate adjourning it on Friday for both Monday and Tuesday, and I am sure as the member for Redberry (Mr. Michayluk) has already said, there are many members on both sides of the house who would like a long week-end at home.

So I am very much in favor of this motion and will support it.

Hon. D.G. Steuart: (Minister of Health) — Mr. Speaker, speaking to the amendment, I think first we should point out why we introduced this motion in the first place. I think all members will agree that the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities is an extremely important organization, representing as it does local government in rural Saskatchewan. I think it has been a practise over the years for many members of the government, and in fact many members of the legislature on both sides, whenever it was possible, to attend some sessions of that annual convention.

It has also been the practise for the S.A.R.M. to invite the Premier and various members of the cabinet to address them and they have done so again this year, and for this we are very happy. We very much appreciate their invitation to us to present certain policies before that convention and to give us a chance to express our point of view, and to give them a chance to question us. We realize too, that three or four of us were invited the same day. As I say, with the extremely small majority of the government, it meant that if we all went we might have to depend on the rather tender mercy of the opposition. We could probably all go, but I am sure that if we had asked them, they would no doubt have given us a very mild day that day. I am positive, but there is just a little hint of suspicion that creeps in every now and then that we might have gone there as the government and we would have kept right on going, in my case, to Prince Albert. The next day I might be back peddling furniture on time and not necessarily to politicians . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Blakeney: — We hope you get paid . . .

Mr. Steuart: — Well, I am being extremely careful lately to whom I advance credit, I am advising my brother too. So we felt it necessary to ask the legislature if they would adjourn for that particular day and we asked the S.A.R.M. to so arrange their convention so the cabinet ministers could all make their addresses on that one day, and in this they accommodated us.

But we do feel that one day should be sufficient. Now this will not come up the following year, because, as I understand it, the convention alternates and will be here in Regina; and the following year there will have been so many by-elections which we will have won by that time, that we will not have to worry. We could send four or five of us to Saskatoon.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Or vice versa . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — But either way, we will not have to worry, so in view of all this, while we feel it is quite reasonable to take one day off, we do feel that the one day is sufficient and we are afraid we are going to have to oppose this amendment. Much as we would like to see the members get a week-end off, we have still some very important legislation that we must get through. So I am afraid, while we would love to give the members a long week-end, we are going to have to oppose the amendment and ask the house just to take the one day in this particular instance.

Mr. I.C. Nollet: (Cut Knife) — Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed that the hon. Minister of Public Health (Mr. Steuart) takes this view point. I do not think it is fair to members on his side of the house or this side of the house, who do go home over the week-end, many of whom go to northern Saskatchewan, as has been mentioned, great distances, and to ask them then to come back here on Monday and then up to Saskatoon for the S.A.R.M. convention. It is not very considerate in my opinion.

I would like to say to the hon. member for Prince Albert, (Mr. Steuart) that this could have been arranged without adjourning the legislature at all. We could have made an arrangement to 'Pair' ourselves, for example. It could have been done without an adjournment . . .

Mr. Thatcher: — We asked for it . . .

Mr. Nollet: — But I would think since the progress of the house has been good, in fairness to those members from the north who want to go home on week-ends, and who do go home on week-ends, it is not quite right to ask them to come back to Regina on a Monday, and then go to Saskatoon again, the following day. I would hope that the hon. members on both sides would have some consideration in this regard. After all a day is a day. What is a day?

This is not going to determine how long this session is going to last. A good deal of it will depend on the behavior of the hon. members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. A.N. Nicholson: (Saskatoon) — Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the Minister of Public Health (Mr. Steuart) very carefully. After having a long time in parliament, I think I should say that the government deserves a great deal of credit for keeping the attendance so close to one hundred per cent every day. I think hon. members have responsibility to their constituents as well as to the assembly. I think that the members for Meadow Lake (Mr. Coupland) and Nipawin (Mr. Radloff) who have large constituencies which are a long distance from here, I think should have occasionally during the session an opportunity to go back to their constituency. My guess is that if the government could accept this resolution, it will make no difference to the closing date of the session. I think everyone has agreed that we have a great deal of important legislation to pass, but I would think that if you total the number of hours that we have given to the assembly since the house started, it would be a larger number than any previous year. I would think that we could dispose of the business just as quickly if we take Monday and Tuesday off.

I might say personally that Saskatoon is very close to Regina and that it does not make much difference to Saskatoon members. I think for the sake of the rural members in the north particularly, that this amendment might be accepted by the government.

Mr. W.J. Berezowsky: (Cumberland) — When I heard the Minister of Public Health (Mr. Steuart) speak, it made me a little angry.

An Hon. Member: — It always does!

Mr. Berezowsky: — Well, I am angry about it and I am going to say so. First of all, the hon. minister has said that we should adjourn and take one day off to accommodate the cabinet. I, as a private member, have received no particular invitation to the convention. I may be there or I may not be there, I do not know. But I have no invitation and if this house is adjourned for one day, it is only to accommodate the cabinet because they are scared of being defeated in this house.

Mr. Steuart: — I agree.

Mr. Berezowsky: — It could have been arranged as it has been on other occasions.

An Hon. Member: — Glad you said that Bill.

Mr. Berezowsky: — . . . now there should be some accommodating of members who do not live close to this capital city of ours, but who have been away from home for a long time, as in my case. I have a wife who has been sick since December 25th, I have not seen her for a month and I thought that the legislature would arrange to give us that one day so I can go down to see her and my family at Meadow Lake.

This is how I feel, as a private member. I am asked to accommodate the cabinet ministers because they are afraid to lose a vote in this house and because they want to accept an invitation to a municipal convention at Saskatoon. Well, I would like to see them accommodate some of us too. We have many personal problems to attend to and I appeal to all the honorables opposite, and I think they are all decent too, that if they are going to ask us to favor them, to be just as decent and give us that one day in between these empty days so we can spend it with our families.

Mr. A. Thibault: (Kinistino) — Mr. Speaker, I live 200 miles

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from here and I cannot see any good reason why that day cannot be awarded. I think it is a trivial thing, and it would please the northern members. I know I would like to have an extra day at home. Things have not been too good up there, but I am not the only one. I have got to go and tell them about the purple gas, so I would like to have that extra day.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Thibault: — But let us be fair and let us be reasonable. Let us support this amendment. I do not think we should quarrel about this one day.

An Hon. Member: — There is nothing we can do . . .

