

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Second Session — Sixteenth Legislature
21st Day

Tuesday, March 4, 1969

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

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Mr. E.F. Gardner (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to this Assembly a group of grade 12 students in the Speaker's gallery from the Langbank school. Langbank is one of our smaller high schools, but what they lack in size, they more than make up for in quality. They have always had a fine scholastic record, and last year one of the class had the second highest average in the six school units in our area. I hope they have a pleasant and a rewarding day.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. C.L.B. Estey (Saskatoon Nutana Centre): — Mr. Speaker, through you I would like to introduce to the Assembly, students from Brevoort Park school and Hollistan school in the city of Saskatoon, who are in the Speaker's gallery with their teachers, Mrs. Bond and Mr. Lasecki. On behalf of the House I congratulate Mrs. Bond and Mr. Lasecki for showing sufficient interest to bring their students to the Assembly this day. It is our hope that the students will enjoy their stay in Regina and learn something from their visit to this House.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. I.H. MacDougall (Souris-Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, today I have my students at last. I should like to introduce 36 students from St. Mary's grade eight class — I introduced them last week, but they never showed up because of the snowstorm. The grade eight class are led by their teachers, Mr. Hugh Bitz, Mrs. Bartlet and Miss Fornwald, and their two drivers, Leo Seipp and Jim Mack. Now, Mr. Bitz you will probably recognize, many on both sides of the House, as the leader of the famous Blue Barons Orchestra which is a great contribution to the social life in the Estevan area. He has taken this band, incidentally, to Eastern Canada, and these young men are a credit to our community.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. W.A. Forsyth (Saskatoon Nutana South): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce through you to the Members of the House a group of students from Thornton school which is located on Lorne Avenue in the Nutana South constituency of Saskatoon. These students are here this afternoon as part of a tour, and I hope that they find their stay in the House profitable, interesting, and that they enjoy the entire visit to Regina.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MOTIONS FOR RETURN

RETURN NO. 26

Mr. J. Kowalchuk (Melville) moved that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 26 showing:

- (1) The number of hospitals constructed in 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, and the name and location of each such hospital.
- (2) The number of major additions to hospitals constructed in 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968 and the name and location of each such hospital.

Hon. G.B. Grant (Minister of Public Health): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce an amendment to clarify the wording of this motion, if I may. I would move, seconded by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Coderre) that Return No. 26 be amended:

That the word “constructed” in part (1) thereof be deleted, and the word “completed” substituted therefore; and the words “in excess of Fifty Thousand Dollars be inserted after the word “additions” in part (2) thereof.”

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

RETURN NO. 31

Mr. C.G. Willis (Melfort-Tisdale) moved that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 31 showing:

For all provincial capital improvement projects with an estimated bid value exceeding \$100,000 finalized in the current fiscal year upon which final total payments made since April 1, 1968, exceeded the estimated bid value by 10 per cent; (a) names of contractors; (b) date of awarding each contract; (c) estimated bid price; (d) total final payment; (e) number of working days allowed in the contract for completion of project; and (f) number of actual working days to complete the project; and (g) amount of liquidated damage charges assessed against the contractor (i) per day; and (ii) in total.

Mr. E.I. Wood (Swift Current): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to move an amendment to this motion, seconded by Mr. Blakeney (Regina Centre) that Return No. 31 be amended:

That the word “highway” be inserted between the words “provincial” and “capital” in the first line.

Debate adjourned.

RETURN NO. 32

Mr. G.T. Snyder (Moose Jaw North) moved that an Order of the

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Assembly do issue for Return No. 32 showing:

Copies of all communications between Department of Highways district engineers and the Chief Maintenance Engineer in 1968 regarding assessment of the results of the 1968 crack sealing program.

Hon. D. Boldt (Minister of Highways): — Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is privileged information between Highway personnel and I am not prepared to provide any information. I beg the House to drop this question.

Mr. Snyder: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! If the Member had anything to say on his motion, he should have said it when he moved it. These returns are all debatable, and Members should speak when they make their motion. You can't speak after somebody else has spoken, except to close the debate.

Mr. Willis: — Mr. Speaker, on this point I would like to speak.

Mr. Speaker: — Yes.

Mr. Willis: — Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that exactly the same motion was introduced in this Chamber last session. We got the answer last session. Suddenly it becomes privileged document. What has this Government across the way to hide, Mr. Speaker? It looks very much as if the Government is not going to answer questions on Highways, at least not this session. We can expect the answer next year. Now it wants to throw this out even.

Mr. Snyder: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to add a word or two to the remarks made by the Member for Melfort-Tisdale.

A year ago in this House I placed a question on the Order Paper asking for copies of communications between the Department of Highways, and their maintenance engineers with respect to the crack sealing program. We were given information to the effect that one-third of the highway mileage only was to be filled in the coming year. I think it is a matter of public interest, Mr. Speaker, to the Members of this House and to the members of the public when maintenance costs are being cut to this extent. I think it is a matter that has been noticed by each and everyone of us as we have travelled about the highways, the state of maintenance that has been carried on by the Government over the past number of years. Accordingly I wonder again what it is the Government is trying to hide with respect to the communications between the Department of Highways and their maintenance department. We can only conclude from this, Mr. Speaker, that there is something in this corner of the Highway Department that they prefer that the general public shouldn't know anything about.

Mr. Speaker: — Just to clarify the point of order, I should apologize

to the Member for Moose Jaw, because he was probably rising to close the debate in the first place. I certainly did not wish anyone else to be shut off from taking part.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division:

YEAS — 23

Messieurs

Lloyd	Meakes	Baker
Wooff	Berezowsky	Pepper
Kramer	Smishek	Bowerman
Willis	Thibault	Matsalla
Wood	Whelan	Messer
Blakeney	Snyder	Kwasnica
Davies	Michayluk	Kowalchuk
Dewhurst	Brockelbank	

NAYS — 33

Messieurs

Thatcher	Grant	Weatherald
Howes	Coderre	Mitchell
McFarlane	Larochelle	Gardner
Boldt	MacDonald	Coupland
Cameron	Estey	McPherson
Steuart	Hooker	Charlebois
Heald	Gallagher	Forsyth
McIsaac	MacLennan	McIvor
Guy	Heggie	Schmeiser
Barrie	Breker	
Loken	Leith	
MacDougall	Radloff	

RETURN NO. 33

Mr. A. Matsalla (Canora) moved that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 33 showing:

Copies of the existing union agreement or agreements including wage and salary schedules, between the Saskatchewan Timber Board and its organized employees.

Hon. L.P. Coderre (Minister of Labour): — Mr. Speaker, a very brief discussion on this. I believe that the Hon. Member has been ill-advised by possibly the Member from Moose Jaw South (Mr. Davies) and the Member for Regina North East (Mr. Smishek) and the Member for Moose Jaw North (Mr. Snyder) who are in the labor movement to realize that such a question is not proper. The information that is available in the Department of Labour insofar as every agreement that is filed there is privileged information. It is a contract between two parties which they agreed to, it is between these two parties to give. We have a copy of every agreement that is ever signed in this province and is registered with the Department of Labour for that purpose. For this reason, I feel that it is absolutely improper to make this public, because the information in these agreements would be to an advantage to another union who would want to raid this particular union. This often happens. I think it is a most improper question and

I would ask the House to turn it down.

Mr. A.E. Blakeney (Regina Centre): — Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether I heard the Hon. Member correctly. He, I take it, is taking the position that a copy of an existing union agreement between a Crown agency and employees is privileged information. I find that to be an absolutely remarkable proposition. If this were a private company, then I would accept the Minister of Labour's explanation. I agree that, if for example Interprovincial Steel and the Steelworkers of America have signed a contract and filed it with the Minister, then it follows I think that this should not be tabled because, at least, I don't object to the proposition that this should not be tabled. I would consider that issue at another time. This is not the case here. The Saskatchewan Timber Board is a wholly owned Crown company and incorporated under The Crown Corporations Act. We are here faced with the proposition that a union agreement between a Crown enterprise and its employees is not public information. I simply can't believe that this is the Government's position. We have for many years had available to us copies of the agreement between the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Association and the Government of Saskatchewan. We had this morning, and I think properly, an undertaking by a minister of the Crown to file a union agreement between a Crown corporation and its employees. I think that it is entirely improper for the Government to suggest that a union agreement between a government agency and its employees is not public information. I would ask the Government to reconsider its position with respect to this motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. W.E. Smishek (Regina North East): — Mr. Speaker, I want to concur with the remarks of the previous speaker, but in addition to that, I want to take exception to the remarks of the Minister of Labour that the Hon. Member from Canora was ill-advised by either myself or the Hon. Members from Moose Jaw South or Moose Jaw North. Surely, Mr. Speaker, those kinds of accusations have no basis of fact that somebody advised the Member. I think the Hon. Member from Canora does have within his constituency, people who are working for this Crown corporation, and I believe he is entitled to this kind of information. I might inform the Hon. Minister that I had the opportunity of serving on the Crown Corporation Committee several years back and requests have been made by Members in the Crown Corporation Committee asking for copies of the collective bargaining agreements between various Crown corporations and the particular unions, and they have always been provided. I am wondering whether the Government, or the Minister at least, is trying to hide something. Certainly I would concur with the proposition put forward by the Hon. Member for Regina Centre (Mr. Blakeney) that where it is a collective bargaining agreement between a private employer and a union, this should be considered privileged information. But certainly we are not dealing with a private employer. We are dealing with an agency of the Government. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that this information should be made available to Members of the Legislature.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. C.L.B. Estey (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, I just have one or two words to say in regard to this point. As some of the Members opposite know, this agreement was filed pursuant to a statute of our province. There is no argument whatever in my opinion as to whether the Timber Board emanates from the Crown, or doesn't emanate from the Crown. This document was filed with the Government in good faith and shouldn't be disclosed by the Department of Labour, to any party . . .

An Hon. Member: — . . . Not asking the Department of Labour to disclose it, we're asking the Saskatchewan Timber Board to disclose it!

Mr. Steuart: — . . . Protecting the IWA, that's all I'm thinking of!

An Hon. Member: — . . . Your cousins anyway!

Hon. D. Boldt (Minister of Highways): — When we were on the other side and we asked the question, what is the salary of Cass Beggs, manager of the Power Corporation — this is a public utility — you wouldn't give it to us. You never gave us that information. You didn't give us the information of what the salary was of the manager of SGIO, or Telephones. What's the difference?

Mr. W.S. Lloyd (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Highways is trying to throw dust in our eyes. He is admirably equipped to do it. He has got both the dust and what else it takes. As a matter of records, it can be substantiated, I am sure, that full details with respect to the employment of Mr. Cass Beggs was revealed in committees in this Legislature, time after time, time after time.

An Hon. Member: — Nonsense!

Mr. Lloyd: — Just you hold your cool a little bit there. There was refusal I know, with regard to some other employees, that is quite true. But, never, Mr. Speaker, never with respect to the sort of thing that we are talking about here. I say to the Minister of Municipal Affairs that that was about the weakest attempt at a legal justification for this motion that I have ever heard from anybody, lawyer or non-lawyer or anyone else. Mr. Speaker, the records will show — and I hope the Government does reconsider — the records will show that year after year when they sat on this side of the House they used to ask regularly for copies of the collective bargaining agreements, as they were in effect between Crown corporations and its employees. Year after year, these were filed by the dozens. The record is perfectly plain on it. The Minister of Municipal Affairs said the Department of Labour had no business to file this. That may be true, I don't know why the Minister of Labour was the one to speak on it. He was a little eager, it seems to me, because it is not directed necessarily or particularly or appropriately to him. The person who should be speaking on this is the Minister who is in charge of this particular Crown corporation. That is where the question is directed. I hope that

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the Government will see fit to reconsider its position on this and to file this agreement and other agreements, as asked for between Crown corporations and its employees. It has always been done and there is no reason in the world why it shouldn't be done now.

Mr. W.G. Davies (Moose Jaw South) — Mr. Speaker, I want to respond first of all to the remarks of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Coderre) about . . .

Mr. Coderre: — You weren't even in the House, how can . . .

Mr. Davies — Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that the Minister of Labour constantly has to be advised as to House rules and procedure. It is not necessary, Mr. Minister, for me to be in the House to reply to allegations made by the Minister. He should know that. I want to tell the Minister that this is before the House, not because I have advised Mr. Matsalla to put it before the House, but because Mr. Matsalla wants the information. He is entitled to that information and there is no reason why this House should not have this information. We are dealing here, Mr. Speaker, with information that obviously pertains to expenditures made by the Saskatchewan Timber Board. This is one of the agencies that is part of other public employees' groups of the Crown. They total probably 20,000 employees in the Province of Saskatchewan. I say the Members of this House are entitled to know what the employees in any division of any Crown agency or any section of this Government are receiving in wages and salaries. When this information is contained within the confines of a trade union agreement, surely there is not substance or credence in trying to prevent this information from coming to the House.

Mr. Speaker, I have noticed this year, in other questions that have come before this House, that the Minister of Labour and some of his colleagues have turned these into Orders for Returns so as to prolong the bringing of this information to the Members of this House, so that this cannot be received in time for use to be made of it in speeches before this House.

