

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Second Session - Seventeenth Legislature
34th Day

Wednesday April 12, 1972

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

On the Orders of the Day.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

MR. D.F. MacDONALD (Moose Jaw North): — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Member for Rosthern, Mr. Boldt, who has been ill for the past couple of days, I should like to introduce to this Assembly a group of 50 students from the Osler School, Osler, Saskatchewan. I wish them a very educational day in this Assembly and a very safe journey home.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. H.H.P. BAKER (Regina Wascana): — Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to extend a warm welcome to a group of students in the west gallery from the St. John's School in my constituency, part of our Separate School system in this city. They are 50 in number, they are Grade Eight students and are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Leontowich and Mr. Yano. I want to wish them, through you, a very pleasant and educational stay here this afternoon.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — We are favored this afternoon with another class from the Kitchener School. I had the pleasure of introducing a Grade Seven and Eight class a day or two ago. I now wish to introduce to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, to this House a further Grade Eight class at the Kitchener School. They are here with their teacher, Mr. Don Stewart. I know that all Members of the House wish to extend to them our best wishes for a pleasant stay with us and the hope that we will have helped them in their studies.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF PENSIONERS FROM SASKATOON

MR. W.A. ROBBINS (Saskatoon Nutana Centre): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to bring to the attention of Members of the Assembly a rather different group who are with us today. They are seated behind me. I am not sure they are all in here as yet, but nevertheless they are a large group of people, some 150 in total I believe, from the Pensioners and Pioneers organization in Saskatoon, Branch No. 1. They came from all over Saskatchewan. I suppose in a sense we could classify them as graduates of the School of Experience.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROBBINS: — We welcome these people most

sincerely to this House today, Mr. Speaker. We sincerely hope they will be interested in the proceedings and we wish them a safe trip home.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. D.G. STEUART (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to join with the Hon. Member for Saskatoon representing the Opposition in welcoming not only the students but the pensioners and senior citizens. I understand they met with the Government, they met with our caucus. I think it is a fine thing to see them down here putting forth their views and then watching the House in session. I am just sorry we can't get around to dealing this afternoon with some of things they have petitioned for, but I join with the Hon. Member from Saskatoon in welcoming them here and hoping their stay is educational and enjoyable.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. J.G. RICHARDS (Saskatoon University): — Mr. Speaker, as the youngest Member from Saskatoon, I too would like to join with Mr. Robbins and the Hon. Leader of the Opposition in welcoming the pensioners here. I think the pensioners will have to learn some of the aggressive tactics of youth if they are going to solve some of their problems which are just as acute, if not more acute, than the problems of the young.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

REMUNERATION RE MEDICAL CLINICS PRINCE ALBERT

MR. G.B. GRANT (Regina Whitmore Park): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to direct a question to the Hon. Premier.

Yesterday I had occasion to ask the Minister of Health (Mr. Smishek) If there had been a change in policy in the method of payments to the Community Clinic in Prince Albert. He indicated that there had been and when I asked if this reflected a change in payment to the medical profession, in the Prince Albert Clinic he was very evasive and left the impression that he was not aware of any change. He proceeded from this Chamber to give a news release to the television and radio, within minutes, explaining fully the answer to my question. My question to the Premier is: does he condone one of his Ministers withholding information from this House which he has knowledge of and then proceeding to answer the question fully to the news media?

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, I do not condone any Minister of the Crown withholding information from the House and then disclosing it to the news media. As soon as that matter should occur, I will most assuredly speak to the Minister. However, I happened to have been here yesterday when that explanation was given. It seemed perfectly clear to me, and if the Member for Whitmore Park did not understand it, this may well be the case, but he can

hardly attribute that failure to the Minister.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GRANT: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. On this same broadcast the Minister and his Parliamentary Secretary expressed different views and I should like the Premier to tell this House which one was correct. The Minister said it did not indicate a change in method of payment of a fee for service basis to doctors to a salary basis. The Hon. Member from Saskatoon, the Parliamentary Secretary to Mr. Smishek, said that in his opinion it did mean that there was such a change about to take place. I wonder if we could have that situation clarified because believe me there is more than myself confused about the answer the Minister gave yesterday.

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I do not propose to comment on what the Member for Whitmore Park says was what the Minister said in a broadcast. The Minister will be in this House again. If the Member wants to ask me what the policy of the Government is, I would be happy to answer it. I decline to answer a question based upon his interpretation of what a news story was.

INCREASE IN SCHOOL GRANTS

MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Milestone): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Education. This morning I received some information from the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association expressing great disappointment that the Government has failed to keep its word in providing a \$13.3 million increase in school grants. Their estimates this year are a difference of \$75 million from last year to \$85 million this year. Does the Minister of Education intend to fulfil the word of the Government and himself and provide the additional \$3.6 million to school trustees and school boards in the Province of Saskatchewan?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. G. MacMURCHY (Minister of Education): — Mr. Speaker, in reply to the Member for Milestone. I do not know where the Trustees' Association are getting their figures. The figures that I have available to me, and I have just received some today, indicate that we will be spending \$13.36 million new money in this particular year in school grants.

MR. MacDONALD: — A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. If that is true I have also just received word that out of 92 school systems heard from in the Province of Saskatchewan, 45 will report an increase in mill rates, some of them at rather astronomical figures, another 27 systems will be able to maintain their level and 20 will reduce it. Is the Premier willing to adjust the formula that is not a formula again to see that these school boards receive that \$3.6 million so they don't have to raise their school mill rates?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I want again to state the policy of the

Government. The policy of the Government is to substantially increase . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — . . . school grants by the amounts stated by the Minister, \$13.35 million, I believe, was his figure.

AN HON. MEMBER: — . . .

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, when I have the floor I'll be happy to continue.

The policy of the Government is to increase school grants and having done that, to permit school boards to set their own mill rate. And if the school boards decide that with the increase in school grants, they still want to increase mill rates to improve the quality of education in their district then that is their decision. It is not the policy of this Government to stabilize mill rates. It is our policy, stated again and again and again, that we will provide enough money to provide for basic school purposes at a computational mill rate and to that we will apply a grant, which if applied to mill rates, will, during our first term of office, decrease school mill rates to an average 25 mills across the province. That is the policy.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL WILDLIFE WEEK

HON. E. KRAMER (Minister of Natural Resources): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to draw the attention of the House this is Canadian Wildlife Week sponsored by the Canadian Wildlife Federation and is being observed throughout Canada. All residents of the province I think could benefit from National Wildlife Week by taking this opportunity to increase their understanding of the natural processes at work in the environment. We need to have a more thorough knowledge of the complex ecological cycles this world supports if we are to fully comprehend and solve our environmental problems. I hope sportsmen associations, citizens groups and schools will co-operate with the Canadian Wildlife Federation in promoting National Wildlife Week.

It is particularly important that our young people should grow up with a keen awareness of the ways in which we can manage our resources with wisdom and integrity so as to benefit from an environment without damaging it. The theme this year is Conservation Education is Survival Power. An adoption of this slogan is an indication of how close man has come to threatening his very existence through reckless exploitation and pollution of the world's resources. Saskatchewan is a very fortunate province, we still have an abundance of clean water, unpolluted air, vast expanses of land and a thriving wildlife population and we should take every opportunity to learn how better to appreciate and to manage the natural resources of our Province. With this in mind, and keeping this in mind, our DNR field staff is meeting — have chose Wildlife week for their meeting. A lot of consultation is going on with the emphasis being placed

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on this particular slogan and we hope that many new ideas will be coming forth from this meeting.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

LLOYDMINSTER BORDER KINGS WINNING SEMI-FINALS

MR. M. KWASNICA (Cut Knife): — Mr. Speaker, before the regular business for the day, I should like to ask all Members of the Assembly to join with me in congratulating the Lloydminster Border Kings for winning the Intermediate Double A Western Canada semi-finals. This was a hard fought series with the New Westminster Schmyr Flyers going the full five games. Mr. Speaker, I am told that the New Westminster team is named after the Schmyr brothers who were originally from Saskatchewan. The Border Kings will now advance to the Western Canada Intermediate A finals against the Rosetown Redwings, the first game to start Friday in Lloydminster. I ask all Members to join with me in wishing both teams a good series for the Western Canada championships.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

ROMANIAN TRACTOR PLANT

MR. D.M. McPHERSON (Regina Lakeview): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to direct a question to the Hon. Premier. It was reported several times this morning on a local radio station that the Romanian tractor plant was moving to Brandon and they were locating there because they could not make a decision in Saskatchewan. I wonder if the Premier would tell us whether this report is true or not?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, so far as I am aware there is no truth in the report. So far as I am aware the arrangements to have a group from Romania arrive in this Province in the next couple of days are still firm. So far as I am aware there is no truth to the report. I don't want to misconstrue what the Hon. Member said, but I would ask all Hon. Members to view some of these reports with the distrust which I think they merit. I would ask all Hon. Members to desist from any campaign there may be to denigrate the Romanian Tractor Plant by calling it Communist or saying their tractors are no good or whatever the basis of the attack is. We are doing what we can to bring this plant to Saskatchewan and we propose to continue to do just that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