The amendment was negated on the following recorded division:

**Yeas — 25
Messieurs**

Brockelbank (Kelsey)	Nicholson	Snyder
Cooper(Mrs.)	Kramer	Broten
Wood	Dewhurst	Larson
Nollet	Berezowsky	Robbins
Blakeney	Michayluk	Brockelbank (Saskatoon)
Davies	Smishek	Pepper
Thibault	Link	Pederson
Willis	Baker	
Whelan	Wooff	

**Nays — 31
Messieurs**

Thatcher	MacDougall	Bjarnason
Howes	Gardiner	Romuld
McFarlane	Coderre	Weatherald
Boldt	McIsaac	MacLennan
Cameron	Trapp	Larochelle
McDonald (Moosomin)	Cuelenaere	Asbell
Steuart	MacDonald (Milestone)	Hooker
Heald	Gallagher	Radloff
Guy	Breker	Coupland
Merchant (Mrs.)	Leith	
Loken		

The motion was agreed to on the following recorded division.

**Yeas — 48
Messieurs**

Thatcher	Howes	MacFarlane
Boldt	Cameron	McDonald (Moosomin)
Steuart	Heald	Guy
Merchant (Mrs.)	Loken	MacDougall
Gardiner	Coderre	McIsaac
Trapp	Grant	Cuelenaere
MacDonald (Milestone)	Gallagher	Breker
Leith	Bjarnason	Romuld
Weatherald	MacLennan	Larochelle
Asbell	Hooker	Radloff
Coupland	Brockelbank (Kelsey)	Cooper (Mrs.)
Wood		Nollet
Blakeney		
Davies	Thibault	Willis
Whelan	Nicholson	Michayluk
Snyder	Larson	Robbins
Brockelbank (Saskatoon)	Pepper	Pederson

Nays — 7
Messieurs

Kramer
Dewhurst
Berezowsky

Smishek
Link

Baker
Wooff

MOTION RE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

The assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the hon. A.H. McDonald (Moosomin)

Mr. J.H. Brockelbank: (Kelsey) — Mr. Speaker, I hope I will be more successful in getting support for this motion than I was the last time I rose in this house. I thought perhaps I should adjourn this debate, but I think I will take a chance on going ahead with it.

I have the report of the special committee that was appointed in my hand and there are just a few extracts that I would like to read from it. First of all, I would like to say that the work on this committee was very enjoyable indeed but because of circumstances beyond my control, I was not able to attend quite all of the meetings that were held. It certainly was very interesting work and I am sure that all members of the committee who attended the committee meetings found that it was very interesting indeed. The committee is indebted to the advisors and research people and staff to a great extent for helping them to get a picture of the work of the Public Accounts Committee, not only here but in other jurisdictions.

I would like to just draw your attention to the report on page four where recognition is given in regard to these people. Mr. C.B. Koester, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, was secretary to the committee. Professor Norman Ward, of the University of Saskatchewan contributed from his experience and knowledge as research consultant. Mr. C.E.S. Franks, commonly known as Ned Franks was loaned to the committee from the Treasury Department as research assistant to the committee. Then we had Mr. C.H. Smith, the provincial auditor, Mr. A.M. Kerr, the comptroller of the treasury and Mr. A.W. Johnson, deputy provincial treasurer who were witnesses before the committee and contributed very valuable research papers at the request of the committee. The legislature owes thanks to these people because certainly the committee could not have done the work without the help of these people.

I would like now to turn to page forty-five in the report, in regard to the position of the Provincial Auditor. This is a short passage:

If the Provincial Auditor in Saskatchewan were to prepare a report like those prepared by the Auditors General of Britain and Canada which contain criticisms and descriptions of selected significant financial transactions of the government, he would be criticising transactions which he must by statute have approved already.

This is the situation that the provincial auditor would be in if he tried to do that. And the report goes on:

This is obviously an unreasonable task to ask of any official. It is impossible to escape the conclusion that, at present, the Provincial Auditor is not in a position to prepare a critical report on the public accounts,

by virtue of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that he has the responsibility in the preparation of those accounts. So I think the recommendations of the Committee that the Provincial Auditor should be independent of the government and should not have further responsibility with regard to the pre-audit, is a good and sensible recommendation.

We come to the question of chairman of the committee which is dealt with on page 47, and the report says:

The chairman chosen from the government side in the Saskatchewan committee, as was true for the

chairman of the Canadian committee until 1958. has a role similar to that of the Speaker in the legislature, and the proceedings of the committee itself reproduce those of the legislature in smaller political form. The committee chairman from the government side is an arbiter between opposing action and does not initiate or lead investigation himself.

And going on, it says:

As a member of the opposition, the chairman is keenly interested in making a critical examination of the governments' accounts, and knowing that the government majority on the committee, . . .

This is very important. Mr. Speaker,

. . . the chairman knowing that the government majority on the committee can overrule him or prevent inquiry, he has every incentive to be fair and thorough in his investigation.

So I think the argument for having a chairman from the opposition, is well supported. Then we come to the question of ministers as witnesses. As all members know, the ministers at the present time are witnesses before the committee. The report on page 48. says:

The records indicate that, in early years, the chief witnesses before the Public Accounts Committee in Saskatchewan were civil servants, usually the permanent heads of departments. However, the committee was used as a political forum and ministers who by their positions were the appropriate witnesses for such a committee gradually replaced civil servants as witnesses. The rulings of successive chairmen tended to encourage and make formal the change. For the detailed investigation of expenditures that Public Accounts Committee makes, a permanent head is a more satisfactory witness than a minister. because as a witness before the special committee on Public Accounts procedure stated, — first, his attendance tends to preclude policy debates. He may say what the policy is, and may discuss the administrative aspects of the policy but he will not debate policy. This is quite evident. Second, his evidence is based on a more intimate knowledge of the facts. That is, the permanent head is the principle administrator in the department or agency. Third, the information he provides is less likely to be subjected to the same political screening as that obtained from the minister.

This I think is very important too.

Fourth, the selections of the permanent head or Deputy Minister, as the principle witness before the Public Accounts Committee, builds right into the civil service, a pressure in the direction of a strict observance of propriety, lawfulness, custom convention, and the rights of parliament.

So that when we came to the question of witnesses before the committee, I think the evidence is overwhelming.

Now the question of publicity, and this is the question where probably there will be some misunderstanding. In the early days of the government of the North West Territories. the Public Accounts Committee met in camera, and kept a verbatim transcript of at least some of its proceedings, although these were not published or distributed to the press. The present practises were adopted in the year 1900, after there had been an inquiry by a committee of the assembly and a leak to the press of the verbatim transcript of the proceedings, and as a matter of fact, the press went to the meeting of the committee that they heard about, and they were

allowed in and that is where our present custom started.

Now, another extract that I would like to quote:

The chief force of a Public Accounts Committee is a moral force, whose strength lies in the thoroughness of a committee's investigation and in the character of its report.