But this of course is in a different vein. It is a deliberate refusal to give to the House information which it has the right to receive. In terms of past practice, as has been pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, it is absolutely intolerable that the Members of this Assembly should be denied facts that they have been getting for the last 20 or 25 years.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Matsalla: — Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say a few words, first of all to get the record straight, I had no advice from the Hon. Members for Moose Jaw South, Moose Jaw North or Regina North East, with regard to this question or motion. I would like to say that I was the one that initiated the question, and I am sure that, if I had received advice from the Members, I wouldn't have been ill-advised. The remarks of the Hon. Minister of Labour are certainly uncalled for. I want to say that I represent an area where a timber industry is being developed and I am interested in its development. I am also interested in the welfare of the workers in this industry. Therefore I say that I and the Members of this House should be entitled to this

information.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division:

YEAS — 23

Messieurs

Lloyd	Meakes	Baker
Wooff	Berezowsky	Pepper
Kramer	Smishek	Bowerman
Willis	Thibault	Matsalla
Wood	Whelan	Messer
Blakeney	Snyder	Kwasnica
Davies	Michayluk	Kowalchuk
Dewhurst	Brockelbank	

NAYS — 33

Messieurs

Thatcher	Grant	Weatherald
Howes	Coderre	Mitchell
McFarlane	Larochelle	Gardner
Boldt	MacDonald	Coupland
Cameron	Estey	McPherson
Steuart	Hooker	Charlebois
Heald	Gallagher	Forsyth
McIsaac	MacLennan	McIvor
Guy	Heggie	Schmeiser
Barrie	Breker	
Loken	Leith	
MacDougall	Radloff	

RETURN NO. 34

Mr. J. Messer (Kelsey) moved that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 34 showing:

With respect to the agreement between the Government and Simpson Timber Company:

- (1) Whether a “complete pulp mill feasibility report” has been prepared as specified in Clause 3.
- (2) If so, the cost of this report.
- (3) A copy of the report.

Hon. D.G. Steuart (Provincial Treasurer): — Mr. Speaker, I ask Members to vote against this, because by making the report public it could have adverse effects on our efforts to get a pulp mill development in that part of the province. While it won’t affect Simpson Timber Company, which made the report, it is not the only company we are negotiating with. I feel it is not in the public interest to make this report available.

Mr. Davies — Mr. Speaker, I believe that the agreement which we are referring to here in clause 3 of that agreement was drawn sometime ago. Because there is some doubt, some criticism as to exactly what the operation is in that area, I think in order to

clear it up, it would be justifiable for the Government to table such information.

In regard to any undue information that would be made available to other companies that are negotiating in that area or other areas respecting the cost of the report itself and the internal nature of what Simpsons is doing in money relationships with the Government, I would be willing to leave that out. But to satisfy the people not only in that area, but all the people of the province whose natural wealth is involved on, what exactly is going on between the Government and Simpsons, I would hope that we could support this Return.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division:

YEAS — 23

Messieurs

Lloyd	Meakes	Baker
Wooff	Berezowsky	Pepper
Kramer	Smishek	Bowerman
Willis	Thibault	Matsalla
Wood	Whelan	Messer
Blakeney	Snyder	Kwasnica
Davies	Michayluk	Kowalchuk
Dewhurst	Brockelbank	

NAYS — 33

Messieurs

Thatcher	MacDougall	Leith
Howes	Grant	Radloff
McFarlane	Coderre	Weatherald
Boldt	Larochelle	Mitchell
Cameron	MacDonald	Gardner
Steuart	Estey	Coupland
Heald	Hooker	McPherson
McIsaac	Gallagher	Charlebois
Guy	McLennan	Forsyth
Barrie	Heggie	McIvor
Loken	Breker	Schmeiser

RETURN NO. 43

Mr. Thibault (Kinistino) moved that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 43 showing:

With respect to payments to physicians under the schedule of fees of the Medical Care Insurance Commission, since May 22, 1964: (a) the dates on which general increases in the schedule went into effect; (b) the estimated dollar value; and (c) the percentage rate of increase in each case.

Hon. Mr. Grant (Minister of Public Health): — Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of words in this motion that should be changed to clarify the subject. I also feel that it might be extended to give a better picture of the actual facts. I would like to move this amendment, seconded by the Hon. Attorney General (Mr. Heald):

That all the words after the word “showing” be deleted and the following substituted therefore:

“With respect to the Schedule of Fees of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan (a) whether there has been a general increase in this schedule since 1959; (b) if so, the dates the increases became effective; (c) whether any increases became effective between 1959 and July 1, 1962, and if so, the estimated dollar increases; (d) the percentage rate of increase; (e) the estimated annual dollar increase to the Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Commission of any increases effective since July 1, 1962; (f) the percentage rate of increase; (g) the average annual percentage rate of increase per year since 1959; and (h) the average annual percentage rate of increase since July 1, 1962.

Mr. Lloyd (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I find it rather difficult to understand why the Government is amending in this way. I presume that it is amending it in this way because it is prepared to give the information which the amendment would then call for. I find it exceedingly hard to understand how it is in a position to do this in the light of the argument we just had over a previous return. If you will remember, Sir, that in a previous discussion this afternoon we asked for the collective bargaining agreement between the Saskatchewan Timber Board and its organized employees. Members across the way argued that this couldn't be made public property. The Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Estey), who is a lawyer, even went into the laws of Saskatchewan as to why this couldn't be done.

Hon. Mr. Heald (Attorney General): — My point of order would be, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition in developing his argument in this motion is making reference to a debate on a previous motion and I think he is out of order when he does so.

Mr. Thibault (Kinistino): — On the point of order, we should have a copy of the amendment, we haven't received one.

Mr. Lloyd: — Well, the Attorney General raised the point of order and I felt, Sir, that I was only using relevant and proper information to argue why the Government couldn't possibly offer this kind of amendment.

Mr. Speaker: — Yes, well the arguments in one debate cannot be renewed in another debate.

Mr. Lloyd: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me put it this way then. If the Government is free to provide, as it seems to feel it is, a copy of what could be called a collective bargaining agreement with regard to one group of people in the province, I don't see why it isn't equally free to provide in regard to another. If the Government feels that it must refuse it, for example in the case of a Crown corporation, then I don't see how it can feel free to make available information with regard to the Saskatchewan College of Physicians and Surgeons, particularly

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when it is going to go back to the time before there was any direct relationship between this and the Medical Care Insurance Commission. There was no direct relationship because there was no Medical Care Insurance Commission. The whole thing seems to be a very strange sort of procedure that the Government is proposing. However, we haven't had a copy of the amendment, Mr. Speaker. I think it must be admitted that the amendment is long and complicated and therefore I would ask leave to adjourn the debate until we have had a chance to see the amendment and talk about it.

Debate adjourned.

RETURN NO. 48

Mr. Berezowsky (Prince Albert East-Cumberland) moved that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 48 showing:

Copies of all agreements between the Government or its agencies and (a) Waskesiu Holding Ltd.; (b) Woodland Enterprises.

Hon. Mr. Stuart (Provincial Treasurer): — Again I would have to ask the House to treat this motion as privileged information.

Mr. Blakeney (Regina Centre): — Am I to understand that copies of agreements between the Government and Woodland Enterprises are privileged information? If I am not misled, Woodland Enterprises is a company which is owned by the Government of Saskatchewan. If I am not misled, Woodland Enterprises Ltd., has, at least on the register as its shareholders, Saskatchewan Pulpwood Ltd., which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Saskatchewan Forest Products and also one Steven Wiltshire who at that time was a Government employee and held that share in trust. Now what we are now being told is that agreements between the Government and Crown corporations are not now to be disclosed, and I find that to be even more remarkable a proposition. I don't know about Waskesiu Holdings Ltd., I am not sure what its corporate status is, but I understand, if I am not misled — and I am sure the Minister will clear this up when he closes the debate — Woodland Enterprises is in fact entirely beneficially owned by the Government of Saskatchewan. If this be the case I would wonder on what conceivable principle the Government could say that an agreement between the Department of Natural Resources and one of the Crown corporations, for example, would not be available to be seen by the public. I am absolutely unable to appreciate how, for example, Woodland Enterprises would be able to, let us say, market timber or cut timber under a deal with the Department of Natural Resources which agreement would not be made available to the public. If this is what the Government is saying, and I think it is, then I think we must take the position that this is entirely improper on the part of the Government and we do take that position.

Hon. Mr. Stuart: — Was the Hon. Member asking me a question?

Mr. Blakeney: — No, I was raising a question

in the debate which I trusted the Hon. Member would answer when he closed the debate.

Hon. Mr. Steuart: — I don't close it, but if you want me to answer the question, I'll answer it.

Mr. Blakeney: — Fine, go ahead.

Hon. Mr. Steuart: — In the first place the question — and I can't be responsible if the Member words his question wrong — asked between the Government or its agency in Waskesiu Holdings, Waskesiu Holdings is not a Government-owned business. It also asks for agreements between the Government and its agencies and Woodland Enterprises. Yes, Woodland Enterprises is owned by a Crown corporation. It's owned by the Government, but the Crown corporation, Saskatchewan Timber Board, has agreements with Woodland Enterprises that are not in the public interest.

Mr. Davies (Moose Jaw South) — If this sort of procedure is going to continue, as the Deputy Premier (Mr. Steuart) has now outlined, what are we going to see in the future? The Department of Education turned into a Crown corporation so that we are denied information of the same sort that is now being asked for in this motion. By the device of making its Departments creatures of the Crown, that is Crown enterprises, this Government could deny the House every scrap of information that it has a right to ask and which is now being given to the House.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division:

YEAS — 23

Messieurs

Lloyd	Meakes	Baker
Wooff	Berezowsky	Pepper
Kramer	Smishek	Bowerman
Willis	Thibault	Matsalla
Wood	Whelan	Messer
Blakeney	Snyder	Kwasnica
Davies	Michayluk	Kowalchuk
Dewhurst	Brockelbank	

NAYS — 32

Messieurs

Thatcher	MacDougall	Radloff
Howes	Grant	Weatherald
McFarlane	Coderre	Mitchell
Boldt	Larochelle	Gardner
Cameron	MacDonald	Coupland
Steuart	Estey	McPherson
Heald	Hooker	Charlebois
McIsaac	MacLennan	Forsyth
Guy	Heggie	McIvor
Barrie	Breker	Schmeiser
Loken	Leith	

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2 — ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROVINCIAL CONSUMERS' AGENCY

Mr. Davies (Moose Jaw South) moved, seconded by Mr. E. Whelan (Regina North East):

That this Assembly, believing that action to help and protect consumers is vital and essential, recommend to the consideration of the Government of Saskatchewan the establishment of a Provincial Consumers' Agency, on lines proposed in February of 1968 by the Batten Commission, that would develop a full and effective program of consumer assistance, education and protection, in conjunction if possible with the Federal Department of Consumer Affairs, and report as often as required to a Standing Committee of the Legislature on Consumer Problems respecting their work; the Committee to be so constituted that it would from time to time sit to receive representations from the public on all matters relating to the welfare of consumers.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is now about a year ago since I moved and spoke to a similar Resolution in this Chamber. The resolution that I shall move this afternoon has some additions and I shall be explaining these as I go along. Perhaps it is appropriate that I begin this afternoon by a quotation, reported in the last edition of the Co-op Commentary, from the book, "The Plot to Make You Buy," which was written by John Fisher, an expatriate of the marketing industry. Mr. Fisher says, if I may quote, Mr. Speaker:

The slowly gathering clamour for new forms of government protection in consumer matters is not motivated by malcontents, radicals, and seekers after the millennium. It is the ground swell of a feeling culminating from years of steady abuse by the uncontrolled forces of marketing in Canada and the United States. Most certainly these forces have helped to give us the highest standard of living in the world . . . but our standard of living has been achieved at the expense of many of our old established moral standards and produces its own nasty by-products in polluted air and water, appalling traffic fatalities, inadequate public services, juvenile delinquency, intolerance, selfishness, broken marriages and the highest incidence of stress diseases in the world.

Fisher goes on to say:

Perhaps the saddest fact of all is that the forces of organized marketing have created a schizophrenic society whose moral standards are becoming quite questionable. Great store is set by the efficient production of goods, and it is the highest form of human endeavor to perfect a new aerosol can of hair spray. But question the ingredients that go into the hair spray or its misleading advertising campaign and the cry goes up that you are upsetting the natural forces of the market place . . . Question why that hair spray factory is allowed to pour forth its filth into the air and rivers of your city and you will be told to hush up or some other city may be the future site of such industries.

Mr. Speaker, I think that quotation is more than ever relevant because of the fact that this week in Canada we are celebrating Consumers' Week and the Canadian Association of Consumers all across this country will be endeavoring to do all they can do to bring the plight of consumers before members of the public and governments, trying to get government, in particular, to do that which will be helpful to consumers.