BREACH OF PRIVILEGE

REMUNERATION RE MEDICAL CLINICS – PRINCE ALBERT

MR. D.G. STEUART (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might speak on a Point of Privilege. The Member from Whitmore Park I think has raised a very serious question of House Privilege. If in fact the Minister of Health (Mr. Smishek), if in fact – he did give in

this House an evasive reply to a legitimate question asked by the Member from Whitmore Park (Mr. Grant), and then immediately goes out as it appears and gives a Press statement, which I heard, outlining in detail the information that was asked for by the Member. If this happened then I think a serious breach of House Privilege has taken place. I agree with the Premier if this has happened, he should be called to order, and should be reprimanded. If it hasn't taken place it should be cleared up. I think, Mr. Speaker, that I would ask you to clear this matter up and to get a copy immediately of Hansard, of the report, which I am sure should be on record, of the question and of the answer that the Minister gave to the Member for Whitmore Park, and a copy of the Press report and I would ask you then – I ask you officially – then to bring this back to the House when you have examined it and to report whether in fact he did give an evasive reply then give the information within minutes to the Press outside this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Speaking to this, what I take to be a Point of Order. I want to lay before this House what I think are the appropriate procedures, First, it is no function of the Speaker, to decide whether or not a reply is evasive or not. That is a matter of judgment, whether a reply is complete or not, evasive or not is not subject to the rules of the House nor is it any function of the Speaker to determine that. If the Member opposite is saying that there has been a Breach of the Privilege of this House, then he has procedures open to him. We set up at the beginning of this Session a Committee on Privileges and Elections dealing with the Privileges of this House. If the Member has the courage of his convictions, either of them, let them put a resolution on the Order Paper asking that the matter be referred to the Committee on Privileges and we will debate it in the proper way, particularly when the Minister is in his chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — Mr. Speaker, on that Point of Order, fine, then. We will be prepared to do that, but I will ask the Speaker to table then the question and the answer before it is changed, as we all know that we are handed copies of Hansard which is not all that official and can be amended and changed, and I would ask the Speaker to immediately have that copy of Hansard tabled in this House so that when we make a charge, if we decide to do so, we will first look at the record and then decide if there has been an abuse of the Privileges of this House, we will in fact have the absolute record and true proof of what was asked and what was answered. I would ask you to do that, Mr. Speaker, I think you have that right.

MR. BLAKENEY: — I am sure any Hon. Member can ask Mr. Speaker to do anything they like, but so far as I am aware Mr. Speaker is under no obligation to . . .

MR. STEUART: — I don't think Mr. Speaker needs any instructions from you . . .

MR. BLAKENEY: — No, I think that's entirely

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right, but I wish Mr. Speaker would give instructions to the Hon. Member to retain his seat when I am on my feet.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — I think there will be ample time to discuss this in the Estimates of the Department, as they are not yet before this Legislature and the Members can go after the Minister at that time. As far as the transcript that was referred to in this House yesterday, that is available to any Member. But as far as what may or may not have been said to the Press, the Speaker has no knowledge of that and could not even if I wished table anything, certify that it was true or untrue. Copies of the transcript of Hansard can be made available on request to the Assembly office for any Member. Those copies are available but I have no knowledge of any Press report. A copy of which I may or may not be able to secure would not prove it was authentic. If any Members should wish to discuss it with me at any time, I would be glad to discuss it to show the implications or the complications. I do not think we need to pursue it any further at this time.

MR. GRANT: — Mr. Speaker, I accept your ruling. I would point out that the point under question has nothing whatsoever to do with the Estimates, that is the only exception I take to your ruling.

MR. SPEAKER: — I would point out to the Hon. Member that when Estimates or when the first vote is up, administration, everything is open, and then he can be questioned at that time on policy. The policy of departments is always open on the administration vote. There you can question the Minister but there isn't a specific vote for questions.

MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Milestone): — Mr. Speaker, on the Point of Order, the question here is a Breach of the House, not the policy of the Department of Health.

MR. SPEAKER: — It may or may not be a Breach of the House. It's a thing that must be proven either one way or the other and the Speaker is not in a position, not having all the facts at his disposal, to say whether it is or it isn't. I have no knowledge, I know what was said in the House but I don't know what was said outside the House. I have no knowledge of it.

SECOND READINGS

Hon. A.E.BLAKENEY (Premier) moved second reading of Bill No. 96 – An Act to amend The Education and Health Tax Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the Bill now before the Legislature is to amend The Education and Health Tax Act. This Bill will serve to exempt from the

\$5 imposed upon vendors for filing late or inaccurate returns. Mr. Speaker, when we went to the electorate last June we went on a campaign of removing the tax from meals, the so-called hotdog tax, or soup and crackers tax, that was imposed by the Member from Prince Albert West (Mr. Steuart) in that session when almost every tax was increased. Before I deal with the principles in detail, let me outline some of the sections of the Bill.

Section 16 will provide that a vendor who fails to forward to the Minister in the manner prescribed by the Act the amount of tax collected by him will pay a penalty of 10 per cent of the amount of the tax. This is a familiar provision which provides that where you are late in paying a tax you have to pay a penalty of 10 per cent. At the 1970 session of the Legislature this was amended by the then Government of which the Provincial Treasurer was the Member for Prince Albert West to provide that the penalty should not be less than \$5. The effect of that amendment was to impose a penalty which was in some cases in no way commensurate with the nature of the offence. If a vendor in calculating his tax, and a vendor I repeat is an ordinary storekeeper collecting education and hospital tax, the ordinary sales tax, and if in calculating his sales and in calculating his tax he made an arithmetic error of \$2 and sent the money in but was \$2 short because of an arithmetic error, the Act as amended by the then Government provided that to that \$2 should be added \$5 and he had to send in \$7. On the other hand if a vendor deliberately held back \$50 for weeks or perhaps months he had to pay 10 per cent or \$5 and his penalty was \$5. We believe that this involves unfair discrimination particularly against small vendors. Small vendors are people who frequently send in small amounts of money and make small arithmetic errors and they are faced with penalties of an extra \$5 which represent a very substantial portion of their shortfall. Mr. Speaker, when this was introduced in 1970 we objected to that proposal and we object to it now and we propose to remove it.

I want to deal now with some changes which are being made partly by the Act and partly by regulations. They are rather technical but they are of considerable interest to the public. The Act as changed by the Members opposite when they were the Government provided that the Provincial Treasury could define "meals" by regulation. They included in the definition of meals, meals packaged for off-premises consumption. It included meals served by charitable organizations on a casual basis if they served more than six functions a year. The effect of that change in the Act and the Regulations made under it was to place operators of drive-in restaurants or take-out businesses at a serious competitive disadvantage compared with the delicatessens or super markets who could sell their packaged chickens free of tax but you paid if you got chubby chicken from the drive-in. Secondly, it placed a tax on voluntary organizations, the voluntary labor of individuals working in various religious organizations for the betterment of their communities. This concept of collecting the tax from the church supper, the bride's wedding cake was not only contrary to the previous practice in Saskatchewan but it was contrary to the practice of other provinces in Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to announce that effective last April 1st, 1972, the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council has amended the Regulations to exempt the payment of tax on meals sold for off-premises consumption and to exempt the tax on meals

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sold by religious or other organizations to their members.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — In 1970 or earlier, as we know, the Members opposite when they were the Government applied the meals tax right down to 14 cents. Every hotdog, every bowl of soup and crackers, was subject to the tax that they put on. It was labelled the hotdog tax and we objected to it. We objected to it then, we object to it now and we propose to remove it. An old age pensioner or someone in that income bracket, the income bracket which too many old age pensioners find themselves in, who went out to the nearby restaurant to get himself a 75 cent meal found himself paying a tax. We propose an amendment to Section 6 of the Act which will exempt from tax food and drink except for meals which are sold at a price in excess of \$2.50.

Now we have given some fair consideration as to why it should be \$2.50. Meals are a necessity of life. People must eat food and they must buy food but there are some meals which are really in the class of entertainment. If I go down to a leading hotel in this city and buy a chateaubriand for two at \$16, it seems to me that perhaps if I can pay \$16 for the base meal for two people I can afford to pay some tax. If on the other hand I buy hamburg steak for \$1.65 because I need a meal and that's the cheapest solid meal on the menu then it seems to me I shouldn't be subject to tax. We think that the level of \$2.50 is a reasonable level. We recognize that meals away from home are a necessity for many working people. We believe the recommended level will enable the public to purchase ordinary meals without the payment of tax.

Any change in tax rates causes uncertainty. In order that there not be uncertainty we have set a date for the application of this tax, April 1st. We have advised the public that it will be April 1st and we propose to make this remittance of tax retroactive to April 1st.

May I then summarize. We propose to eliminate the \$5 minimum penalty for failing to file a return within the prescribed time and in the prescribed manner. We propose principally to eliminate the tax on meals sold for \$2.50 or less. We have already eliminated the tax on meals sold for off-premises consumption. We have removed the tax on meals served by religious or charitable organizations to their members.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that this Bill is a good Bill. These removals of taxes will be welcomed by hundreds of restaurant owners in this Province. It will be welcomed by thousands of people who buy a lunch and don't want to pay a tax on that modest lunch. It will be part of our election program fulfilled and because of that, Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in moving second reading of this Bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. D.G. STEUART (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, let me say first that I think taking off the penalty of \$5 for late filing is good. It was a nuisance and has been on there for many years, and I agree with that. Certainly we are not going to oppose the taking off of the sales tax on meals under \$2.50. It is interesting to note again and