So, if we are interested in having a really good job done by the Public Accounts Committee, to be a force for all that is good in the way of government administration and accounting of public money, we want then a committee that can do a very thorough job of investigation whenever it is necessary.

This is the great moral force, And again the report says:

If meetings are in public, it is possible for an investigation by the committee to receive wide attention from the press, before it is completed, giving the public only a part and perhaps a distorted part of the whole story. Public meetings encourage the committee to seek the sensational material, and ignore more important but less entertaining matters.

The report could have said, also with less political kudos, a process which can reduce the committee's ability to make a systematic and thorough investigation. Public meetings deter public servants from speaking freely before a committee because they might become involved in political controversy.

So I think the arguments are very strong for meeting in camera. As a matter of fact, unless the meeting is going to be in camera, I don't think it is worth while changing the system at all. We might as well let the committee go on being what it is now, which is about ninety per cent or ninety-five per cent a political forum. I hope this will not be done, but I do not think there is any use going half way.

Then we come to the question of the size of the committee. The report says:

Only a few members are likely to have the aptitude and the interest which are needed on an effective Public Accounts Committee. Large committees make it difficult for the chairman to conduct a clear and orderly investigation. Members take less interest in meetings of large committees.

And I think we see that everyday that our Public Accounts Committee meets.

A large committee imposes too great a demand on time of individual members.

In other words, with a lot less help, you can get a lot more and better work done. It is important of course, when this committee makes a report, after its investigations, that the report gets attention. In Britain, the treasury is the central control agency of the government and reports back to the Public Accounts Committee on each on its recommendations. The treasury's report, which is the first business of the committee each year, is either to say that the recommendation has been implemented or that the committee should consider further evidence and arguments and perhaps change its recommendations. So the whole thing fits together, that the recommendations have got to be reported back to see that they have been acted upon.

Now, a few words in regard to the recommendations themselves which, as the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. McDonald) pointed out, are eight in number. The first is with regard to the independent legislative auditor. The minister mentioned that, at the present time, the auditor could be suspended by the government. Maybe any public servant should be always in the position where there is some authority that could take them out of their office by suspension. Maybe we should consider, if we adopt a new system, that the Public Accounts Committee would, if it found it necessary, have the right to suspend the auditor but it would have to be reported. He could not be dealt finally with until the next session of the legislature.

I think also, that if we adopt this system, when we provide for setting up a committee, we should consider that the committee should hold office until their successors are appointed, and that the committee should not pass out of existence with prorogation but should continue in office even if they do not have many meetings during the summer time when the house is not meeting. Then they will be there, this committee representative of the house, and the chairman of the committee could call the committee together, on the advice of the auditor, or if any emergency arises, to deal with the situation.

So we would always have a Public Accounts Committee. I do not think that I need say anymore about the chairman of the committee, or about the value of having permanent heads of the departments, or having civil servants as witnesses to give information in regard to the various accounts for which they have been responsible.

I certainly think that the meetings should be held in camera. If we do not have the meetings in camera, then I believe that the committee, whether it is large or small, will turn out to be a political forum. Its value as a check on the public accounts, as a moral force in regard to administration and expenditures of public money, will be to a great extent lost. It will be a political force.

The suggestion that there be an official verbatim report of the proceedings, I think is good, and I think with experience, will enable us to face this question and make decisions on it. It might be that, after experience, extensive minutes of the meetings of the committee would be sufficient instead of a verbatim report. But a verbatim report is not a very difficult or impossible thing today with modern recording equipment. It might be sufficient as long as it was recorded and could be transcribed. If necessary, this might fill the bill.

Then with respect to the size of the committee — they suggest the committee should not have more than eleven members. In the previous recommendation, the membership of the committee was based on the voting strength of parties in the legislature.

Now, let us just take a look at this. If we take the voting strength in this legislature and first we have three parties in the legislature. But if we are going to have a small Public Accounts Committee, and this Committee will have a good many meetings throughout the year, it is questionable as to whether or not a party represented by one member would want to use up that member's time on this committee. Now, this would have to be looked at. I do not know. That would be up to them.

But let us suppose that we were dividing up a committee of eleven at the present time, between the official opposition and the government. Using the major fractions as the whole and ignoring minor fractions, the result would be six government members and five opposition members, and of course, you would put one opposition member in the chair. So then, you have the six to four.

Now, I think it is very important that the balance in this committee does not get too far out. That is, if the committee was on the basis of ten to one. This would be rather ridiculous. Back in 1944, if we had had this system when we had five Liberals sitting on this side of the house, we would have had ten members on the committee of eleven and one from the opposition. I do not think that would be good.

Mr. R.A. Walker: (Hanley) — He would be chairman.

Mr. Brockelbank: (Kelsey) — And he would have to be chairman.

An Hon. Member: — A nauseating problem.

Mr. Brockelbank: — A very nauseating idea, is it not? Well, I think we have got to look carefully at this and put in a rider probably. I would suggest that we consider, if we go for a committee of eleven members, and I think that is big enough in a house of this size — then we might consider that the government should never have more than seven members out of the eleven — no matter how much the majority was. This would always give them a voting majority and it would give the opposition, even if it was a small opposition, say of ten or fifteen people, a chance to have a good representation on this committee. I think that one of the things that we should consider, is the makeup of the committee.

I have already dealt with the question of the recommendations of the committee being implemented by the treasury and the treasury to report back on what was done with them. I do not think that needs anything further. I do think, if we are interested, and I am sure we all are interested in setting up an institution here in the form of a Public Accounts Committee that will be effective, that this is a step in the right direction and I hope that the house will adopt it. I do want to emphasize that I think that it is no use going along with a part of the report. We must take the whole principle of the report and I want to see that certain safeguards are put in, as I mentioned, with regard to the personnel of the committee.

It is a pleasure for me to support this motion.

Mr. Speaker: — I must draw the attention of the members to the fact that the mover of the motion is about to close the debate. If anybody wishes to speak he must do so now.

Mr. George G. Leith: (Elrose) — Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to enter this debate because even though I have had about nine days experience on the Public Accounts Committee, it is my first experience and I have just barely read through the report of intersessional committee.

I would like to say something to the house about what I think the Public Accounts Committee should be doing and what my estimate of what it did do this year. I would like to echo the sentiments of both previous speakers in this debate about its ineffectiveness as a legislative control or post-audit body. We sat in the Committee for some days, and in my opinion, it is a political forum. It cannot help but be a political forum.