Mr. Speaker, my Resolution of a year ago called for the creation of a Consumers' Agency by the Government of Saskatchewan that would make every effort to work closely with the appropriate branch or department of the Government of Canada. And as I say, a year has gone by. No steps appear to have been taken in that desirable direction. Another year has elapsed during which Saskatchewan consumers have not enjoyed the kind of broad and effective program of consumer protection, education and information that could have been launched, and that could have secured some valuable results up to this time. At one point in my talk last year, Mr. Speaker, I commented with regard to the very heavy costs that the Saskatchewan public pay because of being overcharged in grocery items at supermarkets. I said, at that time:

We can afford to spend a fair amount of money to try and prevent this outright robbery — and I think that's what it is — of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

At this point in my talk, the Premier interjected: "That's a lot of bunk." I can't help but think that the Government has taken this overall view of the Batten Commission Report and its recommendations and this is why, to this time, no real action has been taken to bring about the principal recommendation of that Report; namely, the setting up of a Provincial Consumers' Agency which would, as soon as possible, become an effective department of this Government. When the Attorney General (Mr. Heald) rose to speak on my Resolution, last year, he said that he agreed with the Resolution, except with the portion suggesting the creation of an agency that would carry out Government programs. He said that the setting up of a department, agency or commission on consumers' affairs in Saskatchewan at this time was premature. But he did add, I'm quoting from his speech at that time:

Government involvement where public opinion expects such participation is not only legitimate, it is the duty of those administering the affairs of the Province to accept that responsibility.

But the Attorney General (Mr. Heald) last year also said that it would not be proper to embark upon the establishment of a consumers' affairs agency before consultation with the Governments of Alberta and Manitoba. Discussions of a relevant kind, he said, would avoid what he called, "hasty measures," and might reveal, he said, more practical alternatives.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as I've said, many months have gone by and the pressure of the public at large for effective consumer protection has grown. I don't see any signs of implementation of the Batten Commission recommendation for a consumers' agency. The news media have not been supplied with references to any discussions between the Premiers of the Prairie Provinces as to what Saskatchewan believes can be done to assist the whole

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area of consumer protection. The fact, Mr. Speaker, seems to be very evident that this Liberal Government in Saskatchewan has ignored its obvious responsibilities.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Davies — The way was open for them during the past year to create an agency that would co-operate with the new Federal Department of Consumer Affairs. This path hasn't been taken. A year has been lost because of most regrettable inactivity on the part of this Government. In the meantime, the fact that cities like Regina and Saskatoon are shown to have the highest food prices in Canada confirms the thinking of the Batten Commission that, in one of the greatest food-producing areas of the world, consumers are forced to pay the highest prices for their groceries. Those who are responsible, Mr. Speaker, for the implementation of these high prices plainly do not feel that the Government of Saskatchewan intends any action that will reverse a direction that has imposed inordinately high costs on Saskatchewan families. In other words, the large corporate concerns feel that they have nothing to fear from a program of action by this Government to help consumers.

In the Resolution that's now before us, I have gone further than the recommendation of last year. As well as calling for the establishment of a Provincial Consumers' Agency that would develop a full and effective program of consumer assistance and education and protection in conjunction, if possible with the Federal Department of Consumer Affairs, I propose that there be created a Standing Committee of the Legislature on Consumer Problems. The Agency would report to the Standing Committee as often as this would be required. But in addition, the Committee would sit from time to time to receive representations from the general public on all questions concerning consumers' complaints or suggestions and their general welfare.

Mr. Speaker, I think the time has come for the Legislature to recognize that the problems of consumers have such far-reaching importance that we need as Legislators to go directly to the public to learn the extent of the problems that are besetting Saskatchewan families and by this means thereby derive a better grasp of how we can, in this House, devise legislative programs that will meet these difficulties. I find, Mr. Speaker, in conversations with many citizens, that they shrug their shoulders at the possibility of securing redress of complaints. They have become so used to bad quality associated often with high prices, that they are constantly faced with so many little irritations, that they appear to have in many cases given up the struggle. The most valuable thing that could be secured by the creation of a Standing Committee on Consumer Affairs would be to get complaints and suggestions and information direction from the consumers themselves. I do not believe that MLAs can understand the full extent of the situation I am trying to describe, unless we do as I am now suggesting in the creation of a Standing Committee of the House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, while no action with respect to setting up a Consumer's Agency has been taken in this Province, it is encouraging to note that some progress is being made at the Federal level in following the creation of a new Ministry of Consumer and Co-operative Affairs under the Hon. Ron Basford. This Department has instituted an address for complainants

to write to at Box 99 in Ottawa. Some of the complaints are not, in my opinion, answered very well. But it is a fact that this step has been taken and I believe that this step is a good one.

Mr. Basford, in a talk before the Montreal Board of Trade, has advised manufacturers that the concept of "Let the buyer beware" should be replaced by "Let the seller take care." Mr. Basford has informed his listeners and the Board of Trade that the customer feels that the market place is letting him down; and that he is beginning to tell producers and retailers that their actions are not good enough. Mr. Basford also went on to say, and I'm quoting from the press report:

He is demanding protection against fraud and deception. He is demanding protection against hazardous substances. He is demanding full and accurate information and true prices.

Mr. Basford also said that:

The prime responsibility for what goes on in the market place rests with the businessman.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this House should understand that the Resolution before us today is not one that suggests and recommends action on certain fairly restricted lines. It is really one that has to do with a large part of what goes on in the whole of society today. Anyone that has taken even a brief look at consumer issues knows that while the corporate concerns are represented by hundreds of able, experienced and clever individuals, many of them professional people, the consumer goes almost completely unrepresented in the face of very large issues which are of vital and great significance to him. The most prominent of consumer groups in Canada is of course the Canadian Association of Consumers. It's an organization that relies largely on the strength of individual membership fees. It has sought to promote the consumers' welfare through national and provincial branches. However, it is hard to avoid the impression of an organization that is under-financed and under-manned in the presence of the numerous powerful lobbying groups that are in existence in society.

I would hope that eventually there would develop out of implementation of the proposals that I make today, further progressive moves. One thing that could be done is to establish a Consumer Advocacy Office, free of political entanglement with the existing administration of government, to serve impartially the consumer interest. Indissolubly associated with the consumer interest is the need of government support of research and product and service performance, and of safety and health standards, and technological progress in the consumer sector; comparable, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to that reflected in the several existing research councils that are now concerned more or less solely with producer interests. We have a National Research Council. We have Research Councils in Ontario, British Columbia and Saskatchewan by way of example. Why, Mr. Speaker, should their functions not be extended to better reflect their service role to both business and to the public. But these are extensions of the kind of ideas that are contained within the Resolution. I believe that what is proposed in the Resolution takes precedence and should be proceeded with immediately by this Government.

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I have said that this Resolution is connected with the welfare of other salient parts of our society, and one, Mr. Speaker, doesn't have to look very far to see that this is quite true. Personal bankruptcies in the United States for example, have jumped 240 per cent in the last 10 years and the bulk of these have been consumer bankruptcies. From the middle 1950s to the middle 1960s, instalment debts jumped 130 per cent in North America. Not only are American families buying more goods on credit, including small items that traditionally were bought for cash, but they're paying higher finance rates and taking longer to pay. Sidney Margolius, a United States economist, says that a family that habitually carries \$1,500 for instalment debts very likely pays out in the neighborhood of \$225 a year just in finance charges or almost \$7,000 over its major buying years. This family is also probably carrying a typical mortgage on its home, and would pay out at least double the cost of the home in 25 or 30 years of mortgage interest. These days we're talking, therefore, in terms of about \$40,000 to \$50,000.

Mr. Speaker, a typical wage-earner today may work four or five years of his life just to pay interest fees that are apart from the interest that he pays on his home. In a province like Saskatchewan, that is anxious to sell the maximum quantity possible of the food materials it produces, it's surely very hard to do so through the very many so-called cereal breakfast foods that are on the market shelves today. The manufacturer buys wheat, corn and other cereals, and he makes stuff called A-Puffa Rice, Sugar Pops; you name them! I'm sure everybody's heard of them. Today's families, with incredible innocence, pay 30 cents for a few ounces of what are actually three cents worth of ingredients. It's a pretty hard proposition for the basic producer of this province to benefit very much from that kind of operation.

The lack of standards for products everywhere on which consumers and retailers as well can rely causes a great deal of waste in money and resources. The uneven quality and the lack of standards of many goods cost you money at two levels; as a consumer and as a taxpayer. As one example, a Defense Department official in the United States estimated in 1966 that close to \$3 billion a year in tax money is wasted because of unreliable quality; and that is five to ten per cent of this department's entire expense dollar. It can easily be seen that there is enormous wastage in terms of this example. One has only to talk to the housewife about the lack of standards, and the lack of quality in clothing, household furnishing, food, and other equipment to understand the extent of the great losses incurred.

Mr. Speaker, Canadian families are today running very hard but often are notably ignorant about how to handle their hard-won pay cheques. In many cases there are two pay cheques in each family, as more and more married women try to catch up with inadequate household budgets, or budgets that are inadequate to meet the demands imposed or induced by mass advertising campaigns. Mr. Speaker, many Canadian families do not know how to buy adequate nourishment, and this is attested to by frequent surveys of various public health departments across Canada. It has been reliably stated that only about one-half of all United States households eat meals that fully come up to the nutritional standards of the National Research Council of the United States. There is very good reason to believe that a similar situation

exists in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, goods and services have become more and more complicated as years go by. There is a greater consumer innocence at a time when the consumer needs to be most educated and most aware of what is going on. The real question before the nation is, as Sidney Margolius said recently:

Whether our law should continue to permit the exploitation of the credulous and the economic seduction of the innocent.

At one time in our history the sale of an article largely depended upon its excellence. This appears to be no longer the case, with thousands of foods and other items used today. Breakfast cereals, which I already mentioned, are a good example. Their use has jumped immensely; so have their prices. The United States National Commission on Food Marketing found that while ingredients in breakfast cereals represent about 21 cents of the manufacturers' sales dollar, advertising and sales promotion alone take 20 cents. Mr. Speaker, advertising in sales costs almost as much as the ingredients cost themselves. The major part of the advertising, incidentally, goes to television at 12 cents on the dollar.

\$2 billion a year is spent on cosmetics and toiletries in the United States alone. This figure has doubled in a little over 10 years, most of it by larger firms who now spend 15 to 40 per cent of their sales dollar for advertising. This is more in many cases than the ingredients for these products cost. Usually 80 to 95 per cent of the advertising money goes to television. The magazine Advertising Age, Mr. Speaker, states that advertising expenditures of three leading soap and toiletries companies alone are \$430 million a year; and that's 10 to 25 per cent of their sales dollar. Now, by comparison, the entire budget of the United Nations is \$117 million. In other words, the United Nations whole budget is \$117 million as against \$430 million spent in advertising for three soap and toiletry companies alone. Two and one-half times more spent in soap and toiletries for three companies than is spent by the whole U.N.!

Some additional idea of the monstrous disproportion that advertising has assumed in our national life can be seen in the \$40 million a year that the Bristol-Myers Company spends to advertise Clairol hair coloring. In contrast the United States Government spends \$48 million a year to meet all the expenses of the huge T.V.A. electric power complex in that country. In 1967, the United States Department of Agriculture found that food costs in the United States had risen to \$78 billion a year, compared to \$53 billion, just 10 years before. Now this increase of 46 per cent means that the United States food bill for the family has increased just about that much. But of that increase, and that increase constitutes \$25 billion, only \$7 million can be attributed to higher farm prices according to the United States Department of Agriculture. The other \$18 billion, which is 72 per cent of the food increase in that period of time, had been commandeered by higher marketing costs which included supermarket margins and other distribution expenses. Mr. Speaker, since supermarket profit margins are higher in Canada than in the United States, it may be taken that a like situation must exist in this country, too.

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Perhaps some of my friends in the House, especially those opposite, will want to say that it is the increase in labor costs that is mainly responsible for the increase in food costs. I might tell them here, Mr. Speaker, that the United States Department of Agriculture reports that labor costs have not increased as rapidly as other major components of the marketing bill, to quote them precisely. The Department found that while hourly rates of workers went up in the 10-year period mentioned, during this period of 10 years, labor costs as a percentage of the total marketing cost had actually decreased nine per cent because of increased automation by the food processors and stores. The one component of the nation's food bill that did rise very sharply is food advertising. This now amounts to \$2½ billion a year, a jump of 180 per cent in 10 years. You get the picture; a decrease in labor costs in that period of 10 years of nine per cent; an increase in food advertising budgets of 180 per cent.

Last year, when we were talking about the Consumers' Resolution, the Attorney General (Mr. Heald) made some comment to the effect that a consumers' agency might cost money. Well, it certainly would, and should. The point is that the billions of dollars that people in North America are now paying for shoddy goods, misinformation, and being led into bad buying habits in general, is money that they pay themselves. Money spent on public information and research can save the public many times more than that which is spent in the way that I am suggesting in this House. Lung cancer for example kills as many or almost as many in Canada as do automobiles, yet we permit the most flagrant use of tobacco advertising, introducing a lethal habit among millions of young people who might not otherwise have entered upon it. The business of smoking is constantly being thrust upon young people as something that they must do if they are going to "swing with it." With all the talk and concern that there is about drug addiction in Canada today, it seems very strange to me, Mr. Speaker, that there is not a great deal more done about the extent of harm in tobacco advertising. It is one thing for a person to acquire a habit on his own. But is quite another for a person to get it, because it is insidiously introduced into his home by television and other similar means every day of the month.