I don't make a great point of it that in the election promise of the NDP, they said they would take the tax off meals without any limit. Now they have decided to still force people to pay tax on meals over \$2.50. But they have taken it off meals under \$2.50 and they dubbed it, and the Press joined in. They called it the hotdog tax and I was the one who put it on. Well, I put it on, sure I take credit for it. We used the money for a variety of things but we put a tax on a hotdog; if they were 25 cents, of a couple of cents. We put a tax on a hamburger of two, three or four cents. We put a tax on a meal of \$1 of five cents, on \$2 of ten cents. Now the Premier says, look what great people we are, I stuck in my thumb and I pulled out a plum and I'm going to hand this plum on to the people. Well, let's take a look at the plum the people have got in regard to meals and hamburgers and hotdogs and cups of coffee since this great people's Government was elected ten months ago. Go to any cafe, go to any hotdog stand, go to any hamburger stand, go anywhere you want and buy a hotdog or a hamburger or a cup of coffee or a meal, what do you find? Not the two or three cents that Steuart put on, no you find 20 or 30 cents that Blakeney put on. If you call it the hotdog tax they should rename the hamburger after the Premier, because he raised the minimum wage which was fine for some people, he lowered the hours, and what's happened? The price of coffee is doubled, the price of hamburgers have gone up 20 or 30 or 40 cents. The price of hotdogs are up 20 or 30 cents. The price of meals has gone up. You go into any cafe, you go into any place in this Province and ask what the price of these commodities was ten months ago, six months ago and what it is today and you will find they have gone up very substantially. So you are taking the credit for taking off two or three cents well then I think you should be quite prepared to take the credit for the increase, the very sharp increase, and if you are not aware of this then obviously you are not aware of what's going on because when you leave this House go and check the price of coffee, what it is today in 99 per cent of outlets, cafes, small cafes, large cafes, of hotdogs, or hamburgers and of meals. The Premier said the restaurant owners will welcome this. Well, some of them will welcome it but they will have mixed emotions because they will find now that they are asked, and we found this problem when we put the tax in first, we had a \$1 or a 99 cents limit, the tax didn't come into effect until 99 cents or \$1, and we had I would say representations from almost all restaurant owners. They said (a) our first choice of course is to take it off, and I didn't blame them; and they said (b) our second choice is drop it down to 15 cents because we are making so many more bills out that it is really a nuisance tax. Now I grant that you have taken it off all take-out meals so that it will not be effective in take-out places, the A&W and all the hamburger places and hotdog places, but you have still left it on meals which you said you would not do. Although I am not making a big point of this because I think this and I said it when I introduced the tax, you go to most provinces and most states of the union and you find you pay a tax on meals. When you go to most of these same states and provinces you pay a tax on hotel accommodations. We brought that in because we felt that if it was fair for our citizens to pay a tax when they went to other places it was reasonable that when people came from other provinces or states of the union they should have the same opportunity to contribute to our Treasury.

We are not going to oppose this tax decrease but I don't think that the Government should attempt to take too much credit because all I suggest to them is to go out and talk to the

people, talk to the people who buy these hamburgers and hotdogs and find out what is happening to the prices. If you are prepared to take credit for saving the three or four cents then I suggest you should be given the same credit for costing them 20 or 30 cents more.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. N.E. BYERS (Minister of Highways and Transportation): — Mr. Speaker, I hadn't intended to speak on this particular Bill. However, I am relatively a newcomer to this House. There are two Bills that I will always recall as being introduced by the former Government in my first session in this House in 1970 and both of them are to go by the wayside at this Session. One was their famous gerrymander Bill, and the other was the imposition of the hotdog tax as it was lowered to 15 cents in 1970.

The Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Steuart) has been collecting taxes for so long and at so many different places that his memory fails him as to all the sources he has taxed.

I want to congratulate the Provincial Treasurer for removing this tax, particularly as it applies to the charitable organizations in Saskatchewan. Those Members who live in the rural parts of Saskatchewan know very well that church groups and ladies' groups do cater to fowl suppers and wedding feasts and church bazaars and this sort of thing. And they did not escape the clutches of the tax collectors of the former Government in this respect.

I should like to tell you how it worked. It was in the session of 1970 that this legislation was introduced. It was in the month of May that the Treasury Department of that day undertook to draft the regulations for the collection of this tax. It was at this time that they decided that the church groups or charitable organizations who had five or more functions in a year must not only collect the tax and remit it to the Provincial Treasurer but must also advise him in advance that they were going to collect the tax and remit it to the Provincial Treasurer. I had a situation of one church group, and I am very sorry that I didn't bring the letter with me today, that wrote in as good Christians to find out what the new law was — how many suppers and so on they could put on before they had to remit the tax. The Treasury Department was so slow at getting the regulations drafted that this particular group had had their five or six suppers by this time and they were assessed a fine for failure to remit the tax before the regulations were written to collect it. And that was the extent of the ingratitude of the former Government towards groups of this kind.

I'm very glad to see the tax is being removed. I think it will be a very popular move and well accepted by the people of Saskatchewan and I will certainly be supporting the Bill and I advise other Members to do the same.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. F. MEAKES (Touchwood): — Mr. Speaker, I can't resist getting into this for a minute or two. I really marvel at the quick-grown modesty and repentant attitude of my Hon. friend, the Leader of the

Opposition (Mr. Steuart). It's hard to believe that this is the same man who stood up a few minutes ago and spoke in this House as when he was bringing that Bill in.

I wish to disagree with him on two points. One – the fact that he says that all the prices of meals have gone up. I'm one who is not as fortunate as the Hon. Member who has somebody to prepare my meals for me and I live out of restaurants a lot of the time and I know that the restaurant where I eat my breakfast, they haven't changed their menu, nor the price of their coffee in the last 12 months.

AN HON. MEMBER: — . . .

MR. MEAKES: — Oh fine, go down to the Parklane, that's where I stay. You can go down to the A&W and their price is the same as they were a few months ago. The exaggeration of my Hon. friend from Prince Albert West amazes me. Just all of them do.

MR. STEUART: — Where do you eat?

MR. MEAKES: — Why I eat all over. I eat in many places. I know this, in my home community that we have two cafes, one charges 15 cents, which they have been charging for a cup of coffee for the last year and a half, the other one is still charging ten cents. No difference, just made no difference. I just wanted to rise and comment on this marvellous change in the Leader of the Opposition in these few short months.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

HON. J.E. BROCKELBANK (Minister of Public Works) moved second reading of Bill No. 95 – **An Act respecting the Department of Government Services.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to present comments on second reading of this Bill to create a new Department of Government Services.

I think that this Bill could well have been sent to the Non-Controversial Bills Committee because the form of the Bill, I would suspect in the eyes of all Members, is non-controversial. However, since it was dealing with the creation of a new Department of Government, I thought that it would give Members an opportunity here to speak on the matter if they saw fit.

The Bill is routine in form. The Queen's Printer Act and The Public Works Act amendments will dovetail with the passing of this particular Bill.

Those two Bills, of course, have gone to the Non-Controversial Bills Committee.

With regard to the creation of this new Department of Government Services, the Department which it supersedes, the Department of Public Works, will have its functions and duties continued under the designation of this name, Department of Government Services. It represents a consolidation of services that are provided to the Government in other departments and consequently they appear in this Bill at this time. One being the Queen's Printer who now comes directly under the Department

of Government Services. Another being The Computer Services which are at the present time under the direction of the Minister of Public Health (Mr. Smishek). Those two services and functions will come under the designation of the Department of Government Services and will be carried on in that Department.

I don't believe that any new principles are advanced in the Bill, Mr. Speaker, except possibly with regard to Computer Services.

The arrangement suggested in the Bill, Mr. Speaker, is that the services of the computer centre shall be available to the Government as is the case now also to local government which is a variation of the present services that are provided by the Computer Service Centre. Educational institutions will be able to avail themselves of the computer services also. It is anticipated that in this field of computer services, which is a very expensive field to be in, some rationalization of the Computer Service can be implemented to the extent that the cost of supplying computer service to the Government and other bodies, namely educational institutions and local government, can be lowered and cause a saving to be had by those three particular groups.

It's with a great deal of pleasure, Mr. Speaker, on those few remarks that I move second reading of Bill No. 95 – An Act respecting the Department of Government Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. J.G. LANE (Lumsden): — Mr. Speaker, after listening to the remarks of the Hon. Minister there seems to be some question arising in the matter of computer time sharing in the use of Computer Services Branch of the Government of Saskatchewan.

The impression that has been left with myself this afternoon is that the Government intends to go into time sharing of its computers in competition with private computers.

I only want to make this comment, Mr. Speaker. I assume that if that is the case that several studies have been done and the ramifications of such an approach are known to the Government. And with those words, I will close debate on this matter.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Romanow that Bill No. 81 – **An Act to provide for the Division of the Province into Constituencies for the Election of Members of the Legislative Assembly** be now read a second time.

MR. A.R. GUY (Athabasca): — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say just a few words. The more I study this Bill the more confused I become as to what the Attorney General (Mr. Romanow) had in mind when he brought this legislation to the House.

We started out, hopeful that we would be able to support this Bill. The Attorney General presented it in a reasonably unbiased manner, calling for support from both sides of the Legislature and I think that for the most part this will be forthcoming. However, there are some sections of this Bill that causes me concern particularly those dealing with northern Saskatchewan.

I think I interpreted the Attorney General's remarks correctly when he introduced the Bill that it was his feeling that there should be more representation in northern Saskatchewan. And I think we all recognize and we all agree with that principle. At the present time the distances, size, the sparse population and the small communities isolated as they are, show that you can't go on a straight population basis for representation. There has to be some consideration given to the factors which I have outlined. I believe that the Attorney General, at least I'm prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt, really intended by this legislation to provide greater representation for northern Saskatchewan. But I suggest that if we would take another look at the legislation that he has brought in that this is not the case.

The new Act is providing for two constituencies with the outside limits already established for northern representation. If you look at it a little closer you find that he is now saying that two representatives will represent what five Members are providing representation for today. Now I know, at least I think I know what he is thinking, that in some of these constituencies the fringe areas perhaps are not receiving the representation that they deserve. I think probably we recognize that in a constituency where 80 or 90 per cent of the population is agricultural in content, with 10 or 15 per cent northern oriented or Indian and Metis oriented because of their location in the northern area, they do not receive the representation they should. I submit to the Attorney General that this is not something that can be corrected by the Legislature. This is something that has to be corrected by the selection and choice of Members themselves. I think that it is the Member's responsibility to represent each and every member of his constituency, regardless of whether he's a part of the majority who cast the ballots or the minority. So I submit that whether it is the Attorney General's belief, or the Legislature's belief that the representation is not adequate under the present situation for some of these border area constituencies, this isn't the responsibility of the Legislature but rather it's the responsibility of the Members who are elected in these seats.