We were reviewing the accounts of the previous administration and it is a little bit of a paradox that the minister was defending his predecessor's spending, which is all to the good, I think, but still it points up the ineffectiveness of the Public Accounts Committee. I would like to read into the records of this house a couple of excerpts from a book called *The Public Purse*, written by Norman Ward. It will only take a few minutes. He is talking, in the introduction to the book, about the principles of British parliamentary practice. He says:

The Canadian practice comes from the British practice.

There are many differences of course, but I will quote a couple of short paragraphs in which he is talking about the principles. Underlining all the others are two principles, both of which have to be supported by a number of subsidiary principles and practices.

1. The executive should have no income which is not granted to them, or otherwise sanctioned by parliament.
2. The executive should make no expenditures except those approved by parliament in ways approved by parliament.

The observance of these principles would be impossible, were it not for the existence of a variety of rules, customs, devices and institutions in all of which principle and practice are impossible to separate, for the practices have meaning only because they are based on principles and among these various rules etc., the essential ones are:

1. There is a budget which brings together all the government's financial needs in such a way as to give everyone concerned a clear unified picture of what is involved.
2. The plan is prepared annually; that is, Parliament does not grant the executive permanent rights to spend money, but (with a few exceptions) requires it to obtain a fresh sanction to spend money each year, and for stated purposes. Money voted for a year but not spent, lapses.

3. The preparation of the budget is an executive function and so is the subsequent spending of public funds which are made available to the executive.
4. Parliament has the right to debate and criticise the budget fully, both as it affects past or current executive activities and the executive's proposals for future spending.
5. The executive is responsible not only for all financial planning but also for any changes made in it, as a result of parliamentary discussions. This principle is one of the essential differences between Canadian Parliamentary and American Congressional government.
6. The executive must account fully to Parliament for its management of public funds, both receipts and expenditures.
7. An independent auditor, responsible only to parliament, audits the accounts and his reports are promptly made available to parliament.
8. Finally, parliament itself audits the accounts of both revenues and expenditures, in almost any way it chooses. Parliamentary surveillance is as loose or rigid or as selective or comprehensive as parliament desires.

These several principles and practices, as they are applied in Canada today, can be described in remarkably few words considering the enormous complexity of governmental operations.

I believe that these phrases describe the principles and practices of British parliamentary institutions.

We in this legislature, I think, do not have the proper post-audit facilities. Our job, as members of the Public Accounts Committee, should be two-fold. The first one is to see that no money is spent that has not been voted by the legislature. The other is to see that the money that is spent, should generally be spent for the purposes of the vote in the legislature.

As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, our Public Accounts Committee, as it worked this year, had no relation to these two very necessary principles of post-audit. Public Accounts cannot do anything about the money that was voted a year ago and spent a year ago, except to pick out little items that may have been spent wrongly. I know, when we sat there for those several days, that without guidance from an auditor or guidance from an expert, members that I talked to had no way of telling what items to look at, to see if the government had had the legislative authority to spend it in the first place and whether they were spending it in the right way.

I think that I must support the recommendations of this intersessional committee and I feel as the member for Kelsey (Mr. J.H. Brockelbank) does, that they should all be implemented and that a change in our system probably would not be effective unless each of them were implemented. I am not going to go through them all, except to say, I think that it will take some time, but when it is done, we are going to have a more effective and a more comprehensive Public Accounts Committee post-audit on public spending.

Mr. Speaker: — I would like to draw to the attention of the house that the mover is about to close the debate.

Mr. A.E. Blakeney: (Regina West) — Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to add a word or two in support of the statements which have been made by the previous speakers. I particularly appreciated the last contribution by the member for Elrose, who reviewed very briefly the origins of our Public Accounts Committee and the development of the system which we use to govern ourselves. It is the latest of the three or four main weapons which legislatures have used to control the expenditures by the executive.

Legislatures started out by saying that the control would be sufficient if the legislature controlled legislation under which taxes were levied or money was borrowed. Members will be aware of the pretty firm rules which generally govern us which say you cannot borrow money or levy taxes unless there is a statute which permits it. This goes back many, many centuries. Sometime later there was imposed upon the executive, at the time of leaving of the throne by the Stuart Kings and the advent of William and Mary, around 1690, or thereabouts, the idea developing that not only did the crown have to have legislative authority but they had to come in every year with their annual budget. Much later in the Victorian era, the idea was developed that not only did they have to legislate authority and not only did they have to present their annual budget and get authority for it, but they had to account to the legislature for how they spent it. This is the origin of the Public Accounts Committee which has existed in England for about a century.

But I must agree with the hon. members that the Public Accounts Committee really worked very well in Saskatchewan, at least from my short experience of four or five years. A public committee, where the only participants in the drama or the action are elected members of the legislature and the elected cabinet ministers, is not a forum which is likely to elicit detailed facts, and is not a forum which is going to do the jobs which a Public Accounts Committee ought to do.

I think one could talk a good deal about what a Public Accounts Committee ought to do but there are really two main things; firstly, to see whether the expenditure was one which the legislature authorized, and secondly, whether it was a provident expenditure. Firstly, are they doing what the legislature authorized them to do, and secondly, are they wasting the public money? These are two different questions.

Our Public Accounts Committee does practically nothing with respect to no. 1. I can hardly recall a question about the legality of an expenditure — whether or not a particular expenditure was authorized — whether it appeared in the budget. And members do not, in fact, take the estimates of a year or two ago and with their public accounts try to match them up, for the very good reason that it is a man sized job if one tries it. The accounts are just not set up that way. It is not at all easy to do enough work so that one can ask intelligent questions of whether or not a particular expenditure was authorized by the legislature. Nor is it very easy to find out whether or not a particular expenditure is prudent or not unless you happen to have personal knowledge of the price of hay or whatever other topic may come up, or the price of margarine or butter or the other vexed questions which get considered by the Public Accounts Committee, you really are not in any position to offer any trenchant criticism.

The reason is not far to see. The people who are doing the criticism do not have a staff. If anyone has worked on any organizations where there are part-time people bringing their intelligence to bear on problems, he knows that, if the job is intricate, the part-time person does a poor job unless there is someone doing a staff job for him. Someone who is conducting studies which he, the part-time person, may direct, but which would have to be done by someone who has a lot more time than he does.

This problem has been solved, as members have already indicated, in Britain and in Canada by having the independent auditor, who is really the servant of parliament and not the servant of the executive, and who does a great deal of work on the question of legality of particular expenditures and does some considerable amount of work on the prudence of expenditures. We know that the parliamentary auditor at Ottawa comes in from time to time and points out that particular expenditures appear to him to be very wasteful. I am sure that he is not primarily trying to catch someone who has made an error, but he is trying to pinpoint particular administrative procedures which lead to wasteful expenditures. If he thought it was a one-time effort because of a particular error and not likely to be repeated, it would not find its way into his report. But if he thought it was an error which came about because of a sloppy procedure and which might happen again next year, or the year after, he would mention this, because that is his job. We, as MLA's want his judgment in order that we can get our system to be responsive to ordinary standards of business prudence.