The United States Bureau of Standards was started many years ago, back in 1927. It cost \$2 million a year to operate just in its first year. But in that first year of operation alone, the Bureau of Standards saved the United States Government, (just the Government), \$100 million. Of course this figure has risen proportionately since that time. And it may be useful to note at this point that this was the Bureau that many years later was responsible for forcing the automobile industry to undertake at least partial reforms in the field of safety. The argument that we cannot afford to spend public money on programs of consumer education, safety, protection and information, simply does not wash, Mr. Attorney General. What we need is prompt steps to check the profligate and the unbridled spending of people's money in private advertising — and that is exactly what it is — and start to spend some of the money saved to inform people on what they have a right to know.

The job to help consumers can be done only when their elected representatives and particularly the people that happen to be in ministerial control take their full responsibility and act to exercise remedial measures and control. This

includes, Mr. Speaker, assistance to all consumers' organizations that exist, in trying to aid and finance them in their work, so as to vitalize and to expand their activities.

The Attorney General says, "Why did you not do these things when you were here?" I want to tell the Attorney General that he would be blind not to admit the dozens of programs in Government departments that were effective to help the consumer over many years; I think that he would admit this is a fair statement. He must also see that the programs about which I am talking have come into existence in recent years, because of the crystalization of the public sentiment and because of the fact that we have come to understand the importance of these programs.

We've also had a tremendous period of inflation in the last five or six years, years by the way, of Liberal Government, not only here but at Ottawa, and therefore it is incumbent, more incumbent than ever, for his Government to give leadership in these programs.

Mr. Speaker, Canada has sometimes prided itself on being ahead of the United States in certain fields of progressive legislation. In Saskatchewan, indeed, we could claim this with some justice, with respect to items of legislation like auto insurance, minimum wage, hospitalization, medical care legislation and so on, that were passed by the CCF Government. This claim cannot be advanced by this Government with respect to consumer matters of the kind that I am talking about. Canada is very far behind the United States respecting consumer protection activities. It was the Kennedy Administration that began the Consumer Advisory Council within the Council of Economic Advisors. It was the Johnston Administration that carried consumer representation further with the appointment of a special advisor on consumer affairs. The Truth in Packaging Bill and other steps that were taken during the last several years have further strengthened the position of the American consumer, although consumer organizations are still very far from satisfied with the results in that country. In Canada as yet, only very halting steps have been taken, and a much more vigorous movement needs to develop if we are to keep abreast of protection in the United States and in other parts of the world.

There has been a great accent, and rightly so, on the need to fight poverty in this country. Certainly the existence of 25 to 30 per cent of the population who exist as poverty-area families, dictates the need for the most rapid action in that quarter. It has, however, pertinent to this Resolution, Mr. Speaker, been disclosed by a number of studies that it is the poor who pay more, almost all down the line as consumers than other sections of the population. It is the poor who have the least access to the best information on buying. It is the poor who are most often victimized with respect to instalment buying and buying over time in general. It is the poor who, because of their lack of cash, have the least opportunity to bargain and who often pay the highest prices for articles that are in other cases acquired at a lower cost.

In considering an attack on poverty everywhere, proper adequate consumer information is of the essence. This Provincial Government has stated that it is going to hold a plebiscite with respect to a drug program. One of the things that the public might well ask for is a little more valid information on the subject of drugs. Certainly consumers are entitled to

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information that they do not now possess. Sidney Margolius in his new book, "The Innocent Consumer versus the Exploiters" has told us that the price of household medicines under generic names is a fraction of the brand name price. He has also told us with respect to hearing aids that people pay \$300 to \$400 for some highly advertised hearing aid, when standard aids are available for \$125 to \$200.

Differences in cost between brand and generic prescription drugs are startling. Mr. Margolius says that the cost to the pharmacist in the United States — and I believe that applies generally here — for meticorten, a brand-name drug, is \$17.90 per 100 tablets; for prednisone, the generic manufactured under licence from the same company, 30 to 50 cents per 100. The customer may pay as little as \$3 per 100 for the generic equivalent; from \$25 to \$30 for the meticorten name. There are many other examples. Some of the Members of this House may be familiar with them. In our country, the House of Commons Special Committee of 1966 and 1967 went into the question of drug prices. They found out that the drug companies of this country have a profit rate twice that of the ordinary company in manufacturing.

The Royal Commission on Health Services found much the same. They found that there was over-pricing in drugs all down the line. I refer you again to the House of Commons Special Committee. It found that the average rate of return on all drugs manufactured, 42 of them I think there were, from 1953 to 1964, was 20 per cent per year on invested capital, 20 per cent on the investment for that whole period of time. In 1964, it apparently had gone up to 24 per cent. They found that only 7 cents of their sales dollar was spent in research by drug companies, while their marketing costs were 30 cents of the sales dollar, including in large part, promotion and advertising. I think that the House has been informed, probably through other debates, that in North America from \$3,000 to \$5,000 is spent by drug companies in influencing each doctor in the United States and Canada.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that, whatever anyone in this House may think, we will have to face up to the need to establish as soon as possible a public drug program of real consequence. This can be more effectively established when better information is given to the consumer and when the consumer interest is further protected by exercising valid public control on drug manufacturers that have to this time virtually completely ignored the rights of their buying public.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Davies — I want to suggest to this Government that in following the steps that I have proposed in my Resolution it will receive active support from many significant parts of the population and many organizations that are dedicated to the interest of consumers.

The Consumers Co-operative movement in Saskatchewan is, as everyone knows, very strong; so is the credit union movement. Their educational centres have placed a considerable accent on consumer education in their publications, especially over the past several years. I feel positive that these and other organizations, like farm and labor groups, will readily respond to any genuine and sincere program that might be evolved to help

consumers on the part of this Government.

The Government may well contend, and I would agree with them, that action by governments is not enough to defend the public in matters like these. I would say, however, that nowhere in Canada is there a larger group of people that will assist the Government in consumers' affairs than there is in the Province of Saskatchewan. Historically, we have developed many groups that have the welfare of the public at heart in many diverse respects. These organizations have become aware of the vacuum that exists in the area of consumers' affairs. These organizations will be enthusiastic auxiliaries in any government program to assist consumers.

Mr. Speaker, the failure on the part of this Government to act aggressively for consumers and the peculiar response of the Federal Government to the Batten Report have been highlighted by the recent efforts of the Canadian Association of Consumers. In January, 1969, the Consumers Association wrote to the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, expressing their deep indignation over the manner in which the 1968 Batten Report had been received by the Director of the Combines Investigation Act. The Canadian Association of Consumers reiterated its demand for a complete Federal investigation into the alleged excess profits by the grocery trade in the Western provinces.

Mr. Basford, in reply stated that he is planning a meeting with Prairie Government Ministers about grocery prices. Now, last year the Premier and the Attorney General told us that they were going to talk about these matters with the other two Prairie Governments. If as little action results after Mr. Basford's meeting as has resulted during the last year, we may expect very, very little indeed from these efforts.

The Government must see that it has an obligation, a moral obligation indeed, to act just as soon as possible in doing the kind of thing that is suggested in this Resolution. It is a fact that the increase in grocery prices has continued in Saskatchewan during the past year. There is no doubt in my mind that this has taken place in large part because of the inactivity and the apathy on the part of this Government.

Mr. Basford, in the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix story of January 21, 1969, said that meetings with the Ministers of the three Prairie Provinces to discuss high grocery prices would take place as he put it, "when they are ready," possibly late this month or early February. Well, February has come and gone. I ask this Government; have these meetings been held? If so, what has been the response: What action has been taken?

Mr. Speaker, a great deal more could be said in justification of this Resolution. However, I believe that all Members of this House must be aware of the abuses and the necessities that spell the need for action to help consumers. Consumers are being hurt and victimized every day that goes by. The longer that action is delayed, the longer consumers will suffer. I call upon this Government to make a forthright declaration that will proceed with action as is called for in this Resolution.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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Hon. L.P. Coderre (Minister of Labour): — Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in this debate I must say that the Hon. Member from Moose Jaw (Mr. Davies) took a great deal of trouble to probably confuse the issue by statistical information. He then started bragging about what they had done when they were in the Government and then didn't say what this Government has done. I believe that the records of the Attorney General of this Province (Mr. Heald), so far as consumer legislation is concerned, stands second to none on this continent. There has been more legislation brought in here under his able administration than by any other administration on this continent.

I am wondering what happened to the former Attorney General when he had an employee by the name of Blakeney, I believe, who is now the Member for Regina Centre, to allow company after company to fleece the people of this province. Unfortunately I was one that was fleeced. The Hon. Member from Moose Jaw stands there and, while he was a Member of this House, did allow the people of Moose Jaw and surrounding districts to be fleeced by what had happened re that cemetery south of Moose Jaw. This Government had to bail out the Socialists. There, the Member for Regina Centre sits, glum, and hasn't done one thing while in this capacity. He allowed these fastbuck artists to run away with things.

Mr. A.E. Blakeney (Regina Centre): — Who fleeced you this time?

Mr. Coderre: — The guy who fleeced me, or the group who fleeced me, are those that you permitted to run loose across this province and do that in various places, North Battleford, Moose Jaw, the cemeteries. You were the registrar of the companies that allowed this type of thing at that particular time.

Much can be said about the matter of packaging. You mentioned a few moments ago something about packaging. I notice that in some stores you find a pound of chocolates for 98 cents, two pounds for \$2.25; four pounds for \$6. I often wonder whether the Hon. Member for Moose Jaw South (Mr. Davies in his capacity as political education or something with the Federation of Labour, couldn't do more and involve himself more in assisting the consumers rather than getting them involved in political affairs. I think that it would be a great thing, for the consumers would show some leadership instead of getting involved and mixing up people. I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that assistance to consumers in this province stands second to none in this continent. I think that we can thank the Attorney General who has brought forward good progressive legislation and I am sure that there will be more to come.

In view of the remarks that have been made, Mr. Speaker, I believe that I would like to have the opportunity to study the remarks of the Hon. Member and I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

RESOLUTION NO. 5 — EXPRESS RAIL RATES

Mr. Charlebois (Saskatoon City Park-University) moved, seconded by Mr. McPherson (Regina South West):

That this Legislature urge the Government of Saskatchewan

to immediately and forcefully protest to the Express Transport Association of Canada the discriminatory express rail rates that apply to Regina and Saskatoon.

He said: Mr. Speaker, we have here, I think, discrimination in rates. Certainly to say that it is ridiculous is putting it mildly, and of course it is only natural that we should protest as strongly and as clearly as possible. The rates were introduced and then, of course, as we have heard recently, have been withdrawn. But we wonder why we are continually fighting unfair rate structures here in Saskatchewan. I think of the example that we had in the late '50s where they had preferential rates introduced to Western Canada and we had a rate structure for Edmonton and Calgary. The rate was set the same. The rate from Montreal, Toronto to Calgary and to Edmonton was exactly the same, but here in Saskatchewan we had Regina with a 25 cent preferential over Saskatoon. I remember this very well because those of us in the Board of Trade Movement in Saskatoon protested vehemently over this discrimination against us there. We asked the reasons why and we were told at the time that naturally rates had to be set on mileage, and of course, Saskatoon is further from Montreal than Regina. Therefore we had to pay the 25 cent difference and we still are paying that difference.

However, in this latest situation when we asked why is it that we have to pay more for our express freight rates to Regina and Saskatoon, than it costs to take them to Edmonton and Calgary, well, they said, of course rates must be set on volume. It appears that the logic has switched from mileage to volume. Well, it is very difficult to understand the reasoning behind the setting of the rate structures by the Association. I would only ask here that we watch. I would suggest that the strongest possible representation be made by this Government that any future rates be based on logical criteria and that the Saskatchewan centres be given reductions that are proportionate to those granted to other centres. In other words, if there is a reduction given to Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, then for goodness sake give it to us too. All we ask is a proportionate reduction. All we are actually asking is for fair treatment. We have been listening here to how the consumer pays. Well believe me if we have to pay these unreasonable freight rates into this part of the country, it is pretty hard for us to keep down the cost to the consumer. And so I think that we as a Government should protest very strongly against any rates that are set that are not logical and based on a proper criterion. Having said this, I would respectfully ask the privilege to withdraw this motion because of the fact that the rates themselves have been withdrawn by the Association.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. J.E. Brockelbank (Saskatoon Mayfair): — I oppose the motion to withdraw, and consequently I will make some remarks on the Resolution.

Have you ruled that the motion is in order, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: — I put the motion before the House and if it hadn't been in order I wouldn't have, would I.

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Mr. Brockelbank: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the discriminatory situation, which arose when the Express Transport Association decided to experiment with rail express rates, should have generated a renewed awareness of Saskatchewan's position in the national transportation picture. We were faced with a situation where the engineer didn't know what the man in the caboose was doing and, Mr. Speaker, he didn't care. The Engineer in this case, the Express Transport Association, was running the operation in a manner which suited them best without regard to the desire or the needs of us in the caboose.

Saskatchewan as a land-locked province is very dependent on rail transportation. In addition the very nature of the grain-growing economy necessitates a heavy reliance on rail systems as a means of gathering our products together prior to export shipment. The fact that we have no genuine national transportation policy which takes our needs into consideration has been amply demonstrated. Proof of that was shown when the Express Transport Association, without apparent consultation, was able to invoke the freight-wise discriminatory structure that this Resolution protests against. I have no hesitation in asking, Mr. Speaker, that the breakdown in the effective movement of damp and dry wheat and grain can be partly marked off against the lack of a responsive national transportation policy.