What we have really done here by delineating two constituencies with the boundaries already fixed, we've taken the largest constituency by far, that of Athabasca, we have taken three-quarters of the second largest, which is Meadow Lake, we have taken three-quarters of the third largest, which is PA East Cumberland, we've taken a quarter of Shellbrook and we've taken a quarter of Nipawin and added them together. I use these fractions in a very rough manner. So we have the largest, three-quarters of the second, three-quarters of the third and a quarter of two other constituencies and we're putting them together and we say we'll provide two constituencies with two Members. Now, Mr. Attorney General, I appreciate your intent of providing additional representation. However, I think that your method, now that it is reviewed and considered in more detail, does not accomplish that. You are providing two representatives in an

area which is now being represented by five. So I would hope that you would take another look at that.

The two constituencies which you are making out of the parts of five are two very large constituencies.

The other point is, and I think this was raised by my colleague from Meadow Lake (Mr. Coupland) that you have not taken into consideration the travel and transportation patterns of these communities and I think it might have been wise if you had held some consultation with northerners, with northern people. The way it is now, if you were to divide it into two constituencies as you intend to do, someone in Buffalo Narrows or LaLoche has Uranium City in the same constituency would now have to come to Meadow Lake and then across to Prince Albert and then up to LaRonge and then up to Uranium City. The line of transportation would be much longer than it is at the present time where you can go direct from LaRonge.

So that's one, I think, very glaring weakness in this new Bill but there's a more important principle involved than that and that of course, is the principle that we are trying to establish what is going to be an independent commission.

Now, if it is independent, why in heaven's name is the Attorney General determining the boundaries for the constituencies in northern Saskatchewan?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GUY: — We have a Bill where we are establishing a principle which I am prepared to support with other Members on this side of the House, of an Independent Boundaries Commission and then he turns around and in this Bill, where he proposes such a principle, he reneges and denies it for more than one-half of the province and I don't care whether it's half in population, it's certainly half in size. He has taken it upon himself as Attorney General to say these are going to be the boundaries for northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I am not prepared to accept that principle and on that basis I will have to vote against this Bill. If the principle of Independent Electoral Boundaries is fair for southern Saskatchewan why isn't it fair for the people of northern Saskatchewan? Haven't you got enough faith in this Independent Commission which we are going to establish that they can look at northern Saskatchewan and do a better job of determining the boundaries. Maybe in place of two constituencies there should be three, or maybe even four. As I said, today there are five Members representing an area which you in your own sole judgment are saying now will be represented by two Members.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GUY: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I say, this is something that we cannot accept on this side of the House. The principle of independent electoral boundaries, if it's good for one part of the province, has to be for the whole province and you cannot segregate the north from the south. You're doing just the opposite in this Bill. What you're trying to do, the Minister from Shellbrook (Mr. Bowerman) is trying to do in his Northern

Department Bill.

MR. BOWERMAN: — Same thing.

MR. GUY: — No, you're talking about consultation. We're going to let the people of the North decide. We're going to let somebody that's involved decide. But this isn't what he's done in this. The Attorney General has said, I am going to set the boundaries for northern Saskatchewan. This is the outline of the constituencies. He's the gerrymanderer in this case. I'm not suggesting any ulterior motive because I know my friend from Saskatoon too well and it would never enter his mind to gerrymander the northern part of the province because two of these seats are now held by Liberals. That would never enter the Attorney General's mind.

MR. ROMANOW: — It didn't.

MR. GUY: — It did?

MR. ROMANOW: — Absolutely didn't.

MR. GUY: — No, I know it didn't. That is what I say that I am sure it didn't. I do say and I am sure that the Attorney General on reflection will agree with me that he has done just that.

MR. ROMANOW: — No chance.

MR. GUY: — Oh, yes, you will. He will agree with me that he is treating northern Saskatchewan differently than he is southern Saskatchewan. He is prepared to let an Independent Boundary Commission determine 63 constituencies in this Province, but he is not prepared to let them determine the constituencies for the north half of the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is this inconsistency that is apparent in this Bill. If we are going to support the principle of independent boundaries it has to be independence for every constituency in this Province. I regret that I am unable to support this Bill in second reading.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. A. MATSALLA (Canora): — Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of Bill No. 81, a Bill to establish an Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission, a Bill to provide for drawing up constituency boundaries by an independent body on the basic concept of representation by population.

Resolutions requesting the former Liberal Government to consider legislation for establishing An Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission were introduced by New Democratic Members of this House on a number of occasions. I recall 1965, 1968 and then again in 1970. On all these occasions Liberal Members voted against the proposal and defeated the resolutions. It is obvious that while they were in Government, they wanted to draw up constituency boundaries to suit their political advantage. And they made an extreme effort in 1970 in order to win the 1971 election.

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The former Liberal Government had a great opportunity to introduce a first in Saskatchewan by establishing an Independent Boundaries Commission. No, they preferred to keep it in the hands of their Government as a tool to manipulate constituency boundaries strictly for political purposes. Changes to boundaries were made without rhyme or reason and without regard to democratic principles and fairness of representation of the electorate.

It was obvious that the primary objective was to gerrymander in a manner to win as many seats as possible for the sake of power and glory. The highlight of the Liberal gerrymander came in 1970, when a committee of Government Members, consisting of the following Hon. Members now sitting to your left, Mr. Speaker. They are Dave Steuart, Cy MacDonald, Allan Guy, Don McPherson, and the former Member for Hanley Robert Heggie, who incidentally lost his seat in the process.

The Committee, Mr. Speaker, concocted the worst gerrymander in the history of this Province, a concoction that backfired and smoked out the Liberal Government. The gerrymander was one of the prime reasons why the former Government was literally crushed to defeat and why there are only 15 Liberal Opposition Members to your left, Mr. Speaker.

The lesson to learn from the last gerrymander, Sir, is that the electorate is informed and intelligent and it will not stand for a government that is guilty of taking advantage of democracy to meet its selfish ends.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MATSALLA: — Mr. Speaker, democracy allows for freedom but it objects to gross interference with the operation of its process. The legislation before us, to establish an Electoral Boundaries Commission is meant to prevent political interference in drawing up of constituency boundaries.

MR. STEUART: — Except in the North.

MR. MATSALLA: — It removes the responsibility out of the realm of politics to an independent body, that would carry out its function in an unpartisan and unbiased manner.

I have faith, Mr. Speaker, that the naming of the three-man Independent Commission and its work as provided for by legislation will be fair. As I see it, the Commission will save the Government from any embarrassment of charges of unfair practices, selfishness and destruction of an important function of electing representatives under conditions that are fair and just in the eyes of our society.

I believe that the appointment of a Court of Appeal judge by the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan, after due consultation with the Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench, certainly should be one, we as Members of this House and the people of Saskatchewan could put our trust in. If not, then we could just as well question the entire judicial system of our Province.

The two other members of the Commission, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and a person agreed upon by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, I believe are a good choice and will do justice to the work of the Commission.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I would only like to hope that following the passage of this Bill the Commission could be set up at an early date, and that the Commission start work immediately thereafter.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MATSALLA: — I believe it is important to have new constituency boundaries drawn up as soon as possible. This will not only facilitate the work of the present Members but it will as well provide the electorate with an opportunity to plan for representation come next election.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MATSALLA: — I say this, because in many cases the redrawing of boundaries could drastically change the size, shape and location of present constituencies.

The Bill, Mr. Speaker, provides for drawing up to 65 constituencies, two for the far North and the balance for central and southern parts of the province. I believe this to be quite fair providing every consideration is given to maintain rural Saskatchewan with fair and proper representation. In saying this, I am hopeful that this Commission will, as provided for in Clause 16 of the Bill, depart from the prime rule of representation by population.

In drawing up rural constituencies, Mr. Speaker, I believe it is important — and I want to emphasize that size and area should be considered. Members in rural constituencies will readily understand that communication in rural areas is inconvenient and sometimes difficult. Telephone and postal services are slow and in some areas very inadequate.

In other cases, the only other means of reaching constituents is by personal visits. Enlarging rural constituencies which are already large would be unfair and improper, not only to respective members but to constituents as well. Other factors Mr. Speaker, such as rate of population growth, accessibility and physical barriers should not be overlooked.

In addition, certain regions in the province may have special economic and social interests that should receive consideration. All these factors should be examined and carefully considered. I want to say that I agree with the 15 per cent tolerance relative to the population factor.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation, I believe is good legislation. It is another first for Saskatchewan. This is another measure by this New Democratic Government to give Saskatchewan people fair play and justice. This legislation is worthy of support by every Member of this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MATSALLA: — I am hopeful the Members opposite have changed their attitude towards an Independent Boundaries Commission, and will now see fit to vote for the legislation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

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MR. E.C. WHELAN: (Regina North West): — Mr. Speaker, first I would like to congratulate the Attorney General (Mr. Romanow) for bringing in this Bill.

A promise was made to introduce this legislation and this Bill represents the keeping of a commitment. Recently in this House, a few moments ago, I heard the Hon. Member for Athabasca (Mr. Guy) worrying about two constituencies for the North.

I don't think he should worry about two constituencies for the North, Mr. Speaker, at present he has only one and I think he may have something to worry about in one constituency for the North.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — Mr. Speaker, although the number of voters and the size of the riding has been an embarrassment to democracy, I thought the Hon. Member for Albert Park (Mr. MacLeod) proved his ability to misrepresent the facts and mislead the House when he spoke in this Assembly. I think this is regrettable. I am sorry that I was not in the Assembly at the time. Since the Hon. Member is a member of the legal profession it should be possible for him to call some evidence to prove, or attempt to prove, or substantiate, or attempt to substantiate, exactly what he meant.