Now, I think that the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee are particularly well designed to do the job which is suggested. It is going to be a major overhaul for Saskatchewan. We are the heir to some traditions which go back prior to our being a province, as I think this report makes clear. The function of our auditor is one which stems

partly from the fact that he was a guardian of the purse of the federal government at Ottawa, which function has absolutely no relevance to our present day condition.

I think most of the recommendations will be non-controversial. The only area where people might wonder is whether or not the committee should be public and, if it is not going to be public, precisely how the moral suasion of the public can be brought to bear.

I think the solution worked out here is a pretty good one. The chief dangers of having public hearings are that a statement which can be misinterpreted gets to the press before the correction can reach it. I think that a damning statement of fact clearly ought not to be excluded from the press — that is what the press is here for. But a damning statement of half-fact or half-truth is particularly unfortunate because the other half rarely reaches it. We all know this problem.

But, if a witness before the Public Accounts Committee makes a statement which is open to serious misconstruction, it will in the ordinary course of events be corrected or modified in the report of the committee. When the whole committee report is laid before the legislature, the matter will be portrayed in its proper light. Therefore, I think there is no particular danger to the proceedings of the committee by having the minutes or proceedings of the committee made available to the public.

There is a good deal of merit in not having the committee public, if your witnesses are going to be public servants. This is the real problem. We see this at Ottawa. I am always a little bit upset when I see a vendetta arising between a particular public servant and some M.P.'s. We see Donald Gordon from time to time get put upon by some M.P.'s and he is in no real position to defend himself. Other senior public servants have similarly been embarrassed. For example, a person from the C.B.C., or someone else gets subjected to a line of questions which he must answer truthfully but he cannot put the qualifying material before the press at the same time. The whole procedure is a bit unfortunate.

I do not object to a politician being subjected to a serious public scrutiny but when this is done the politician is in little jeopardy. Politicians are particularly skilled at answers which obscure rather than elucidate the facts and I think this is what has been the case in our Public Accounts Committee. I do not suggest that there has been anything improper. It is just the way the committee has been conducted.

I think that a sort of compromise has been worked out by the committee. We want to get at the officials; we want to get at them, armed with the material supplied to us by an independent auditor; we want to be able to cross-examine them; we want them to be able to answer fully and freely and fairly, but naturally we want to protect them against the misconstruction of any statement they might give. The minister will certainly want this protection for his officials. This can be done by making the proceedings from day to day private. However, we want the public to be informed of what went on, so that if there is a degree of impropriety, public pressure may be exerted. This is achieved by having the verbatim reports made available to the public.

I think it is a good compromise. I certainly hope that we can build this sort of a structure in Saskatchewan in the next few years. I would wholeheartedly support the motion.

Mr. Speaker: — I must draw to the attention of the house that the mover is about to close the debate.

Hon. A.H. McDonald: (Moosomin) — Mr. Speaker, there is little new material that I can add at this time, but I do want to thank members on both sides of the house for the contribution and the part that they have played in this discussion. I am very, very pleased to see that there is general agreement on both sides of the house and that these changes, we hope, will bring about a new Public Accounts Committee that can do a better job in the future than we have been able to do in the past.

I also want to thank the member for Kelsey (Mr. Brockelbank) for having given the thanks of the committee, and the thanks of the house, to the secretariat and to those people who made themselves available to the committee when it set, back in 1963.

I would not want anyone to think that this is a problem that is

only confined to, or experienced only in the province of Saskatchewan. I think this problem is pretty general across Canada. I know some provinces have become so frustrated with the work of Public Accounts Committee that they have not held any meetings for the last twenty years. One of our neighbouring provinces has found itself in this position.

I think that when a legislature allows itself to drift into a position where there is no Public Accounts Committee for many years, then it is not performing one of the functions that the people of Saskatchewan, or people of Canada, intended it to perform. But I am afraid if we had drifted much longer in Saskatchewan with the present makeup of our Public Accounts Committee that this could have happened here. I do not think this is in the best interest of Saskatchewan or any province, as far as that goes.

I think the suggestions of the member for Kelsey (Mr. Brockelbank) with regard to the makeup of this new committee, is very, very, important, as he pointed out. I think his suggestions of limiting the makeup of the committee to eleven members is a fair one, six to five. But, on the other hand, if this legislature at some future date should have one party with overwhelming power in the house, then I think you have to look at it in a little different light.

I was wondering if we were to apply what we are suggesting here at the moment to the province of Alberta now, what would be the answer? I think there are only three people in the opposition, if my memory serves me right.

Mr. Brockelbank: (Kelsey) — one-third of a person on the committee.

Mr. McDonald: (Moosomin) — Well, one-third of a person would not be much good to the committee and the other two-thirds would not be much good wherever that part of this person happened to be.

Mr. Brockelbank: (Kelsey) — He could be chairman!

Mr. McDonald: (Moosomin) — But I think from time to time we would have to review the makeup of the committee, if this situation presents itself as far as the makeup of the members in the house is concerned.

I was very pleased to hear the remarks of the member for Elrose (Mr. Leith) who is a new member in the house, and I am sure that his impressions of Public Accounts Committee were similar to those of all of us who attended Public Accounts Committee for the first time. His reference to Norman Ward's work, I think, was apropos in that this very book of Mr. Ward's was available and studied by the members of the committee in 1963.

The member for Regina West (Mr. Blakeney), mentioned the responsibilities of a Public Accounts Committee. I think there is one further responsibility other than those that he referred to. That is, not only must there be legislation making provision for the expenditures of it, but in my opinion, there must be a program that has probably been debated or will be debated in the house to make provision for these expenditures. We have found ourselves in the past, when in estimates, we are dealing with the detail that is in this little book. This is when we are voting the money. But after the money has been spent, this is the detail we get. I often wonder if we are not a bit backwards. Here we vote the money with this detail and then we request all of this detail two years later. I wonder if the present form of public accounts is the form that the committee will need in the future as it will be constituted.