In conclusion for a land-lock province such as ours, if it is heavily dependent on rail transportation, and it is, it is imperative that we have representation on an over-riding body which has direct access to the Board of Transport Commissioners. If we make progress towards this end, then we can expect sympathetic and effective response on such vital matters as wheat and coarse grain movement, rationalized branch-line abandonment, meaningful passenger service, further development of Hudson Bay Route Association at Churchill and last, but not least, Mr. Speaker, undiscriminatory freight rates.

Mr. Speaker, I support the Resolution.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. W.S. Lloyd (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a few words to the Resolution because I think there is indeed something very important here that we need to be aware of. The mere fact that some request and some pressure from the Government here and from other Members at Ottawa caused the change of decision at this time is no assurance that the same thing is going to work another time. I think that this House needs to support the intent of the Resolution which the Member from Saskatoon City Park-University has put before us.

Let me just take a minute to say what the Express Transport Association tried to do with respect to these particular freight rates. The effect of this is shown by this kind of an example. Under the rates which were in effect for a while, to make a 200-pound shipment from Montreal to Swift Current by way of Winnipeg was this: to send it first to Winnipeg and then re-ship it to Swift Current would have cost \$13.45. However, for the same order, if shipped to Regina and then to Swift Current, the cost would have been \$16.82 — a difference of 25 per cent. If

however, instead of sending it that way, the 200-pound article was to go to Calgary or Edmonton, the cost would have only been \$11 or 25 per cent less than shipping the same goods to Regina.

This is clearly in itself, Mr. Speaker, a situation which should raise questions about the rate-making procedures of the railways. I think that we have to go back a bit and realize that at one time the changing of freight rates was a function, at least the approval of these freight rates, was a function of a board of the Federal Government. With the passing of the new legislation in 1967, I think it was — I have forgotten the specific date — Yes, the railways were given the right to set their own rates. This action follows them being given that right. It seems to me that this is a right which should not be left just in the hands of corporations. When corporations set prices of this kind, they are in fact levying taxes on the people of Canada. I don't believe that they should have the right to levy these taxes without reference to some public body. Some day I hope that we will return to a situation in which the rate at which these freight rates are levied will be subject to approval by some organization like the Canada Transport Board, or whatever, the right board is. I think we need to be very concerned about the fact that the railways can set a rate which is in effect for a couple of months and then they withdraw them and set some other kind of a rate. Railways, Mr. Speaker, are part of our national system for development of our country. Freight rates certainly ought to be a part of our national financial consideration. I think we need to protest this in the strongest way possible. I think that the Government ought to consider making representations that the right to decide on railway rates should not be left with the railways themselves, but should be subject to some supervision by the appropriate agency of the Government of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. A.E. Blakeney (Regina Centre): — I just want to add my words to those of the previous speakers. This proposal would be very hard on Regina as it would be hard on Saskatoon. I don't know what part the Government played in having these discriminatory rates withdrawn, but to the extent that the Government played a part in having them withdrawn, I would like to congratulate the Government for its efforts. Having the rates withdrawn was very valuable it seems to me for Regina and Saskatoon. It is a matter for regret that they had to be withdrawn by withdrawing a benefit to Calgary and Edmonton rather than conferring a similar benefit on Regina and Saskatoon. We certainly regret that. On the other hand, the principle of non-discrimination on these rates is so vital to the continued industrial development of Regina and Saskatoon that we must express a preference for non-discrimination, even if it is rather hard on our friends in Calgary and Edmonton. I think that it would be wise for this House to pass a Resolution. In order to tidy things up and bring it in line with the facts, I think we ought to move a small amendment to this Resolution, because in fact discriminatory express rail rates do not apply to Regina and Saskatoon, or do not apply in the way that this Resolution was aimed at. Accordingly I will move, seconded by the Member for Wadena (Mr. Dewhurst):

That the words "the discriminatory express rail rates that apply to Regina and Saskatoon" be deleted and the

following words substituted therefor:

“their threatened application of discriminatory express rail rates to Regina and Saskatoon.”

With that change, Mr. Speaker, the Resolution will read:

That this Legislature urge the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately and forcefully protest to the Express Transport Association of Canada their threatened application of discriminatory express rates to Regina and Saskatoon.

I think that this is still desirable. I think that this Legislature should go on record as being unhappy about the proposed application of these rates. If this amendment is undesirable because it disturbs a newly created relationship between the Government and the Express Transport Association, I would not want to urge anything that will upset what is now a moderately successful apple cart. But it seems to me that we ought, as a Legislature, to go on record as opposing this sort of thing and to let the Express Transport Association know that the Legislature of Saskatchewan thought it sufficiently important to be the subject of a Resolution.

STATEMENT ON POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: — Just before I deal with the amendment I propose to deal with the point of order which was raised on the motion. I refer Hon. Members to Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice, 17th edition, page 402:

Proposal of Motion — When a Member is at liberty to make a motion, he may speak in its favor before he actually proposes it. But his speech is only allowed upon the understanding, first, that he speaks to the motion; and, secondly, that he concludes by proposing his motion formally.

And further, I think it is well known that a motion once moved becomes the property not of the mover thereof, but of the House itself and can therefore only be withdrawn by unanimous consent.

Hon. D.G. Steuart (Provincial Treasurer): — I think that as far as I am concerned I certainly agree with both the motion and the amendment.

But I would like to point out to the House that when this situation arose Premier Thatcher got immediate action. He picked up the phone, he talked to the Hon. Mr. Hellyer, the Minister of Transport, and Mr. Sinclair, the President of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. He got the two of them together and they changed this discriminatory action immediately. At the same time, I agree that something like this shouldn't be able to happen almost at the whim of the railways. As far as we are concerned on this side of the House, we have and we will continue to fight and work as hard as we can to get Western Canada and Saskatchewan in particular a better deal in regard to express rates or freight rates. If this motion and this amendment will help, then I think that our side of the House will support it.

But again I want to point, we can talk all we want, but in this case, it was the Premier that got action, got results and got it immediately.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. J.E. Brockelbank (Saskatoon Mayfair): — Will the Hon. Member permit a question before he takes his seat.

He suggested that the Premier had got in touch with Mr. Sinclair and the Federal Government immediately this situation arose, by telephone. What date was that?

Mr. Steuart: — Well, I don't know. But the record is there. He phoned them immediately that it came to his attention, or the day before the motion was brought in. He picked up the phone and phoned them. I think he phoned two or three times and got the action. They got together, and the result was that they withdrew the privilege from the other people, so at least we are all even. It was kind of a negative result. We would have much sooner seen everyone get the better express rates. But at least we got action so that Saskatoon and Regina are not at a disadvantage. There is no question. I don't know whether you are questioning whether he did this or not, he did it . . .

Mr. W.S. Lloyd (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, on the amendment I really didn't intend to say anymore, and I don't want to take away any of the glory or credit which the Premier is being given. I thought just to complete the record, Mr. Speaker, I might read a comment from the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, February 21. It was the comment that Mr. Sinclair, the President of the Canadian Pacific Railway made about this decision. He says that "the rates were put on and dropped." These are Mr. Sinclair's words, because it didn't work out as expected. Then referring to complaints that were made about the rates, he said the complaints had nothing to do with the decision to drop the special rate, I thought that perhaps . . .

Mr. Blakeney: — That's his story.

Hon. W.R. Thatcher (Premier): — I don't think it really matters who get the credit or who doesn't get the credit. When I phoned Mr. Sinclair, he had never heard of these rate changes, according to what he told me. He promised me he would look into the matter. When we still didn't get much action, I phoned Mr. Hellyer. Believe me between the two of them, within a few hours, the matter was settled. I don't know whether this will happen again. It has happened over the years far too often. In any event this particular matter has been settled, and I was pleased with the co-operation which we received from Mr. Sinclair and Mr. Hellyer.

Mr. J.J. Charlebois (Saskatoon City Park-University): — Mr. Speaker, I must say that I appreciate the fact now that this motion was not permitted to be withdrawn, because it has brought some comments to the floor of the House. I must say that in general I am in agreement with these, but where I

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voted for the amendment, I would like to point out that the amendment was put in this way, that the express rates were threatened. These were not threatened rates, these rates were actually put into force and they are still in force. I don't think that we should be confused on this. While they are still in force, there has been a statutory notice placed that will have them withdrawn within the 30 days of the time that they were put there. It is only to point out this, I am in agreement with the comments generally, but here I think we should be clear that they were not threatened rates. They were rates that were actually put into effect. The other point of course is that I don't think that we should sell the Premier short on the effort that he has made in regard to these rates. It has had a very real effect and I don't think that anything was intended to belittle the efforts that he made. But believe me his effort was a major one and I think we should be grateful for it. The other point that I would like to make in conclusion is the fact that now, because this motion has been put — and I am sure it will pass — I think that when the protest does go to the rate association, the point should be made very clear, and I think this should also be made to the Federal Government, to Mr. Hellyer, that some standard criterion should be set. It should be a logical criterion and through it, if any rates are placed, that the centres in Saskatchewan should be given a proportionate reduction or a proportionate treatment to what other centres are given in Western Canada. With that I will conclude my remarks.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

**RESOLUTION NO. 9 — INCLUSION OF HEARING AIDS UNDER THE SASKATCHEWAN
MEDICAL INSURANCE ACT**

Mr. G.T. Snyder (Moose Jaw North) moved, seconded by Mr. R.H. Wooff (Turtleford):

That this Assembly recommends to the consideration of the Government of Saskatchewan early action to determine the most appropriate, effective and economical manner in which hearing aids may be included as an insured service under The Saskatchewan Medical Insurance Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this Resolution I trust is one that requires a minimum of explanation to this House. It is not a Resolution that initially calls upon the Government to spend any excessive sums of money, but it requires that action be taken to investigate and to conclude upon the most expedient and the most economical method by which an extremely important service may be provided to a large number of handicapped people. This, I suggest, should represent a most worthy and a most legitimate undertaking for this Legislature to recommend to the Government of Saskatchewan.

I have within my circle of acquaintances, Mr. Speaker, a number of senior citizens who have become afflicted with defective hearing in varying degrees over the last number of years. Several of these people are in what has to be described as their declining years and are living in financial circumstances which make it all but impossible for them to purchase a device which is designed to correct their hearing loss. I believe, Mr. Speaker,

that there is mounting evidence to indicate that excessive prices are being charged to those who require this service in Order that they may live reasonably normal and contented lives.

Because of this and the many inquiries that I have had directed to me in recent months by pensioners in particular, Mr. Speaker, I have attempted to gather together as much information as possible on the whole matter. I am convinced that the information that I have still must be regarded as incomplete, but I believe it does throw a good deal of light onto the whole question.

Some of the information that I have originates with the Minister of Health in Great Britain, the British Consulate in Ottawa and from a variety of other sources. It is a matter of interest, also, Mr. Speaker, that a survey was conducted into this matter in British Columbia during 1966, and that the report was completed and handed over to the Government of British Columbia in 1967. There was also a United States Senate report in 1962. All of this information I suggest is readily available to the Government. There are some very interesting conclusions that have been noted in studies and other material that are readily available. For instance, well over half of those who wear hearing aids are people of 65 years of age or over. Another statistic that perhaps is not surprising, but is nevertheless true indicates that more than twice as many people suffer from a hearing loss than those that suffer from visual defects. The loss of hearing is then by far the single most common impairment in our country today.

Members will be aware that hearing aids are provided in Great Britain under the National Health Plan. It is a matter of record that hearing aids purchased in bulk quantities, with excessive profits done away with, have been made available at a price which is within reasonable limits. The cost of manufacturing each unit is kept to a minimum, because the General Post Office in Great Britain which is charged with the responsibility obtains components in bulk and places competitive contracts with suitable electro-engineering firms for assembly of the hearing aids. The performance standard of the product was first laid down by the electro-acoustic committee of the Medical Research Council and hence the name, Mr. Speaker, 'MEDRESCO,' which is the name of the aid provided to hearing centres in selected hospitals throughout the country. These hearing aid centres, Mr. Speaker, are responsible for fitting and issuing aids to individual patients after initial assessments have been made by hospital otologists and other technicians.

A preponderance of evidence would appear to indicate that the British service has met with widespread acceptance. The original 'Medresco' hearing aid was described as a somewhat clumsy and less cosmetically attractive than some of the smaller in-the-ear and behind-the-ear aids. But the British Columbia survey of 1966 indicated that this type was the cheapest and the most economical to maintain and the most satisfactory from a technical point of view. I want for just a moment, Mr. Speaker, to read a quotation from Bevin's book, "In Place of Fear," which relates something of the British experience in bringing hearing aids under the National Health Service in Great Britain.

The way that seemed to offer the best chance of success, was to bring the hearing specialist and the aural technicians into conference with each other, to see if a

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satisfactory aid could be devised, which could then be put into mass production and distributed through the hospitals. The effort met with outstanding success. By September, 1951, 152,000 aids had been distributed and the users are enthusiastic about them. They cost approximately one-tenth of those on sale commercially. By bulk ordering of common essentials and cutting out unnecessary retail profit margins, substantial economies can be made.