What did he say during the course of his remarks? He said, and I quote him now:

There are some people who believe that the Member for Regina North West hardly merited re-election.

He said this, and I am now quoting the record as evidence and I think any logical person knows that this is an unsubstantiated statement.

Mr. Speaker, the evidence is to the contrary in every respect, I submit, as it applies to that constituency. As a matter of fact with the second largest riding in the province, every poll but one in the constituency, endorsed the New Democratic candidate and the lone poll was conceded to the other candidate by approximately 12 votes.

Mr. Speaker, in the Hon. Member's patio constituency of Regina Albert Park, on the other hand, in that constituency the New Democratic Party candidate won seven times as many polls. It seems obvious that there were people there who did not think that the Hon. Member deserved election.

When you look at the figures to substantiate an argument you will find that almost four times as many people voted for the Regina North West Member as voted for the Member for Albert Park. Mr. Speaker, by the gerrymander prior to the 1971 election Regina North West had a net increase of 362 voters and yet the majority of the sitting Member who he said, 'hardly merited re-election' increased from 1967 from 1,636 to 3,968.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — Mr. Speaker, he says and I quote him, if the record is

right:

And that with a good candidate which we had and a proper boundary which was there formerly, he would have been defeated.

Let's look at the 'proper boundary' that was there formerly.

I can recall vividly prior to the 1967 election, what kind of a boundary was introduced in this House for Regina North West. I am sure that many of the people in that constituency do too. It was set up so that if you added up the votes in the 1964 election, the Liberal candidate seeking election in that constituency had a majority of 60 and yet when the election was over the New Democratic Party had won the election by 1,638, this was Regina North West's reply to what they considered a very bad gerrymander.

Looking at the present election where the candidate hardly merited re-election according to the Member for Albert Park. The New Democratic vote increased from 52 per cent to 63.5 per cent against a good candidate, and I concede, a candidate who had the courage to run in a riding that had a large number of people in it, that had a considerable number of New Democrats in it. Not in a riding like Albert Park. After all, Regina North West had three and a half times as many voters as there were in Albert Park.

I hesitate to say, Mr. Speaker, or to conjecture what the outcome would have been if the very ordinary candidate who now sits for the patio-sized riding of Albert Park had had the courage to run in Regina North West. If the Boundaries Commission does its job well and properly and completely eliminates this pocket riding, and there is an amalgamation of Lakeview and Albert Park, and the Hon. Member wants a seat, and he wants to put his actions where his mouth is, I challenge him to come into Regina North West, or any portion of Regina North West, and see who merits re-election. We shall let the people who know the Member for Regina North West decide, not on the basis of who sits for pocket boroughs, not on the basis of personal opinions tossed around, but on the record of performance in Regina North West, Mr. Speaker, and on no other basis.

The inaccuracy of the Hon. Member for Albert Park (Mr. MacLeod) regarding Regina North West completely astounds me. I quote his inaccuracy:

The additional Members (surely he meant voters) who were put into his constituency actually confirmed him in office.

They added 362 and the majority was 3,968. All 362 were not New Democrats, maybe 320 were, but I am not sure. The facts are that in 1967 Regina North West was gerrymandered by the Liberals. And this is what he calls proper boundaries. At that time I remember very well what happened. The former Member for Last Mountain crossed the House where I was seated, as did the former Member for Melville, and giggled with glee about the boundaries for Regina North West, and what they said would happen in the 1967 election. Well what actually happened is history, but I point out to the Hon. Member for Albert Park that those boundaries that were described at that time, as resembling the trail of a drunken caterpillar and I say accurately resulted in a

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majority for the candidate in Regina North West.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this constituency have stated over and over again that they object to gerrymandering. There isn't a doubt in my mind that in 1967 the boundaries were improperly drawn. They were not proper boundaries, they were gerrymandered. And in 1971 the riding had far too many people in it, far too many voters.

Now if the Hon. Member for Albert Park will bear with me, I want to quote to him the exact number of voters that were added to Regina North West in 1971. I want to suggest to him that they were added to make sure that the Member for Lakeview (Mr. McPherson) got elected and to straighten out the boundaries and for no other reason. Obviously there is not an ounce of accuracy when he says that the added voters confirmed the Member in office when the record shows that the majority for the New Democratic Party in Regina North West is in the top five for the province.

The total vote, as I said before, is four times his total vote and the majority is four times his majority. The increase in the majority of 2,332 was more, Mr. Speaker, than his total vote.

The Hon. Member for Albert Park (Mr. MacLeod) says that there should be some regard for population increase. Mr. Speaker, the riding of Regina North West had the largest increase in population of any riding in the province. With very slight changes in the boundaries there were 3,430 new voters in that constituency. Yet they added 362 people, it is slightly ridiculous . . .

MR. STEUART: — He's not here, are you going to table it?

MR. WHELAN: — . . . and most hypocritical to come before this House and sanctimoniously argue for this, using Regina North West as an example. The Hon. Member says and I quote, "Some people did not merit re-election". If he thinks there were too many voters in Regina North West, and a vote in Regina North West was worth one-third of a vote in Albert Park, then I suggest to him, Mr. Speaker, that he should have moved some of the voters from Regina North West into Albert Park. Of all the people in this House who should have argued representation by population, the junior Member from Albert Park; that is arguing from a miniature riding, he is the last person who should represent himself as a reliable advocate. Mr. Speaker, we are told that some of the boundaries guaranteed that some of the Members who have been elected would be elected. There is not a doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that there are at least three and perhaps four Members sitting opposite who, if they had been running in ridings drawn by an Independent Commission, would not be here, giving us the benefit of their judicious and illogical wisdom today and every day, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WHELAN: — Mr. Speaker, looking at the principle of this Bill, first it provides that an Independent Commission can draw boundaries for a number of seats up to 65. However, I cannot see the

justification for increasing the number over 60 without an increase in population. I cannot see the justification for increasing the number of seats over 60 when we are arguing for a salary to compensate Members on a full-time basis.

Second, I think there is a fairly good argument for naming someone to the Commission who has been a Member of the legislature and I hope, when the member is named by the Speaker with the sanction of the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier, although I am not in favor of naming someone who sits in the House at the present time, because there would be a natural suspicion that the boundaries would be set to protect this person, I hope the person will have had legislative experience and have sat as a Member, that is, a person who has accurate knowledge of the work involved in looking after a constituency.

Third, Mr. Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly that the date of the election should be established by statute, that the election should be held during the second week of June every four years, unless the government is defeated in the House.

Fourth, the constituency should be drawn so that the boundaries are easily located, for instance in Regina if there were ten seats there should be five on each side of Albert Street and natural boundaries should be used such as main arteries and railway tracks. This would do away with confusion that occurs because of the present illogical inexplainable boundaries that exist both in Regina and Saskatoon.

Fifth, because of the distance involved the division of the North of the province into two constituencies is reasonable and long overdue.

In conclusion, if one wants to examine how far astray representation by population has gone under the Liberal administration here in the city of Regina, take a look at the total number of voters in Regina North West, Regina North East and Regina Centre. Over 50,500 while the enumeration total for Albert Park is just over 4500. This means that while the people of the three ridings in the north part of the city now have three Members, if they had been given the same representation per riding as Albert Park, they would be entitled to 11 Members. Not three, not three Members, but 11 Members, Mr. Speaker. This emphasizes the need for an Independent Boundaries Commission and that the percentage variation in the number of voters should be contained in the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, an Independent Commission, the idea contained in this legislation, is a good idea, I urge all Members to support the Bill on second reading.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Milestone): — Mr. Speaker, I just have a few words to say on this Bill. You know it has been a rather unusual debate, Sir. First of all we start off with a great new principle involved in this Legislature and the Province of Saskatchewan, that of an Independent Boundaries Commission to set the new electoral boundaries for future elections in the Province of Saskatchewan. Then we hear Member after Member stand up from the other side of the House and give a political partisan tirade on past performances. Mr. Speaker, it was rather interesting because, for example, the

Member from Canora (Mr. Matsalla) said it was the worst in history. Not the first in history, not the second, not the third, not the fourth but the evil was to be measured by degrees. Well, I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that Members on this side of the House, the vast majority of us, welcome the concept of an Independent Boundaries Commission. Not because of past deeds, if you look back onto the principle of an Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission it was begun by the Liberal Party. It began in Canada by a Liberal Party in the Dominion of Canada in the House of Commons by a Liberal Government. It is now spread to two or three other provinces in Canada and certainly now the political maturity of Canadians across the country has come to accept the principle that this is a good device. But, Mr. Speaker, that does not mean that I support this Bill in its entirety. I believe there are four very specific weaknesses in this Bill, in fact some of them even negate the principle of an Independent Boundaries Commission.

I would like to say first, Mr. Speaker, that it fails to recognize the rural fact of life of the Province of Saskatchewan. It fails to recognize that the Province of Saskatchewan is an agricultural province. That the Province of Saskatchewan, the basic economic life of our Province is directly related to agriculture and the agricultural community. It provides absolutely no protection, Mr. Speaker, for rural representation. You know the tragedy of it is, Mr. Speaker, that this is not a temporary Bill, this Bill will set the structure and procedures for redistribution not only in the year 1972 but in the year 1982, 92 and 102. Mr. Speaker, we can only look ahead at what is happening in the rural population shift to urban centres and we can visualize that it won't be too long, Sir, before in many areas and perhaps even in the Province of Saskatchewan the majority of the people of Saskatchewan could be living in our two large urban centres. It could be very closely related, for example, in the Province of Alberta to Calgary and Edmonton. It could be related to the Province of Manitoba where almost 50 per cent of the population lives in the city of Winnipeg. And to suggest in a province that is a rural province, a province that is an agricultural province that we should have 50 per cent of the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan coming from Saskatoon and Regina, Sir, I think is against the very principles that most of us stand for and the very concept of the agricultural community of Saskatchewan. In fact, Sir, the 15 per cent tolerance could work against rural Saskatchewan. If the members on the Independent Boundaries Commission were conscious of urban problems and urban rights the 15 per cent tolerance could work actually Sir in favor of a large and more geographic area in rural Saskatchewan and a larger population in rural seats taking in a much larger geographic area and a much more difficult area to represent.