It seems to me that there is a lot of detail in the present public accounts that need not be there. And some hon. members who are members of Public Accounts Committee this year, will recall that when my own public accounts were before the Public Accounts Committee, and we were dealing with expenditures that had been made under the Family Farm Improvement Program, and most members were aware of the policy that the maximum grant is \$300, and yet we found some accounts in here that were more than \$300. So naturally, members asked, well, how come? Of course, the policy makes provision for more than \$300 to be paid where you have more than one residence in a farm yard. But, I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that if we had a provincial auditor who was auditing these accounts, a post-audit, he would have immediately checked and seen that there was provision for expenditures, in some cases, of more than the \$300. I do not think that we need worry that anything is going to pass a provincial auditor of this nature. But

about the only thing in my experience in Public Accounts Committee that the committee were able to pick up was this type of expenditure, but the fact was, that it was picked up this session. No one inquired as to what legislation made provision for this. They did inquire as to what policy or what program made provision for this expenditure of money.

I am hopeful that when this new committee comes into existence, that we can redesign the form of public accounts. I think we are getting into too much detail. I doubt very much whether it is necessary to list every family in Saskatchewan who happen to receive a payment for social aid. I think, if the payment has been made under the policy, why should these people's names be listed in public accounts? Why should every person who received a grant under the Family Farm Assistance Program, be listed here? I doubt that we need all of this detail.

It would be impossible to state in the estimates to whom we were going to pay this money because we would not know at that time. But you estimate the amount of money that is necessary to carry out the program and this appears in estimates. The detail has appeared in public accounts in the past, and I am one who thinks that the detail of public accounts is probably too much as it is presently made up. I am hopeful, next year, that the Public Accounts Committee will take under consideration the form that the new public accounts will take, ought to take, and will be presented to future Public Accounts Committees.

I think at this time, I should mention that if this resolution passes, as I hope it will. I am going to move that this document be printed. The reason I do this, is that it should be made available to all senior civil servants who should be fully aware of the new system. I expect there will be demands for this report from other parts of Canada, if we are going to make this change in Saskatchewan. It is new. We are ploughing new ground and I think we should make the report available to other people who might be interested, even outside our province.

I wanted to say, before you vote on the matter, that I will be asking for this if the resolution passes. With that, Mr. Speaker, I think that is all I need to say at this time.

Mr. Speaker: — The question before the house is on the motion of the hon. the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. McDonald):

That this assembly endorses the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Committee on Public Accounts Procedures tabled in this assembly as Sessional Paper No. 41 of 1964, and requests the government to give consideration to the early implementation of these recommendations.

Is it the pleasure of the assembly to adopt the motion?

Motion agreed to.

Hon. A.H. McDonald: (Moosomin) — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the house, I would like to move, seconded by Mr. Cameron:

That the matter of the printing of Sessional paper No. 41 of 1964 be referred to the Select Standing Committee and Public Accounts and Printing.

Motion agreed to.

SECOND READINGS:

Hon. D.V. Heald, moved second reading of Bill No. 24 — An Act to amend the Court Officials Act, 1963.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have had distributed a short explanatory note, following the suggestion of the hon. member for Regina West, the other day. This is not a very serious sweeping amendment at all. But the purpose of the bill as drafted was to enable the Attorney General to close the court

houses at the same time as other government offices at Christmas time.

We had a situation last year, December, 1964, when Christmas was on a Friday. All the other civil servants except the employees in the court house decided to have Monday as a holiday instead of the day before Christmas. This is permitted under their collective bargaining agreement, the SGEA agreement. It provides in Article 61 that "when either Christmas day or Boxing day falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the chairman, "that is the chairman of the public service commission, "shall designate another working day to be observed as the holiday or holidays in lieu thereof."

Now, what happened was that the government employees requested that they have Monday instead of the day before Christmas being the 24th, Thursday. So we had a sort of an unreasonable situation, in a sense, that all of the government employees excepting the employees of the court houses, sheriffs and local registrars, and deputy local registrars, and so on, they all had Monday, but because of this provision in the court officials act it was not possible to extend the same courtesy to the employees of the court houses.

The purpose of this amendment is to provide, by leaving subsection C of section 17, it would give the chairman of the public service commission power to give the court house employees the same day off as all other government employees. That is the principle of the bill, Mr. Speaker, and I would move second reading.

Motion agreed to and bill read the second time.

Hon. D.V. Heald, moved second reading of Bill No. 26 — An Act to amend The Regulations Act, 1963

He said: Mr. Speaker, I should indicate to the hon. members that when this bill reaches committee, if it does, I propose to make a house amendment and I would like at this time to provide copies to the member for Kelsey (Mr. Brockelbank) and the member for Arm River (Mr. Pederson)

The reason in the first instance, for this amendment is because there is a deadline date of December 31st, 1965, for the promulgating of all regulations in the Gazette. The Queen's Printer has given an estimate that it would cost \$100,000 to publish all regulations within the meaning of that act. This, only an estimate and it could be higher.

It is also estimated that there would be a great deal of work, of course, and my staff estimates, at the present time, because of the number of existing regulations and the staff of two involved, it would be a practical impossibility to complete it on time.

So what I am suggesting, what I was originally suggesting, in the amendment as printed was that section 18 of the act be repealed. However, I discussed this matter with the hon. member for Hanley (Mr. Walker) and the hon. member for Regina West (Mr. Blakeney) and I have adopted their suggestion that rather than take section 18 out of the act, that we simply extend the time to 1968, which would still keep the plan of central registration. We would carry on with the plan but we would not be under the gun, so to speak, and we would not have all this cost at this time. So I really feel that we are not doing violence to the principle of section 18 by simply extending the time for a period of three years.

My people, the people in my Department, feel that if we had this additional three year period we would be able to accomplish what was originally intended under section 18, which was to have this central registry and have registration of all these regulations.

So with that preliminary explanation, and with the undertaking to make the amendment in committee, I would move a second reading of this bill, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — It has been moved by the hon. the Attorney General, that Bill No. 26 — An Act to amend The Regulations Act, 1963, be now read the second time.

Is the house ready for the question?

Mr. R.A. Walker: (Hanley) — Mr. Speaker, I would like to just say a word about this.

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I want to express appreciation to the Attorney General (Mr. Heald) for substituting the idea contained in the house amendments for the principle contained in the bill itself.

I think the problem may not be fully appreciated. Anybody who is in a law office and has to advise people as to what the regulations are governing their particular situation, sometimes has to go back to 1947 or 1948 or 1953 in the Saskatchewan Gazettes to find the appropriate regulations governing the situation. Often it is not possible to get these Gazettes that far back. They are in the archives and they are in the libraries but you cannot get them in your law office. Consequently, it is virtually impossible to know what are some of those regulations.

For example, a regulation may have been passed running into three or four pages. Then it has been subject to an amendment every year since. Now, we can get the recent amendments but we do not know what the regulation is that was being amended unless we have the 1945 or 1946 or 1947 Gazette.