Mr. Speaker, the problem as it appears to apply to the Canadian and Saskatchewan scene appears to revolve around the excessive cost of these appliances. As has been mentioned, the vast majority of those with hearing defects are over the age of 65, and in many cases these people are living within very limited means.

I believe that the pertinent question that we as a Legislature must ask ourselves, is whether we, as a civilized and organized society, can allow excessive profits to be made at the expense of excluding many people from a service which is vital to their health, comfort and their well-being. The British Columbia survey presented some rather startling figures with respect to the markup from the wholesaler to the retailer. For the least expensive hearing aid, the British Columbia survey showed among the five different firms, a retail markup of from 49 per cent to 306 per cent. For the most expensive hearing aid, these same five firms showed a markup of from 97 to 278 per cent. The British Columbia survey gave examples of numerous types of hearing aids with suggested retail prices for these five British Columbia firms. The vast majority of examples indicated a retail markup of as much as 200 per cent to 300 per cent. Other information indicated that hearing aids, which cost \$35 in Japan, are being sold for upwards of \$400 in Vancouver, and others, which cost \$77 to manufacture, are being sold for \$700.

It should be noted also that there are no manufacturers of hearing aids in Canada, unless a manufacturer has gone into production in recent months, since the beginning at least of 1967. Most of the hearing aids sold in Canada are imported from the United States and Europe, with over 80 per cent of the imports of hearing aids and parts originating in the United States. It should be remembered also, Mr. Speaker, that hearing aids and hearing aid parts are imported duty-free into Canada under tariff items 48200-1 and 48205-1 of the Canada Customs Tariff. I am not familiar with the actual connotation of the tariff items, but the indication is that they do arrive in our country duty-free. It is worthy of note too, Mr. Speaker, in terms of cost, that they are also exempt from Provincial and Federal sales tax. I suppose I should say that rather quietly, Mr. Speaker, unless it prompts the Provincial Treasurer to look upon this as another source of revenue.

Well, all of this would, Mr. Speaker, seem to indicate that there is some real reason to ask that a full and complete investigation be conducted into the hearing aid industry. I am not suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that I have all of the available information. What I do suggest is that, on the face of evidence that is readily available, there would appear to be no way in which a respectable commercial firm can justify a percentage markup of anywhere from 100 to 300 per cent, as has been shown in the British Columbia survey. I don't have at my disposal any figures

to demonstrate the markup from the manufacturer to the wholesaler, nor do I have available any information to indicate the cost of advertising and other sales techniques. I leave it to Members of this House to judge what other hidden costs may be involved.

I have been of the opinion for some time, Mr. Speaker, that these appliances should be included as an insured service under The Medical Care Insurance Act. However, I think, in light of information that has been provided, it must be agreed that the inclusion of this service must be preceded by a rational approach to the whole matter of providing this service at a realistic cost. With this in mind, I am hopeful that recognition will be given to the need for a study in depth into the whole matter of costs, maintenance and other matters which will make it possible for us to judge what steps should be taken to provide this service at a reasonable cost. With this in mind, I hope that Members on both sides of the House will see their way clear to support this Resolution, which I am convinced is worthy of the consideration of Members on both sides of the House, irrespective of political creed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. R.H. Wooff (Turtleford): — Mr. Speaker, I for one consider this a very, very important motion, but my colleague has covered the ground very well. I will endeavor to be as brief as possible.

I suppose it is only human and only natural that one should be vitally interested in a matter which has affected oneself, and in many respects still does. I am referring to this problem of hearing aids for those unfortunate enough to need such appliances. At best, Mr. Speaker, regardless of cost, they are indeed a poor substitute for the natural ear. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt was a very understanding individual when she said, "People who need hearing aids are not just awed by the cost, which is high, but many do not like to acknowledge that they do not hear well." But, Mr. Speaker, sooner or later regardless of feeling or emotions, they come face to face with the cold fact of price. I mean just that, Mr. Speaker. I have here on my desk, a little instrument that I purchased some three years ago in this very city, for the price of \$340. When I was overseas at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, I dropped into a hearing aid establishment and had a little discussion with the proprietor. I asked him what he could sell an instrument like this for. He was very frank with me, he said, "That is a beautiful instrument, it is new, and we don't have it in at the moment but it is coming very shortly." Well I said, in dollars and cents I would like to know what it would cost. He told me that they would retail it at \$150. Now, Mr. Speaker, that instrument was going to be manufactured somewhere on this continent and transported all the way to Britain. It will sell for one-half the price you or I pay for it in the city of Regina. This is not a high-priced instrument as my colleague pointed out to you, \$350 for the instrument and molded ear fitting is only half the price that many of these hearing aids are being retailed at. \$340 is not the top price, but again as my colleague from Moose Jaw North (Mr. Snyder) pointed out, it is not by any means the lowest price. But in my own experience, ignorant as I was of all this kind of thing, this was the only type and the only price of instrument that I was told anything about. The Consumers' Union has done a great deal of work

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tabulating prices, models, materials, performances according to manufacturers' claims with regard to hearing aids. On the whole they found that, while the odd instrument might not quite perform quite to the advertising level of the company's claim, on the whole they reasonably accomplished fairly well what the company claimed they would. However, the Consumers' Union found there was little comparison, Mr. Speaker, between price and performance or materials and performance. I would judge myself that \$10 would cover all the material there was in an instrument like this. But the cheaper models, not quite so compact an instrument, gave equally good reception. In the case of the breast pocket model one of course has to be careful in keeping them free from the clothing, the microphone being covered up and therefore interfering with reception. For the most part, aids are sold by exclusive outlets devoted to one make, but there are opticians in some of the larger cities who carry several brands. There are shops that carry more than one make, but by and large they are exclusive houses dealing only with one firm.

There's a costly and at times a misleading element which enters in when high-priced travelling salesmen are employed. They do not alone cover the urban centres, Mr. Speaker, but we find them out in the rural areas, dealing with individuals and people who are absolutely ignorant of this kind of thing, but needing them in the worst way. Often they are led into buying a high-priced instrument, which, had they had the proper information, they would never have purchased. The State of Oregon is the only state in the United States of America that requires by law a minimal examination and certificate for those selling and fitting hearing aids to the public. This certificate is the only means the public has of judging the person's ability to advise and to fit hearing aids suitable to those in need. The American Speech and Hearing Association gives reliable information and will issue certificates of competence to any audiologist who meets their fairly strict standards. What I'm really saying, Mr. Speaker, is that here in Saskatchewan the public lack this protection when they go to market to purchase hearing aid equipment. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the information compiled by consumer unions on price, material and the reliability of the equipment be made public by the Department of Public Health, the Department of Social Welfare. I don't mean to go out as salesmen, I mean that you just put this information where the buying public is, especially this group that my colleague referred to, so many of them 65 and over, may pick it up and at least be aware of what they need and what the price and the reliability of any instrument that they wish to purchase. This, Mr. Speaker, would give at least some measure of protection to those least able to defend themselves on the commercial markets of today. This information might be made available, even through pickup pamphlets placed where the public could at any time get one and at least have a minimum amount of \$700. I think that the least a government could do is to make sure that these people know to some extent what they are doing and they are not left to the mercies of the open trade.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. G.B. Grant (Minister of Public Health): — I can't disagree with a lot of what the mover and seconder have said about the question of hearing aids. I expect

that I'll need one very shortly myself and to prepare for it, I a few months ago, ordered one from across the sea, the type mentioned by the Member on the other side of the House and the price is actually \$33 laid down for a single model. If you order them in quantities you can get them for less than that. So, I'm ready for the occasion when I need one myself. I have had some experience in purchasing the \$300 models, having bought three of them for a member of my family who insists on throwing them away occasionally or losing them. I find that on occasions it is very difficult to get these hearing aids working adequately and that the suppliers in some cases, I won't say in every case, in some cases do spend considerable time in adjusting ear pieces and listening to complaints in trying to get them to work properly, because, as the Hon. Member for Turtleford (Mr. Wooff) said, even at their best they are a very poor substitute for the ear. But I think we must bear in mind that in the Medical Care Insurance Act there are many items that possibly could be added and included and Members in this House have suggested some on previous occasions. To the Hon. Member for Turtleford and myself a hearing aid may be of top priority, but I can tell you there are other items that have been brought to my attention that are of even greater priority than hearing aids. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we should consider this along with other priorities that are being considered. During the past year I have gathered considerable information and am continually doing so on surveys and studies that have been taken place elsewhere. I don't think we should get into an exhaustive study within our own province because it would be a duplication of what has been done elsewhere to some extent. I feel that there is some merit in considering these along with other items that might be added to medicare. I would like to move the following amendment, seconded by the Hon. Minister of Labour (Mr. Coderre):

That all the words after the word "Assembly" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

"requests the Government, when considering extension of services under The Saskatchewan Medical Insurance Act, and having regard to other priorities, to consider also the inclusion of hearing aids as an insured service."

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

RETURN NO. 9

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. J. Messer (Kelsey) for Return No. 9 showing:

- (1) The total acreage of Crown land sold under the Saskatchewan Government Land Selling Program since January 1, 1967;
- (2) The Government's objective, if any, of acres of land sales for the year 1969;
- (3) (a) The name of each purchaser of land up to December 31, 1968; (b) the number of acres purchased, and the location of each purchase; and (c) the total selling price for each purchase.
- (4) (a) The amount of down payment on all purchases that were not fully paid for on date of purchase; (b) the

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length of repayment in terms of years on purchases that were not fully paid for; and (c) the interest on unpaid balance.

Hon. D.T. McFarlane (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, in order to provide the information that the Member has requested in this Order for Return, I would point out firstly that it would take a great deal of time on behalf of the staff and the department, probably all of this session and part of the summer because there would be about in the neighborhood of 1,791 files to go through and the compiling of the information would necessitate about some 40 odd pages of information. We go from there to a request for divulging the names of all those persons who have purchased land, how much they have put down and how much each one still owes in the amounts of installment payments. However, I think I can still provide the Member and this House with most of the information they would require and in order to do that and to expedite the information, I would move the following amendment:

That all the words after the word “sold” in paragraph (1) be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

“by the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture from January 1, 1967, to December 31, 1968”;

That paragraph (3) be deleted, and the following substituted therefor:

“(3) (a) the number of purchases of land from January 1, 1967 to December 31, 1968; (b) the total value of all sales of land from January 1, 1967 to December 31, 1968; (c) the interest rate charged for installment sales; and (d) the total revenue received from land sold between January 1, 1967 and December 31, 1968;” and

That paragraph (4) be deleted.

Mr. M. Kwasnica (Cutknife): — Mr. Speaker, on account of the lengthy amendment and a detailed question, I would like to adjourn debate on the amendment if this is in order.

Debate adjourned.

RETURN NO. 19

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Snyder (Moose Jaw North) for the Return No. 19 showing:

The number of patients who have been admitted to and the number patients discharged from the Weyburn Mental Institution, and the North Battleford Institution during each of the calendar years 1965, 1966, 1967, and 1968.

Hon. G.B. Grant (Minister of Public Health): — Mr. Speaker, in order that information supplied herein will be more comprehensive and give a better opportunity for the Members to make comparison, I would like to move an amendment to this motion:

That the figures “1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964,” be

inserted after the word “years” in the third line.

Amendment agreed to

Motion as amended agreed to.

SECOND READINGS

Hon. D.T. McFarlane (Minister of Agriculture) moved second reading of Bill No. 27 — **An Act to amend The Live Stock Purchase and Sale Act.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, this amendment is required to provide legislative authority for the premium payments which were made to encourage live stock improvement under the following policies in the Department; the boar premium policy, the graded ram purchase policy, the elite swine herd policy. As a matter of interest, when the municipal boar purchase policy and the graded ram purchase policy were first developed, assistance was given to a producer indirectly by departmental purchase and resale of top quality sires. The resale was at a specified price based on quality, and the resale price to the producer was usually lower than the Department’s purchase price. In recent years it has become evident that these policies would have a more beneficial effect if the producer was encouraged to make his own purchase of high quality animals and received from the Department a premium based on quality, as an incentive to encourage the use of top-quality sires. In addition, a new swine herd policy was introduced in 1964. This policy provides incentive for the production of high quality breeding stocks measured by record of performance, and incentive is provided by paying a premium to the swine breeder for top quality breeding stock purchased and sold for breeding purposes.

Section 5 of The Live Stock Purchase and Sale Act provided legislative authority for the purchase and resale of top quality breeding animals. However, it is now necessary to add a section to this clause which also provides for the more modern concept of premium payments.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

Mr. McFarlane (Minister of Agriculture) moved second reading of Bill No. 28 — **An Act to amend The Live Stock and Live Stock Products Act** and to repeal certain other Acts.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the objective of this amendment is to consolidate one essential item from each of three livestock Acts into The Live Stock and Live Stock Products Act, thus permitting repeal of the other three Acts in question. First The Agisters and Livery Stable Act. The proposed addition providing for regulations is:

To permit the drafting regulations under The Live Stock and Live Stock Products Act to provide for minimum standards of cleanliness and sanitation in boarding stables.