Also, Sir, the fact of the mathematical equation of population is certainly a basic principle I think that everybody agrees with, but it should be weighted. The average should be weighted in favor of rural Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, there should be some guarantees to protect the future of rural Saskatchewan. For example, a 15,000 population, Sir, could mean that there could be 10,000 city voters and 12,000 rural voters because in rural Saskatchewan today many of the young people are going to urban centres in order to obtain jobs to go to university, to take technical training. The majority of the people in rural Saskatchewan, certainly the vast majority are adults, so we could find for the 15,000 population,

10,000 voters in urban Saskatchewan, 12,000 in rural Saskatchewan with a corresponding large increase in the boundaries of rural constituencies. Certainly, Sir, one of the great advantages of a rural constituency today in Saskatchewan is that it is small enough for a member to know personally most of the constituents that he represents. It is now possible for a rural member to get around the Province of Saskatchewan and actually visit the majority of his constituents.

MR. ROLFES: — What about Thibault?

MR. MacDONALD: — Let's take a look for example at the federal boundaries. In there, Sir, it would take almost five or six months for a member to spend just a half a day in each poll in the constituency of Assiniboia. I would hope, Sir, that the government will reconsider and put a guarantee which will recognize the rural fact of life of the Province of Saskatchewan in this Bill, and that they will provide guarantees for rural representation because if we do not, Sir, we could find in ten years time a rural province, an agricultural province that is dominated by two urban centres in this province.

AN HON. MEMBER: — . . .

MR. MacDONALD: — The second, Sir. If my friend will sit down, you know the Member from Nutana South will have every opportunity to stand on his feet and speak. He hasn't said a word since the House started that made any sense. So stand up when you get an opportunity and say what you like. Sit down!

MR. SPEAKER: — Order!

MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Privilege. It was not me who made that comment.

MR. MacDONALD: — Well you know we are so used to you making those kinds of comments that I just jumped to that conclusion. Mr. Speaker, the second point about this particular Bill that bothers me is the point that has been brought up by the Member for Athabasca (Mr. Guy). This is supposed to be an Independent Boundaries Commission and before the Bill is even printed we have the first gerrymander in the new Bill by the Attorney General of the Province of Saskatchewan. Now, Mr. Speaker, there is no question about it that it is a gerrymander because anybody who suggests that the Member who comes from LaRonge can represent the Member for LaLoche is almost the same as driving from LaRonge to southern Saskatchewan in the city of Regina. It has no relationship to geography, it has no relationship to transportation trends, it has no relation to anything, Mr. Speaker, except a political gerrymander to represent two Members from northern Saskatchewan instead of five as the Member from Athabasca indicated. And we would hope, Sir, that if an Independent Boundaries Commission is capable of evaluating southern Saskatchewan then certainly they should be capable of evaluating northern Saskatchewan.

The third point, Mr. Speaker, is that every Member has stood on his feet and said that the great value of this Bill is that it removes politicians. Then, Sir, it turns around and appoints a politician. It appoints a politician on the Commission, it appoints you, Mr. Speaker. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that this

Bill is placing the Speaker of this Assembly in a very embarrassing position, a very embarrassing position. First of all, Sir, when you are sitting in your chair nobody questions your independence, we accept that as part of this House. But this Boundaries Commission is going to take the Speaker of this Assembly and when this Session is completed he is going to take on an additional political responsibility. And you are a politician, you represent a constituency, you represent a political party, you stand for election like all politicians. And, Sir, there is no question that when the boundaries are finally determined there will be many people who will complain no matter how conscientious the Boundaries Commission is, it is leaving the Speaker of this House open to very serious criticism and I think that is unfortunate. Sir, I have in my hand the redistribution Bill in the Province of Manitoba, an Act to provide for the Divisions of the Province into Electoral Divisions and, Sir, what they did they truly made it an Independent Boundaries Commission, they appointed three members, the first, Sir, the Chief Justice of the Province of Manitoba similar to the Province of Saskatchewan and then they appointed, Sir, a member of the community of the Province of Manitoba that like in Saskatchewan has the respect and the admiration of all the people in the Province of Manitoba and I say similarly in the Province of Saskatchewan, the president of the University of Manitoba. And I would suggest, Sir, that if the Attorney General wanted to give the impression of true independence that he could well have named the President of the University of Saskatchewan or some man of equal stature so that it would have removed completely the possibility of any political implications when the results of this Bill are shown.

The fourth, Sir, is one that bothers me even more. The Bill provides an alternative to the Chief Justice of the Province of Saskatchewan naming the members of the Commission. And the alternative, Sir, to this Bill to set up an Independent Boundaries Commission is to throw it back right deliberately into the political arena. That is the alternative. The alternative states that if the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan for some reason refuses to appoint a judge to chair the Independent Boundaries Commission or any of the judges, then it goes back to the Executive Council, to the Cabinet and, Sir, the whole concept of this Bill that has been sold to the Province of Saskatchewan as an 'Independent' Boundaries Commission. And the alternative that the Attorney General and the Government recommend is to throw it right deliberately back into the political arena. And I should like to suggest to the Attorney General that I don't suggest that the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan will act in this manner, I am sure that he will appoint the judge who will be the chairman of the Boundaries Commission but I would urge that the Government withdraw this alternative of leaving it to the Executive Council and if they do that, Sir, I think it will be accepted by the people of Saskatchewan as a truly Independent Boundaries Commission and with those three or four weaknesses out of the Bill, Sir, it could be truly a land mark in the Province of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Oh!

MR. MacDONALD: — It could truly be given the support and the endorsement not only of the Government Members but also of the Members of the Opposition.

MR. FARIS: — Would the Hon. Member permit a question? Is the Hon. Member aware that on the Federal Redistribution Boundary Commission there are three people appointed from each province and that in the Federal Liberal legislation two out of those three are appointed by the Federal Speaker?

MR. MacDONALD: — Yes, I am aware of that but that was the original Bill, the first one, we have graduated from that . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Oh! Oh!

MR. MacDONALD: — . . . and certainly now it is time to get a truly independent and not only that I should like to point out, Mr. Speaker, in answer to his question, that the Speaker of the House of Commons knows little about the Province of Saskatchewan, knows very little. But the Speaker, you, Sir, are actively involved in the political hustings of the province and I would suggest there is a basic difference.

MR. E.L. TCHORZEWSKI (Humboldt): — Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this debate with a great deal of pleasure because I think that this is one of the most significant pieces of legislation that is before this House in this Session.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Now I know that because so many Members have spoken on this debate that there is a danger of repetition of things which have already been said.

MR. ROMANOW: — Say it again Ed. It has to be said.

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — But the fact that so many have spoken, Mr. Speaker, is an indication of the strong feeling about the importance of this Bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — And I just want to add a few words to the record in support of an Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Now, Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal of important, vital legislation which we have and will be dealing with in this Session and one of the most important is this legislation because, Mr. Speaker, government carries out the policy and it sets out the programs which the people indicate that they desire. This legislation establishing this Independent Boundaries Commission will help guarantee the right of people to express what the needs and wishes are. Now I listened with a great deal of interest, Mr. Speaker, to the remarks of the Member, of the temporary Member from Athabasca (Mr. Guy) and the Member from Milestone (Mr. MacDonald). I listened to . . .

MR. STEUART: — I wouldn't bet on your . . .

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — I listened to both of them speak of gerrymanders, Mr. Speaker. And may I say that they certainly should be great authorities on gerrymanders, Mr. Speaker, they invented the word.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, the Member from Milestone spoke of the idea of an Independent Boundaries Commission coming from the Liberal Government in Ottawa. Well it is rather interesting that in this debate now, today, he is willing to recognize the importance of this kind of an institution but in 1970 they were not prepared to recognize the importance of that kind of an institution. Their only willingness to recognize anything was to recognize political advantage and I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that today and in this Session that majority of those, and they said majority, obviously some of them may not want to support it, are going to support this Bill only because it is politically advantageous and not because they really think it is a good idea.

MR. ROMANOW: — I am not sure whether they are going to support it.

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Well, that very likely could be, knowing their line of thinking.

The other day, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart) said that he would like to see this debate not political. And you know this might seem like a very noble stance on his part, but I ask: where was this attitude when he and his colleagues voted against the principle of the Ombudsman? Why did he not think about being non-political when he, as a Member of the Cabinet, of the former Government of this Province, stood in this House and blustered along in an attempt to justify the worse political gerrymander of constituency boundaries that this country has ever seen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — The Members opposite talk about being non-political, Mr. Speaker, because they are afraid of their past record. They know that the people of Saskatchewan know what we are talking about and it makes them uncomfortable. And the Leader of the Opposition knows that there is a group called 171 which also knows what we are talking about, and it makes him very uncomfortable.

Mr. Speaker, a good teacher in teaching a lesson in developing a concept to stress the importance of a topic or a concept uses examples. And in order to establish a need of legislation or other things, Mr. Speaker, it is sometimes worthwhile to use examples. This afternoon I want to use a few examples to show that this Bill is very important and is necessary.

I put on the Order Paper several days ago some questions pertaining to the redistribution of boundaries in 1970.

MR. STEUART: — What did you find out?