This is no problem for the government departments because every government department that has been using these regulations, has been keeping the original regulations and entering the amendments from year to year, in a loose leaf folder. Any official of the Department of Labour can show you what the consolidated regulations are — the original regulations of twenty years ago plus all the amendments. And it is all very nicely done. But there are so many thousands of these regulations that no one had a complete volume of all these regulations, plus all the amendments, except perhaps the Department of the Attorney General. It wouldn't solve this problem if the bill was passed in its original form.

But it is really not too difficult for the departments themselves to supply a consolidated version of the regulations because they all have consolidated versions. They have them now, and it is mainly just a matter of getting them printed, so that a consolidated version of the regulations can be supplied up to date. Now, we do this every ten or twelve years with the statutes and any hon. member who wants can look up something in the Vehicles Act, or the Automobile Accident Insurance Act, an act that is amended practically every year. If we didn't consolidate them every ten years you can appreciate just what a hopeless position it would be to find out what the act says.

Many of our regulations are in exactly that position and I appreciate the Attorney General agreeing to abandon the principle in the original act and to substitute the year 1968, but I really feel that 1968 is a long way hence. It seems to me that the department should be able to set an objective somewhat closer than that, to get a consolidated version of the regulations out and I would hope later on in committee to try to prevail upon him and his colleagues to agree to a date earlier than 1968, but I do appreciate the fact that he has changed the approach of the government in this matter, because even if we get them in 1968 that will be better than not getting them at all. I was afraid that the way that the bill was originally drafted that we would not get them at all. It is quite intolerable to the public, and to the lawyers particularly, not to be able to find out what the law is when their clients ask them. It is intolerable to the public to be in that position and there is only one way to know what the law is, and that is to get these things consolidated so that they are available in a concise and handy form.

Hon. A.C. Cameron: (Minister of Mineral Resources) — If you make it too simple you will not need a lawyer.

Mr. Walker: — Well, you can't make it that simple . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Walker: — . . . you are lucky if you can make it simple enough so that we can understand it. I appreciate this, Mr. Speaker, and I didn't want to pass up the opportunity of saying so.

Mr. Speaker: — The question before the house is on the motion of the Hon. Attorney General that Bill no. 26, An Act to amend the Regulations Act, 1963, be now read the second time. Is it the pleasure of the house to adopt the motion?

Motion agreed to and bill read the second time.

Hon. George J. Trapp moved second reading of Bill no. 31 — An Act to Amend The Larger School Units Act, be now read a second time.

He said: Mr. Speaker, bill no. 31 is designed to amend The Larger School Units Act, as follows:

First, the election procedure is slightly altered to permit more than one deputy returning officer in large voting areas.

Two, again on election procedure, the oath of a voter is slightly changed to bring it in line with the proposed change in the definition of rate-payer, which would be included in the amendment to the School Act. The residence clause is brought into line with the Municipal Act with regard to time, and is made a little less stringent with regard to the assessment of the property on which tax-payers reside.

Third, notification of sub-unit annual meeting will be made directly by the unit secretary, rather than through local secretaries, as a result of amendment to section 33. As many of the members know, in some of the closed school districts, there are no local secretaries, and, therefore, it still is left, and must be left to someone else and the unit secretary is the only one available.

Fourth, a clause is added to section 56 to require units to submit copies of annual budgets to the department. I would say at least ninety per cent of them do so now, but there are a few who do not, and this is just requiring them to do so. I think it is very important that the department have these budgets for the year because it helps the department to plan its own budget on school matters.

Fifth, it was made clear that the term “hamlet” in this act shall be as defined in the Municipal Act. As it is now, there is really two definitions of a “hamlet” and I think it is right to bring it in line with the Municipal Act, so that they both have the same meaning.

Sixth, section 73, is to be amended to provide for the same type of penalty on municipalities for non-remission of a special levy as now applies regarding the general levy. Actually there is no penalty at all now, if the municipal body does not wish to remit this special levy.

Seventh, the grant provisions of this act are to be amended in line with similar amendments to be proposed in The School Grants Act. Changes are minor and are designed to do two things — first, to prevent abuses, under the act, as the privilege boards have to arrange for other boards to educate some or all of their pupils on a fee for service basis. It could happen today that it would be to a board’s advantage to send seventy-five per cent of its students to be educated by some other board. Now this is not done, but the act as it stands and the grant act could lead to such a thing. Secondly, to prevent abuses under the grant formula for transportation costs. This change has been necessitated by the advent of some rather complex lease-purchase arrangement of buses, in the last year or so. Some of these buses are paid for under some of these agreements in a very short period of time, and I think there is an advantage to be gained over those who pay them over a longer period of time.

Finally, it is proposed to amend section 88, so that restrictions on capital borrowing will not unnecessarily interfere with school board plans for school development. This is not to allow them to borrow more money, but to borrow more money in anyone year so that they can complete a school. As the act is now, they can only build a very small portion of a school, and then have to wait for a longer time. I think, when the bill gets into committee, we can go into some of the details of it.

I now move that this bill no. 31, be now read a second time.

Mr. Walker: — I am sorry the minister did not take the house into his confidence and explain to us the general effect of the amendments to section 81, particularly the amendments to the formula for awarding the grants. I think that this is an important matter of principle in this bill. As I understand it, the government is proposing to make some increases in school grants of some \$3,000,000 or \$4,000,000 this year, and I think we ought to have been briefed as to how these increases were going to be applied, in particular, in those areas that receive the higher proportion of grants and in those which receive the lower percentage of their educational costs through grants.

I suppose that it is possible to deal with this in Committee of the Whole, but at the same time there may be principles involved here which I, for one, would be reluctant to endorse on second reading. I must say that there is no way that a member of the house can analyze the effect of these amendments. This depends upon a knowledge of the cost of operating in each school unit, and depends upon a knowledge of the number of classrooms and the numbers of teachers, and the assessed value of the unit, and all the rest, and there is no way we can get this information except from the minister, and I would hope that he would have given us this information on second reading. This is an important matter of principle.

Another thing I would like to discuss is section 9. I frequently run into the complaint out in the country that whereas rural municipalities are under rigorous supervision, and under rigorous discipline as to expenditures, and that rather minute amounts of money must be approved by the local government board, and by votes of the burgesses, before they can be made, that there is almost carte blanche for school units in this matter. Now, I recognize that school units have a very large assessment and a capital expenditure of fifteen mills, or whatever the amount is, can be made without any approval by anybody, but the big complaint I get is that school units presently have too much latitude in this regard and that there ought to be more restraint upon major capital expenditures by school units. Now the minister is proposing to enlarge the area of freedom of the school units in this respect.