This is the only provision of the old Agisters Act and Livery Stable Keepers Act which it would appear necessary to retain. In fact it is anticipated that very limited reference

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will be made to regulations established under this proposed revision.

The Stock Railway Accidents Act has simply prescribed the measures to be taken in reporting an accident with live stock by the person in charge of a train. The Act makes reference to reporting the accident to the nearest station agent and having the station agent post notice of the accident in the station. These provisions are now obsolete insofar as many of railroad stations are no longer functioning and are not staffed by a station agent, and no provision is made for the reporting of live stock accidents involving motor vehicles. It is proposed that these matters be covered by regulations under The Live Stock and Live Stock Products Act, thus enabling repeal of The Stock Railway Accidents Act.

The Injured Animals Act, for the purpose of simplicity and flexibility, it is considered desirable to make provisions for the destruction or disposal of injured, sick or dead animals which have been abandoned by their owners. The Live Stock and Live Stock Products Act thus permits repeal of The Injured Animals Act. The Injured Animals Act simply describes the procedure to be followed by a constable or an inspector of an incorporated Humane Society or Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to proceed with the destruction of animals which have been injured beyond repair and which have been abandoned by their owners or where the owner refuses to destroy the animal in question.

The proposed amendment to The Live Stock and Live Stock Products Act makes provision for regulations which will accomplish the objective of The Injured Animals Act.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

Hon. W.R. Thatcher (Premier) moved second reading of Bill No. 32 — **An Act to amend The Department of Industry and Commerce Act.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, the symbol, "SID" was proposed to provide a suitable design for promotional purposes. The design is taken from the symbol which depicts man, industry and our basic resource, agriculture. These are incorporated in the design which has SID at the base depicting the name of the Department, also standing for S — service, I — industry, and D — Department of Industry and Commerce but the use of "SID" is proposed for use in promotional work of this Department.

It is necessary to stay in step with the promotional world. There is always difficulty with the name of an organization when it is too long and unwieldy.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

Mr. Thatcher moved second reading of Bill No. 33 — **An Act to amend The Liquor Board Superannuation Act.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech indicated the Government is proposing an adjustment to Civil Service pensions. As Hon. Members know, for quite a number of years the maximum

pension has been \$6,000 regardless of the salary, and regardless of the annual contribution that the civil servant made. As the cost of living has gone up, the Government now believes this ceiling is unrealistic. We are moving in the Civil Service and Crown corporations, to bring this ceiling up to a more realistic level. We hope that ultimately the ceiling will reach the figure of \$8,050. This Act does for the Liquor Board employees precisely what similar Bills are doing for other groups. It will affect about 300 employees in all.

Mr. Davies (Moose Jaw South) — I have been informed that this Bill is in keeping with the other Bills that have passed at this session. I now ask the Premier whether there is any distinguishable difference between this Bill and the other Bills that have received passage.

Mr. Thatcher: — No, I believe they're all precisely the same.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Coderre (Minister of Labour) moved second reading of Bill No. 34 — **An Act respecting Annual Holidays, Hours of Work, and other Employment Standards.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, this looks like a mighty big Bill that probably could take a couple hours of the House, but actually it is only a consolidation of eight or more Acts that are normally administered by The Department of Labour. This is something that has been requested both by labor and management. The Acts repealed have been difficult to interpret. Sometimes some of the Acts were in contradiction to the other and by consolidating them into one Bill, there are actually only two changes of principle.

One is a section that is in the Act which in fact will close the gap where employees were not paid their wages. You will notice that a couple years ago we brought in what was known as 'The Third Party Demand' but today under the present Act an employee can only claim for his wages and have first priority when a firm goes under The Bankruptcy Act. But you may find that a firm can in fact be defunct, and the creditors will take over the firm to liquidate it, so that they get their equity out of it. This has always left the employee sort of holding the bag. This Section, that I'm mentioning, will in fact close that gap. This is one that's been of major concern, so that in the last two years you notice that two major loopholes in the Act have now been closed.

The other Section is to make it possible for the Crown to come under the provisions of the Act. You will notice of course that the Act is to come in force only on the date fixed by proclamation by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council. As many Members are aware there are exemptions which have been agreed between the union and the employer where, say for example, a 44-hour week, where they wish to work five days rather than 5½ days. These are exemption orders, and until these orders are all brought into line to conform with the Act, it will not be proclaimed.

There are only two principles as I've mentioned in it. I think it's another step, closing another hole where the employees

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have not been able to get the wages. The Act itself, I think, can best be dealt with clause by clause. I could start here and probably hold you for the next hour and take it clause by clause. It would be a tedious thing which can be best handled in the Committee.

Mr. W.G. Davies (Moose Jaw South) — Mr. Speaker, the Bill we have before us today is, as the Minister explained, a consolidation of a number of pieces of labor legislation that have for years been features in Saskatchewan. Now the intention is as I understand it from the Minister, to effect a consolidation in such a manner as will ensure that there will be no loss in benefits or protection that is afforded by the existing statutes.

I'd want to say to the Minister that I approve of the fact that, from reports I have received, his officials have done a commendable job of meeting with organizations like the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour to discuss the changes in the consolidating Bill.

I believe, also, Mr. Speaker, that as the Minister has said, some improvements have been made in this Bill. They may not be very far-reaching, but to the extent that any improvements exist within the Bill I am certainly glad to welcome them with the Minister.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in any consolidation of eight labour statutes as is the case here, it's my opinion that we should exercise the greatest of care to guarantee that, because of changes in wording and construction, there will be no modifications that will hurt the present Labour Acts. The Minister well knows, as I do, that the task of consolidating this kind of legislation is not an easy one. I am glad, as I've said that he and his staff have conferred with labor organizations on this Bill. I hope that the advice he has received will have benefited him and his people. I also hope that in the future he would exercise the same kind of consultation on other pieces of legislation. Of course I hope also that the essence of the advice that he has received with respect to this Bill will have been recognized in any changes we now have before us.

The draft Bill, Mr. Speaker, Makes revisions from the former legislation, which may be subject to some question when the relevant Sections come up in Committee. The Minister has already suggested this. I may say that I have some reservations that a number of the revisions are in all cases more beneficial than the present legislation. I don't propose to point out those matters now, because it would not be in conformity with the debate on second reading. In Committee, however, this can be done.

I believe that the change, that makes the whole Act applicable to the Crown, is an improvement, whereas before only the Equal Pay Act and the wage collection provision of The Employees Wage Act applied. Also the provision that now requires an employers' records to be kept for a period of five years, is better. Previously the provision applied to The Annual Holidays Act and the requirement stipulated the records would be kept for two years in the case of some other pieces of legislation. This sweeps across the purview of the eight Acts.

The extension, Mr. Speaker, of the period for prosecutions

of employers who haven't complied with the provisions of the different Acts is again, I think, a step ahead. I note that power has been given in the Act to supply enabling regulations regarding certain matters. As I've listed them, they are: 1. The determination of the cash value of board and lodging where this has not been determined by the Minimum Wage Board. 2. With respect to information concerning wages and working conditions to be furnished by an employer to an employee when he is hired. 3. The bonding of employers convicted of failure to pay wages. The Minister touched upon this. 4. The prohibiting of an employer from requiring an employee to live in accommodations the employee considers unsuitable.

Now none of these, at least probably three of these, are very world-shaking but they are changes that I think we should note.

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that the regulations that govern these matters, that were formerly matters of the legislation, will be adequate for the job to be done. For example, employers who had been convicted of violations under The Minimum Wage Act were previously required to put up a bond. Now, as I understand it, this is no longer required, Mr. Minister, and I'm subject to your correction. The only requirements that will be stated are those that you may see fit to include in your regulations. Again I simply say this is an example of the need to expressly stipulate requirements that now set these subjects forward in a specific fashion in the statutes.

In other Sections, power is conveyed on the Government to make regulations respecting the maintenance of wages where hours of work are reduced that concern employees who are now wholly or partly exempted by Ministerial or some other kind of order, from the 44-hour week provisions; and of course those hours may subsequently be reduced from where they are now to 44 hours or some reduced number beyond that. It will be seen, Mr. Minister, that the need to provide adequate regulations is, as I've already said, germane to the future improvement of workers, insofar as this particular part of the Act is concerned that is insofar as this particular part of the Act is concerned that is hours, because again I point out that, if this is not provided, the ability of your Department to make changes in hours will not be possible.

One of the sections of The Minimum Wage Act now provides that Provincial Magistrates or Justices of the Peace can order an employer to pay, as well as any wages found to be owing, a reasonable fee to legal counsel not exceeding \$100, the counsel to be the solicitor of the employee. This section, I don't think, Mr. Minister, occurs in the draft Bill before us. Again I am subject to any correction you can give me. It is probably argued, if it is not there, that most wage cases are now handled by the Department of Labour and that for this reason there would not be a problem, of recovering a lawyer's fee. As well, I understand that the present \$100 maximum fee that is permitted to be paid to legal counsel is considered to be inadequate. I think there may be something to that assumption.

I'm a little worried about this section. At the same time I'd be glad to see how it works out in practice. I do feel on the whole that it would be proper and wise to insert a section in the present draft Bill that would be in conformity with the present Minimum Wage Act section to provide for the payment of a lawyer's fee in the kind of case that I have cited where a

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workman has to have representation in the court for the recovery of amounts owing to him.

Mr. Speaker, to sum up what I've said to this point, I feel that the principle of the consolidation is worthwhile and one that has become more necessary, as the years have gone by and the legislation has grown. The new Statute should, I think, be more understandable; and the effect, of course, is to have all the labor standards of these eight pieces under one Act. This is by itself demonstrably a more efficient way of handling labor standards legislation. There are some improvements in the application of administrative and enforcement provisions that I believe should be supported. As I've said, I do feel that a great deal will depend upon the new regulations that the Government adopts to expedite the legislation that is now before us, when it has received approval of the House. I say once more that the regulations will need to cover many matters in a very positive and a very particular way. That is what the legislation now does. That is what the Bill does not do in any particularity. That is why the regulations must echo in effect the language of the present legislation. Otherwise the working people of the province may suffer badly from the consequences.

Having said all this, Mr. Speaker, I must point out to the Government that basically the Bill before us, with some slight improvements, is nothing but the synthesis of legislation that was on the books when the former CCF Government left office. The fundamental benefits are the same as obtained at that time five years ago. I think the question that the Government must answer to the working people of this province is why it does not, up to this time when this Bill is being considered, bring proposals to this House that would materially improve the lot of the province's wage and salary earners.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Davies — I point out, Mr. Speaker, that the 44-hour week that was implemented by a CCF Government is still standard in this province. The annual vacations of two weeks after one year, three weeks after five continuous years of service with one employer are still the basis. They've not been improved upon basically by this Government. We now have the lowest minimum wage conditions in Canada west of the Maritimes, where once Saskatchewan had the highest minimum wage rate in Canada. I say nothing is proposed here either to improve upon the equal pay and other conditions for female labor. This legislation, Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, was also a part of a progressive approach to labor matters by the Government preceding the present Thatcher Liberal Administration.

Now I would like to see the present Bill so drafted that it would require a much more active Minimum Wage Board participation in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Davies — It should be necessary, in my opinion, that the Board meet with working people and employers' representatives from time to time to discuss with them the kind of floor wages that should apply across Saskatchewan. I say that the Board should be undertaking to discuss with classes of employers and employees

certain wage scales that would have the effect of improving purchasing power and also business conditions all across this province.

In my opinion, one of the places where the draft Bill before us fails to measure up to the existing provisions of The Minimum Wage Act is where it mentions the duties of the Minimum Wage Board. Again I strongly feel, Mr. Minister, that the Minimum Wage Board should at least undertake public hearings from time to time so as to secure the kind of representations that would enable it to understand what it ought to be doing. The Minister would agree with me, I believe, when I say that, since his Government has taken office, the Minimum Wage Board has not met on one occasion on public hearings to hear employees who are affected by minimum wages or to hear representatives from organizations of employees and employers. The Board has been paralyzed by the action of this Government. The Board has failed to live up to the kind of existence that would make it an effective body in this province.

I believe that the Minimum Wage Board has not held hearings to receive public representations on one occasion since this Government has come to office. I have a question in this regard on the Order Paper, Mr. Minister. You can tell me if I'm wrong, I don't think I am. I say the fact that it has not done so is significant and to my mind more than a coincidence.

The Minimum Wage Board's duties should be so defined in this present Bill that the Board becomes a meaningful instrument and not merely an appendage of the Government. I think that's what it has become. For example, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, it is highly improper that the Premier of this province should have on at least one occasion made such statements as that a minimum wage increase will be the same for some time to come. If the Minimum Wage Board is to be a kind of impartial authority, it should be given the right to make its recommendations. The Government should not be exercising pressure to the extent of suggesting that it doesn't want to receive representations from the Board to the Cabinet, and that there won't be any improvements in minimum wage standards for some time to come.

Mr. Coderre: — False.

Mr. Davies — Mr. Speaker, the statement is not false. I can produce the statement for the Minister. He well knows that this statement was made by the Premier of this province two or three years ago. I say the fact is that the Government has over previous years exercised an undue influence and pressure on the Board.