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — I found out some very interesting information. I asked, Mr. Speaker, that before passing of the Act to amend The Legislative Assembly Act in the spring session of 1970, whether the recommendations for constituency boundaries were provided by a committee or commission. And I found, Mr. Speaker, in answer that they were. A committee made the recommendations for constituency boundaries. If you read it and leave it at that, there is some room for hope, but if you continue further there was also a list of the Members who were on that committee. It is very interesting, Mr. Speaker. They were the Hon. D.G. Steuart, Prince Albert West; the Hon. C.P. McDonald, Member for Milestone; the Hon. A.R. Guy, Member from Athabasca; the Hon. R.A. Heggie from Hanley and Mr. D.M. McPherson from Regina South West.

Mr. Speaker, I asked another part of the question. I asked what were the terms of reference, if any, that were used in the determining of boundaries of constituencies. And the answer was: no terms of reference are known of. I dislike to disagree with my own Government, Mr. Speaker, but I am not totally prepared to accept that answer. I am not totally prepared to accept it because I think there were terms of reference, and those terms of reference were; (1) Who was the sitting Member in a particular constituency and (2) How did the vote go in each particular poll in the election of 1967?

MR. ROMANOW: — Oh, they are having a meeting now.

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — I think they are going to decide to support it now.

I want to prove the point that I just raised, Mr. Speaker, by quoting an example, and I like to use an example that I am most familiar with, the example of Humboldt constituency, which in the past used to be a Liberal constituency and supposedly should have been a safe Liberal seat.

I find that in the process of redistributing constituency boundaries that 10 polls were removed from the constituency of Humboldt. They were put into Wadena, into Melfort-Kinistino and one was put into the constituency of Watrous. And it is very interesting, Mr. Speaker, to note the results of the vote in the election of 1967 in those polls. There was a total vote of 1,669. The Liberal candidate at that time received 578 votes, the CCF candidate 824, the Progressive Conservative candidate 167. The CCF candidate had a majority in this total number of polls of 256.

The Member for Athabasca (Mr. Guy) spoke about the MLA representing his constituency in representing the people of the province. Well it is strange why he never thought about representing his people of the province, because he was a part of this committee that suggested that polls and voters be taken out of Humboldt constituency and be placed in constituencies like Wadena, which ended up in 1971, with 10,102 voters. And in constituencies like Melfort-Kinistino which in 1971 had 12,600 voters, leaving Humboldt constituency with 7,300 votes. This certainly was not representation by population, Mr. Speaker.

Now I would be misleading this House if I were only to say

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that polls were removed from Humboldt constituency. And I must admit that some polls were added to the Humboldt constituency. There were two polls added in the north side of the constituency from the constituency of Kinistino.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at the results of the vote in 1967 in these two polls, we find that the Liberal candidate received 122 votes and that the CCF candidate received 62 votes. The Liberals had a majority of 60. I could consider this, Mr. Speaker, as a new candidate in the constituency, as a compliment, but I couldn't and I can't, because I value too much the democratic process and the right of people to elect members of their choice and a Government of their choice.

It seems that the Members who formed the Government prior to June of 1971 tried to guarantee constituencies like Humboldt, but the people saw and the people understood, the people became afraid and they became fed up, and they defeated the Member in Humboldt as well as many other Members, leaving a very few on the other side of the House today.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, the old line parties over the past 100 years have played province against province, region against region and people against people. They have placed farmer against labor and ethnic group against ethnic group. They were able to get away with it until people became better educated and until communications became what they are today, so that people are better informed.

Today politics has to become different or people will reject it. Political parties will have to become honest, sincere and sensitive to people. And any political party should be able to go to the people with a program and its candidates and it should articulate its philosophy, policies and programs to the electorate. And the candidates should be able to say, here is our program for the next four years. The electorate judge it and decide at the polls. In the next general election, Mr. Speaker, this Government will be able to go to the people and say, here is our record of achievement and here is our program for the next four years. This Government is going to do it on fair electoral boundaries.

Mr. Speaker, the former Government by gerrymandering electoral boundaries admitted that its record was one of disaster. They admitted that they had no program and they made it clear that they cared little for what people of Saskatchewan thought about it. The former Government of this Province, now led by the Hon. Member from Prince Albert West (Mr. Steuart) had no record to stand on, Mr. Speaker. They knew they had failed Saskatchewan until they tried to destroy the concept of one man – one vote and representation by population.

That administration created constituencies so glaringly gerrymandered that within one city as the Member from North West has said previously, had over 17,000 voters while others had over 4,000. Liberal Members' constituencies had 6,000 votes, like Saskatoon City Park and NDP Member constituencies had 16,300 votes like Saskatoon Mayfair. And yet in the last election campaign one of the slogans used by them was 'I am proud'.

They were proud, Mr. Speaker, of seven years of Liberal

Government. Proud of seven years of inactivity, proud of seven years of no planning, proud of seven years of no innovation or initiative, proud of seven years of social and economic regression. They said they were proud of years of government drought, seven years so bare of positive action and seven years of almost total neglect of people that they felt that they had to deny the people of Saskatchewan the right to judge their record fairly.

This has now all changed, Mr. Speaker. Legislation will be introduced and is being introduced to prevent unscrupulous politicians from tampering with the rights of people to choose their government by the democratic process.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Now it would be nice, Mr. Speaker, if we could say that because our democratic rights are so important no one would think of tampering with them. At least no one would dare to try to destroy them. Unfortunately the records of the past show this is not true. There have been governments and there have been political parties and there have been individual politicians, Mr. Speaker, who try to destroy representation by population. Some of those people still sit in this Legislature today, although last June many of their numbers were rejected by Saskatchewan voters in spite of the false security of their gerrymandered constituencies.

This legislation establishing an Electoral Independent Boundaries Commission is another first for Saskatchewan. It is another first that can be chalked up to the record of CCF and NDP Governments, along with progressive legislation like Medicare, Auto Accident Insurance and SGIO.

This legislation is a major step in guaranteeing certain rights of people and one basic right, the right to elect a Member of the Government of their choice within fair, equally distributed electoral boundaries. But that is not enough, Mr. Speaker. And that is why this is only a beginning. It is one thing to say that there are going to be equally distributed electoral boundaries and another thing to say that we must make it possible for MLAs to do the kind of job that they should be doing. A great deal has to be done in this field to improve the quality of MLAs and provide them with the opportunity and the time and the facilities to do the kind of work of research and the developing of ideas that they must be doing today.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I should like to add support to a proposal brought forth the other day by the Member for Melfort-Kinistino (Mr. Thibault) and that is setting of the date of elections every so many years, except when the Government is defeated in the House.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that this is a very important idea. I think it is important because I think it would prevent the jockeying that often goes on by governments which try to find political advantage by setting election dates on an appropriate time which is best suited to them. I think it is important because it could force governments to work on programs over a number of years rather than starving the people, starving the economy for two or three years and then raising things for the last year or two in order that they may fool people into voting

for them.

If we look at the kind of situation that has existed with the Federal Government in Canada, today, Mr. Speaker, we see how obvious this is. The farming people of this Province and Western Canada have been starved for three years with no help, no financial injection when they needed it the most. And now when there is an election year coming we see a little bit given off here, a little bit given over there to try to entice them to support the Liberal Party.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to make comment on Section 16 of the Act, which I think is a good one and it is a section that says that the Commission will give special consideration to special geographic areas, to physical features of any area and to any special community or diversity of interest of inhabitants of various regions. I think this is important because as far as possible, electoral boundaries should be established so that people can vote in areas where they have the most in common. Trading patterns and travelling patterns should be taken into consideration.

Mr. Speaker, I want to see an end to the kind of criminal gerrymander that took place under the former Government. The people of Saskatchewan showed on June 23rd that they demand an end to that kind of shameful tampering, tampering with their rights. This legislation brings that to an end. It will be a landmark in the continuing reform of the political process, a reform along with reforms that must continue. I welcome it along with Saskatchewan people and I will support it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. W.A. ROBBINS (Saskatoon Nutana Centre): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to make just a few brief comments with respect to this particular Bill.

I refer specifically to my own seat, Nutana Centre in Saskatoon, which was gerrymandered, despite the fact that the previous incumbent had a 1,282 vote majority in the preceding election. They actually took a number of polls off the west end of this seat and put them over into the Riversdale seat — Mr. Romanow's. I don't think he really needed those votes, I think he had a majority of nearly 7,000. That would be perfectly logical if Nutana Centre had had more voters prior to the transfer than Riversdale, but Riversdale had something in excess of 16,000 and we had slightly more than 15,000 so they took 1,000 out of our seat and put them over in Riversdale making it 14,000 and 17,000. That, of course, is based on the theory of representation by population as you may well guess.

Actually the gerrymander that occurred in 1970 was about as subtle as the approach of the previous Liberal Government in 1943 in this Province which extended its own life beyond the normal five year term of a government. The reason was that it would hurt the war effort if they held an election in 1943. And you know what happened to them in 1944. That is a little incredulous and a little difficult to understand when you realize that Canada itself had an election during the war, as had Great Britain, New Zealand and Australia. But if we had had one in Saskatchewan, of course, it would have disrupted the war effort.

I should like to cite just one further remark with respect to this. The Member for Nutana South (Mr. Rolfes) will well remember this occasion, when he and I were in debate with two Liberal candidates in the Bowman Collegiate in Saskatoon in the last general election.

I made a statement in that debate that if I had been a Member of a Government that changed electoral boundaries as the Government of that day had done, I would have immediately resigned. I am referring to the then incumbent for Nutana South, Mr. Austin Forsythe, who immediately jumped up and informed the group that I was a Member of the Legislature in 1964 and 1967 and he wanted to know why I didn't resign during the period when the previous gerrymander took place. I had to remind him that I was a Member of the Opposition and it would hardly be very useful for a Member of the Opposition to resign simply because his Government had carried out the gerrymander.

I can tell you that Mr. Forsythe got pretty confused at that point.

MR. LANE: — What about 1960?

MR. ROBBINS: — I wasn't here in 1960. I was here from 1964 to 1967. There was a Liberal Government. They carried out the gerrymander and I opposed it. Had I been a Member of the Government that carried out a gerrymander like that I would have immediately resigned.