Now I realize he says that it means it does not affect the total expenditure. It just increases the amount that may be made in anyone year. That is precisely the point. Many expenditures which will be capable of being made in any one year, would otherwise have to go to someone for some review before they could be made. When this passes, a whole new category of capital expenditures can be made in a particular year, without it having to be reviewed by anybody. While I do not share every criticism of school units, made by rural municipal people, I do ask the minister just what it was that persuaded him to run counter to prevailing opinion in this regard. I submit that the prevailing opinion in rural areas is that there ought to be more supervision by superior authorities over capital expenditures by units, and not less.

Mr. Speaker: — I must draw the attention of the house that the member is about to close the debate.

Mr. Blakeney: — I just wanted to add a few comments along the lines of the hon. member for Hanley (Mr. Walker). I think members will have noted that the effect of the change in section 88, that is section 9 of the bill, is to remove the requirement that borrowings be submitted to a vote of the burgesses, if such borrowings produce the result that the outstanding debt exceeds one and one-half per cent of taxable assessment.

There is now a requirement that in that instance, the matter will be placed before the burgesses, as I perceive the section, and that requirement would be removed.

Also, it appears to me that, in the magnificent creation called the “general grant formula”, parts of which are enshrined in section 81, the minister is to be given a discretion as to what fees he counts for the purpose of calculating the formula. I will not attempt to summarize the general grant formula, and I trust that the minister will have a go at it at some later time to refresh the memory of those of us who forget it.

But basically, on the one side, the costs of a school board are calculated and on the other side its financial resources are calculated. Here the attempt is to calculate financial resources, and financial resources means assessments and fees received. By this bill the minister is going to be given discretion as to what fees he counts. I was a bit puzzled by this. And that is the very word “puzzled”. I can see why he would want to control what fees are paid, and counted as expenses, I think he would want to count as revenue all the fees that came in, but not necessarily allow fees paid as an expense. Here again, I may be misconceiving the problem that he is aiming at. If, as he explains, the problem is that some boards might, by farming out their students to another board, make a substantial profit on it rather than operate their own schools. I am a little puzzled, and again I emphasize the word “puzzled”, to see how this is going to be cured by the change in section 81 (1) (c), that he is proposing.

It seems to me that this is the wrong side of the ledger, but I

may be misconceiving the problem, as I usually do, when I attempt to work my way through the grant formula. He may have a comment on it, as he closes the debate.

The other changes with respect to clarifying the meaning of “hamlet” and generally dealing with the voting and other arrangements with respect to the administration of a school unit, I think, are probably not major and can best be dealt with in committee.

I would, however, appreciate a bit of a comment from the minister when he closes the debate, on just what effect these changes will have on the general grant formula.

Mr. Speaker: — I must draw the attention of the house to the fact that the mover of the motion is about to close the debate, if anyone wishes to speak he must do so now.

Mr. Trapp: — In closing the debate, I must say there is really no major change with regard to fees, except this — I think there needs to be some reasonable basis for charging fees. If all fees are to be counted, and one area should charge a fee of \$600 and another area a fee of \$200, I think the minister must have some discretion and say what amount of fees will be reasonable and equitable, compared with other units. I think this is the problem.

This is also true concerning the purchase of buses. Actually I think the previous legislation was fine, except that there is an inequality in purchasing buses under this new arrangement.

There is no major change. I think Some of the questions posed by the hon. member from Hanley (Mr. Walker) will come up at a later date on grants. I do not think I would like to deal with the general grants for buildings at the present time. I might say there is just one major change. A more generous allowance, I think, for other areas than just classroom space, will give boards a considerable amount of more money for other spaces involved.

With these few remarks, I now move second reading of this bill, Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to and bill read a second time.

Hon. J.M. Cuelenaere moved second reading of Bill no. 39, An Act to amend The Regional Parks Act, 1964.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill is a very short amendment, it merely provides for the establishment of depreciation allowance schedule with respect to such of the capital assets of the regional parks as may be specified. In the past the department has been making capital grants to regional parks. In the last few years the Regional Parks Authorities at their conventions have requested the Department of Natural Resources to consider making annual grants to the Regional Park Authorities, to cover depreciation.

The act merely provides that arrangements may be made to set up a depreciation schedule for each of the parks, and there will be an annual grant made, based upon the agreed depreciation schedule.

Mr. Speaker, with these few words of explanation, I move the second reading of Bill no. 39.

Mr. E.I. Kramer: (The Battlefords) — Mr. Speaker, I would first like to ask the Minister of Natural Resources if he has any schedule of depreciation outlined, or does he care to go into that later in estimates, or is there any schedule of depreciation set?

Mr. Cuelenaere: — I will answer that.

Mr. Kramer: — Mr. Speaker, this program I believe now is in its fifth year and I believe the acceptance of the regional park program has passed all the original expectations of the government when it was first introduced. There has been a tremendous public acceptance, a tremendous acceptance,

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a tremendous acceptance on the part of municipal councillors and I think that this move to establish depreciation on existing capital structures is a good one. It has been considered by the previous government before but there were very few, if any, programs completed under the first five year plan. When this was considered earlier it was thought better that they wait until their first five year project was completed. I believe there are some projects completed now, and prepared to move and enlarge and expand. In this continually expanding program with the tremendous extra cost to municipalities, certainly a depreciation fund, of the type outlined here I believe, is very necessary and I think it is an excellent move on the part of the department.

There may be other questions arise in this. I understand several more municipalities have been established, or are in the process of being established and there is very little doubt that the cost of this will increase. In fact, I am rather surprised in looking at the estimates, at what seems like a small amount budgeted for this year, with the expansion that is envisioned. That is about all I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I think this is timely and it certainly should work out to the advantage of regional parks throughout Saskatchewan.

Mr. Ian MacDougall: (Souris-Estevan) — Mr. Speaker, I will have to agree with the member, except for one thing. When the former government was sitting on this side of the house, the Regional Parks Association made various attempts to have depreciation grants made, but at that time they were not considered and I think that the new minister should be commended for this action.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. W.G. Davies: (Moose Jaw City) — Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to ask the minister one or two questions. I wanted, first of all, to ask if he would clarify 9 AB — to establish the standards of quality etc. To me, that is a bit confusing.

An Hon. Member: — It should be in committee.

Mr. Davies: — I will leave that question for committee. The other question then, Mr. Speaker, is a general one, I think that these grants are to be applied on the capital that has been invested in the park. Now, is the grant then to be spent capital wise, Mr. Minister, or can it be spent in any fashion as the parks authorities themselves may decide? In other words, is there to be a requirement that this money will be spent as capital, or can it be spent for current maintenance?

Mr. Speaker: — It now being 5:30, the house stands adjourned until 2:30 tomorrow.

The assembly adjourned at 5:30 o'clock.