The aspects that I am mentioning, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the minimum wage and other standards, are of great importance at a time when we are all acutely aware of the great extent of poverty in our midst. All authorities are coming to realize that one of the best ways of combating poverty is through labor standards. Now after all, if there was no minimum wage floor in this province, it's crystal clear that poverty would be worse amongst us than it is at the present time. Conversely if we institute a decent minimum wage, we may then be sure that poverty levels will constitute less of a hazard to society and people in these brackets will improve their economic circumstances. All society, not just this section, will benefit.

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Mr. Speaker, this Government must make up its mind that it has a direct obligation to act with respect to improved minimum wage conditions. If it will not act by present regulations, it should act through this Statute to effectively change the present adverse position of workers in this province in relation to minimum wages.

Nothing more reveals the extent of negligence of the Government in this field than to note how the Saskatchewan Minimum Wage has declined in proportion to average weekly earning in Saskatchewan. In 1946 the minimum wage represented 57.5 per cent, just about 58 per cent, of the average weekly wages and salaries that they were being paid in the province at that time. Today, this percentage has dropped to 44.3 per cent. These figures are on the assumption that the employee of today works a weekly schedule of 44 hours. As a matter of fact, if the employee works 40 hours a week, the figure drops from the percentage of 44.3 per cent to 40.2 per cent. I submit, Mr. Minister, since the average weekly hours of work by your own figures are around 40, that therefore, what has happened since 1946 is that the relationship of the minimum wage to the average weekly wage in the province has declined from 58 per cent to 40.2 per cent. There is just no ducking the figures or the consequences.

Not only is the Saskatchewan employee in a far worse position compared with his counterparts in all provinces west of the Maritimes. He has also suffered proportionate reverses throughout the years because minimum wage rises have not kept pace with general wage improvements. Nothing could be more illustrative of the need to update and upgrade the minimum wage conditions in Saskatchewan. They are unconscionably low at the present time; and they are contributing to poverty, to suffering and to unemployment in this region.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has similarly failed in this Bill to do that which would constitute not only an improvement in hours of work but accomplish a situation where we would overcome a strong trend to unemployment in Saskatchewan, especially over the last six months. Even in mid-December there was 4.5 per cent of the labor force unemployed — excluding the farmers of the province from the labor force figure. Today, this figure is probably much higher. The outlook for 1969 is by no means encouraging. A reduction of weekly hours of work in Saskatchewan by legislation is not only a desirable thing, Mr. Minister, from the viewpoint of the wage earners themselves; a reduction of the hours of weekly work by legislation has become pressing and necessary as a device for creating work for the jobless people in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Davies — Around 1960 there was a book written by the editor of the Scientific American, entitled “Science in the Cause of Man.” The editor-author pointed out that if hours of work had remained in 1960, as they had been in 1900, some 27 million additional citizens would have been unemployed in the United States of America. We need, because of examples like this, to move to a lower legal schedule of weekly hours. And I say apart from every other consideration, Mr. Minister, it is 22 years since the present basic weekly hours of work were legislated. I say that it is high time that some improvement factor be worked into this legislation. I ask the Minister to consider

this. The Government has an imperative duty to consider what I think is a very, very vital aspect.

To sum up on these remarks, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Government should consider an immediate adjustment in basic minimum wages and the lowering of the legal weekly hours of work in this province. A minimum wage of at least \$1.50 an hour should be considered immediately by this Government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Davies — If the Government does not see fit to act on this recommendation, and your comments seem to indicate that you won't, may I suggest that at least the \$1.25 minimum wage be introduced. I point out that the Government has been dragging its feet to an almost incredible degree with respect to the \$1.25 per hour minimum. After all, the Federal Government has had this rate in effect now for some three years without any corresponding action on the part of this Liberal Government.

I used to sit on your side of the House, Mr. Minister, and I used to listen to some of your colleagues talk about matters of this kind. We at that time had the highest single minimum wage across Canada, when there was no legal Federal minimum wage and when it was a very difficult thing for a Province like Saskatchewan to maintain the higher kind of a rate because of the implied competition from other provinces. But we did it. Now the Federal Government has acted. Now every one of the large provinces has acted to effect a \$1.25 per hour minimum wage. I say that, when the accusation is made that you are dragging your feet, it is a matter of fact and not a matter of opinion.

Mr. Speaker, may I comment on one other aspect with respect to labor standard, that is with respect to the part-time worker. At the present time the differential in pay between the part-time worker and the full-time worker is such that employers are much encouraged to hire part-time labor. I don't need to tell Members of the House that we are in a period when we have evening shopping and there is a great deal of employment of part-time people. This kind of a condition has a disrupting effect on employment conditions generally. I say that it does not encourage a stable income for the family breadwinner. Formerly, the regulations of the CCF Government established a part-time hourly regulation that, being somewhat higher, rather considerably higher, for the worker concerned who was only required to turn out for three or four hours a day, constituted a very strong inducement for the employer to hire a worker on a full-time weekly basis. This Bill, or the regulations that are foreseen under the new Act, should expressly provide for the kind of differential that formerly obtained, if working people in this province are to have real protection, the kind of protection that did to some extent at least obtain previously.

I say again that protection for the part-time worker, Mr. Speaker, is becoming more and more important in industry, especially in service industry. I want to point out to the House that the numbers of employees in service industry have, because of all the known conditions, risen very sharply, so that today we probably have something like 68 per cent of all employees in this country in the service industry. That is why the regulations, I have suggested, are of first rate importance. I have indicated that the present Government has not taken the

steps in the Bill before us to provide these conditions.

Mr. Speaker, I was looking not so long ago at the average wage and salary figures for Saskatchewan. I note that a very large number of the service employees in Saskatchewan are on very low wages indeed. In fact the wages of employees in much of the service industry, such as for example, hotels, motels, and the like are about half the average weekly wage of all employees in Saskatchewan. That is why I have chosen tonight to speak as I have in terms of the importance of doing something additional, something re-inforcing in the Bill that we now have before us.

Mr. Speaker, the record of the present Government with respect to amendments to the pieces of legislation that are being consolidated by this Bill is certainly a very poor one. I have given the Minister every bit of credit that is coming to his Government for some changes that have been made. None of them, are fundamental in the terms that I have been urging during the last 20 minutes. The main change that I can cite, to give all possible credit, is the one implemented in 1967 that enables employees that are owed money by wage-defaulting employers to be able to collect these wages on somewhat more favorable conditions. But apart from that, this Statute points out clearly enough that in the five years that this Government has been in power, progress in labor standards has been practically stationary.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Davies — Now is the time, now is the opportunity for the Government to change this legislation in the manner that I have suggested, so that some genuine, meaningful, forward steps can be taken. The fact that the Bill comes before us without these proposals is significant of the apathetic viewpoint that this Government has respecting such changes. Other legislation before us illustrates that, while its attitude on labor standards changes is anything but enthusiastic, it will go to almost any lengths when it comes to restrictive measures against the employees of this Province.

It may be that in bringing this consolidation before the House, the Government is attempting to make it look as though it is implementing new and decisive changes. As I have said, this is definitely not so. The Bill we are asked to approve here tonight is simply a consensus of good work done in the past, and not basically because of the activities of this Government.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to be supporting this Bill as will my colleagues, because of the positive fact of consolidation, as well as the obvious point that it represents existing legislation in a collected and a combined form. I will be wanting very earnestly to question the Minister in Committee in ample detail, and I shall review some of the proposals that I have referred to at the time the Bill comes to the Committee stage.

Mr. W.E. Smishek (Regina North East): — Mr. Speaker, I want to add a few remarks to those made by the Hon. Member for Moose Jaw South. I can't help but be reminded of the promises made by the Liberal party when they did try to gain office — the promises that they made to the workers

in 1964. They said, if they were elected, they would maintain and improve workers' wages, vacations, hours of work, compensation, trade union rights and security. Well, Mr. Speaker, let us take a look at the first three promises made, as far as improving workers' wages, vacations, and hours of work. The Hon. Member for Moose Jaw South has already described the record of this Government. I will say this at the outset that the Bill that is before us consolidating the eight main labor Statutes is perhaps a worthwhile move on the part of the Government. It is going to probably simplify things, but really when you take away that main feature of consolidation there is nothing new. There is nothing new. There is really nothing new for the workers to look forward to. There is no reduction in hours of work as was promised. There is no improvement in annual vacations. There is no improvement in minimum wages. There is no improvement in other standards. Mr. Speaker, you will recall, since I entered this House I have made several attempts to bring in a Bill to reduce hours of work. I proposed in 1965 that hours of work be reduced from the present 44 hours in the city to 40 hours, from 48 in the country to 44. In fact I proposed that all communities with 1,000 population or more should have a 40-hour work week legal standard.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — You will recall that in 1965 the Liberals voted against it. In 1966 they voted against it. In 1967 they voted against it. Mr. Speaker, in 1968 when I tried to move first reading of the Bill and get leave to present the Bill, every Member opposite stood up and voted against my right to introduce the Bill. These people opposite say they are friends of labor. Well, Mr. Speaker, let me suggest what the Minister can do if he wants to show a hand of friendship to labor. I would suggest, before this Bill goes much further, that he bring in amendments and agree to House amendments that in this Labour Standards Bill we will establish a 40-hour work week for all communities with 1,000 population or more, and in those communities with a population of less than 1,000 an immediate reduction from 48 to 44. Another improvement that the Minister can make is in regard to annual vacation. It has been quite a number of years since annual vacations were improved in this province. It was really the former CCF Government on taking office that legislated two weeks vacation after one year of service. Mr. Speaker, I believe it was in 1957 that it moved to three weeks after five years of service. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the time is right now to bring in an amendment for three weeks annual vacation after one year of service, and it's time we moved to four weeks annual vacation. Here I suggest four weeks annual vacation after 10 years of service. The Government has recognized the principle of four weeks annual vacation in many of its collective bargaining agreements in respect to Government employees and Crown corporation employees. Many private industries have recognized four weeks annual vacation as a right of the worker. I might suggest that it is not asking too much at this time to move with a step of four weeks annual vacation after 10 years of service.

The Hon. Member for Moose Jaw South (Mr. Davies) has discussed the need for improving the minimum wage. Mr. Speaker, as I understand it the Economic Council of Canada has said that any person or any family earning an income of less than \$3,000 a year is living in poverty. Saskatchewan minimum wages of

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\$1.05 an hour in cities and 95 cents in rural areas is a sub-minimum level, a level below the poverty level established by the Economic Council of Canada. In fact, the Hon. Member for Moose Jaw South has described clearly that Saskatchewan has the dubious honor of having the lowest minimum wage west of Ontario. Ontario, as of the first of January this year, established a minimum wage of \$1.30 an hour, in general and in case of construction industry, \$1.55 an hour. Saskatchewan has only \$1.05 an hour minimum in the case of cities and 95 cents an hour in places other than cities. The minimum wage in respect of part-time employees has not been increased in many instances, since 1964, Mr. Speaker. Another suggestion I would like to make to the Minister to consider is an improvement in the case of statutory holidays. Eight legal statutory holidays in this province have been an established norm for many years. I suggest that the time has come for us to add Boxing Day and the first Monday in August as a citizens' day to be added to the list of the eight we now have.

Mr. Coderre: — Add you birthday as well!

Mr. Smishek: — If the Minister is prepared to go that far, I will welcome the proposal.

An Hon. Member: — . . . His picture on the red square . . . “Smishek Day.”

An Hon. Member: — . . . Mr. Saskatchewan.

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, let me refer a little further in regard to the minimum wage. One of the things that is bothersome, in the current proposal, is that no criteria are established for the Minimum Wage Board as to how it should operate. It seems to me it is important for us to establish some guide lines for the Minimum Wage Board to consider. I would suggest that one of the criteria that should be written into the Act, is the rising cost of living. It should be recognized as one reason to raise minimum wages.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — The other criterion is the increase in productivity. The third one is to have some relationship between the minimum wage and the regular or the average wage in the province. Mr. Speaker, I notice that last year, according to the Annual Report of this Department between 1967 and 1968, the average wage in Saskatchewan was \$95.68 a week. At that time we had a \$38 minimum. The minimum has been increased to \$1.05 an hour where there is a 40-hour work week, \$42. However, in that same period the actual wages or the average wages increased, in Saskatchewan by \$6.68. This is a demonstration of how the workers in this province continually fall behind. I was interested in reading an article the other day, Mr. Speaker, in the newspaper that the average minimum wage in the case of farm labor in Canada was \$1.27 an hour. Now, here in Saskatchewan, the legal minimum wage is below what is the going rate in the case of farm labor in Canada. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, as we all know, farm people do provide living accommodations and board for the farm laborer.

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In the case of industry it does not provide such things to the wage earners. These are areas that need to be given consideration. One other area that was completely missed in as far as establishing some protection and some standards is in regard to women's employment. Here prior to this Government taking office, we had a women's bureau established. That bureau was dissolved and no legislation has been passed ever since. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in this Labor Standards Bill, here is an opportunity for us to establish some minimum standards and some protection for women.

Mr. Speaker, I will support the Bill as far as it goes. But in the areas that I have just described it is completely inadequate. I would hope that the Minister will see fit to bring in appropriate amendments.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:00 o'clock p.m.