If there is any doubt in the minds of Members opposite with respect to the results attained — all they have to do is go back and look at the record. When I came in this afternoon — and I have been busy this afternoon — I hadn't had too much opportunity to be in during the debate, I think it was the Minister of Education wanted to know if I would have a poem. I am going to have to repeat one but I think it might be useful in this respect.

On June 23rd the people were heard
They made their decision quite plain
For some 20 Libs were put on the skids
Their broad highway reduced to one Lane.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. J.C. McISAAC (Wilkie): — Mr. Speaker, as one of the Members still going down that one-lane highway, I just want to make a few comments on this Bill before the Attorney General closes debate. I don't intend to get into the Throne Speech issues of the Member for Humboldt (Mr. Tchorzewski) in his remarks.

My basic criticism of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, is the criticism of Section 16 of the legislation before us. I may say that I have no definite alternative to suggest in place of the present section in that sense but I do raise it and ask the Attorney General to consider it in closing the debate and when we get into Committee. Now Section 16 is the one that deals with the very principle, if you like, of representation by population. But I believe, Mr. Speaker, that now is the time to question this particular principle as it applies to rural versus urban Saskatchewan. In 1951 the percentage of Saskatchewan population classed as rural was 57 per cent and that's 20 years ago. In 1961 the percentage of Saskatchewan population classed as rural

was 42 per cent. In 1970 the Estimates by the Department of Municipal Affairs, and these are their figures, was 32 per cent. So we have come from 57 per cent 20 years ago to 32 per cent, or less than one third almost, today.

In short, of course, as everyone is well aware, we have seen perhaps the greatest or most rapid rural to urban shift in Saskatchewan than we have seen in most other parts of Canada. In ten years time by 1981 we don't know what that ratio will be but the chances are it will be even greater still in favor of urban Saskatchewan. Projections and predictions from some of the experts here and elsewhere on community planning and so on is that a large part of our population perhaps by the year 2000 a good half of us will be living in the two major cities of this Province. I am sure we all hope that isn't the case. I am sure we all hope that this trend from rural to urban does not continue but until someone, somewhere, somehow can come up with some steps or moves or measures to prevent it I am afraid it may well do that. And at the same time the interests and the needs of the rural areas or the rural people of Saskatchewan have certainly not diminished nor will they diminish, Mr. Speaker. Agriculture and the economic health of that industry is absolutely the key to everyone living in Saskatchewan regardless of whether he is living in Regina or Saskatoon, regardless of his walk of life whether it be professional, trade or otherwise.

Now let's take a look while we are discussing this Bill, Mr. Speaker, at what has happened to our Federal representation under a somewhat similar Bill and somewhat similar principles. We have seen our representation at Ottawa go down from 17 to 13 in a few years and certainly I think we would all agree here in this Chamber regardless of which side of the House we are on, that the reduction in representation at Ottawa certainly hasn't helped us advance our case and advance the case for Saskatchewan agriculture at the Federal level. Based on the 1971 census, the figures of which are not finalized as yet, as I understand it we can look for a further reduction of perhaps one Federal Member in Ottawa. Surely I say, Mr. Speaker, we don't need to follow the same pattern in our plan for provincial constituency proposals. Again I say I don't have specific answers to suggest but I believe that if we adopt Section 16 as is without specific reference to rural Saskatchewan that that's the path we are following and that's what is going to happen. We are selling short rural Saskatchewan. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, I don't need to tell Members on either side of the House the importance of agriculture and the importance of rural Saskatchewan not only to Canada but certainly to our Province here.

Just as a couple of short, quick illustrations. Do you know, for example, Mr. Speaker, that one out of every three oil wells in Canada is supplying the farm fuel market in this country? Of course of the Canadian farm fuel that is burned across this nation the major part of it is burnt right here in Saskatchewan. You can take the rubber industry if you wish as another illustration of the importance of Saskatchewan agriculture and rural Saskatchewan to the economic health of Canada and Saskatchewan. I think all any Member has to do is stop in at any farm, any farmer, any farm yard and count the number of rubber tires he has got sitting around and he'll find dozens of them. Not only dozens but some of them costing \$500 or \$600. And my point, Mr. Speaker, is this, I don't believe that the 15 per cent variation from the median population figure for a constituency is a sufficient guarantee that the needs and the voices of rural

Saskatchewan will be adequately maintained. I believe that there should be specific reference in that Section 16, Mr. Attorney General, to the rural areas and their representation. I believe it isn't good enough merely to refer to possible variations of plus or minus 15 per cent. I realize here too that it is perhaps too complicated to discuss in a debate on second reading because you could well argue there are many urban communities that do comprise rural Saskatchewan as such. And as I say it is a bit difficult to fully discuss in this kind of a debate. We have heard some views from Members on both sides that really touch on this principle. I think the Member for Canora (Mr. Matsalla) and certain other Members did mention this very same fact. My seatmate, the Member for Milestone (Mr. MacDonald) discussed this point.

Another point that has been raised in this debate by the Member for Humboldt (Mr. Tchorzewski) and was raised around the corridors during the course of the Session inside and outside the House, Mr. Speaker, and that is the question of giving more duties, if you like, more help, more assistance to Members of the Legislative Assembly. In other words the proposition if you wish of making MLAs' tasks more of a full time task. Now I believe that the possibilities of steps in this direction should be considered when we are debating this particular Bill. Because obviously that rural Member looking after his constituents and his region or his district, Mr. Speaker, will not be able adequately to serve a comparable number of voters as opposed to his urban counterpart or his city colleague. I want to ask the Attorney General and the Members opposite in the Government to reconsider this clause when we get to Committee. I believe, as I say, there should be some specific reference to the rural areas of Saskatchewan and failing that the stipulation that the 15 per cent variations that is in there now should be made so that it does not apply to the rural areas. Whether we replace it with another figure or not again I have no particular answer for it. But I think when we consider the difficulties of serving the rural voter and the wider variety of needs that you encounter in rural constituencies. Now you may have one drainage problem or one flooding problem with the Wascana Creek in the city of Regina but many of these rural constituencies have dozens of similar situations where a Member is called upon to be engaged in dealing with a much wider variety of Government departments, Government agencies and so on. I should like to ask the Attorney General and the Government to reconsider this entire question of rural-urban balance and the direction it is likely to be going in the next 10 or 20 years because the Bill is a blueprint not only for today or next year but it is put forward, and I think it should be, as a blueprint and a pattern which will stay with us in this Province for many years. My question whether we should tie down an Independent Commission, and I am not at this time questioning the Commission, whether we should tie them down tightly by that Section 16 with no reference whatever to rural and urban differential.

I also may say, Mr. Speaker, that I disagree with establishing in Section 14, I believe it is, an arbitrary line for northern Saskatchewan. We are asking the Commission to decide in every other case and I suggest to the Attorney General that he should reconsider this and turn this question again over to the Commission because after all if it is going to be their task, if they are going to have the powers that we hope they will have, certainly I think this is a question that should be considered when that Commission is holding its hearings. It should be open

to representation from people from all walks of life, if you like, to come up to that Commission. How can they entertain some of these views if they are hamstrung by that present Section 16 and the other Section dealing with the northern part of the province?

Mr. Speaker, I should hope that the Attorney General would give some comment when closing the debate and I should also suggest that I will have more to say on this point. I hope he is prepared to discuss it further in Committee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. T.M. WEATHERALD (Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, I will keep my remarks very brief on this matter because I think the Members from our side have put forward two or three of what we think are very serious objections to this Bill. As a person who had no changes in his constituency during the last election I should like to make one or two comments. I might add that the last change in my constituency was before my time and it was when the current Member for Estevan sat in the House. I think to help him a little they took a piece out of his and put it in mine. In any event, Mr. Speaker, I would very much like to hear from the Attorney General on his reasons for the arbitrary line which is drawn through the North.

MR. ROMANOW: — . . . second reading.

MR. WEATHERALD: — Yes, but I don't think it's a satisfactory answer.

MR. ROMANOW: — Dave Steuart agrees.

MR. WEATHERALD: — As a matter of fact we'll let Mr. Steuart speak for himself but he doesn't accept it.

MR. ROMANOW: — I can quote him.

MR. WEATHERALD: — Well, you can quote him all you like but we disagree with the interpretation you'll place on it in all likelihood but the fact of the matter is that we do think and we believe that you have no valid reason for drawing an arbitrary line.

Let's take for example, the Member from Meadow Lake (Mr. Coupland) it is practically a certainty that he will have a geographical barrier right in the middle of whatever his new constituency may be.

MR. BOWERMAN: — What will it be?

MR. WEATHERALD: — Well there is approximately 30 miles of bush just south of Meadow Lake and in order to get the population estimate up to the satisfactory amount it is likely he will have to come through that area and take in some of the southern part. In other words whoever the representative is for the Meadow Lake area his new constituency will have a big area there with no population which he has to travel through in order to give them service.

MR. BOWERMAN: — He's got 60 miles now.

MR. WEATHERALD: — Well I'll let the Member for Meadow Lake speak for himself, but the truth of the matter is that you are drawing an arbitrary line across there with no good reason. Now I could add a few good reasons if you want to make a political speech but I think you know them and why you drew the line across there.

MR. ROMANOW: — Why?

MR. WEATHERALD: — So you can try and save a couple of seats up there. That's why. Why else would you draw it across there? Sure you are, that's why you drew the line across there to save a couple of seats up there somehow. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that the Bill provides for increasing the Members to 65. Now I haven't had an opportunity to go back through the records of the Legislature to find out the most Members that we have ever had in this Assembly but I am quite sure that that will set a record of the Members sitting in this Assembly if we go up to the amount of 65 Members. And I might point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is at a time when our population is lower than it has been at other periods of our history, still under a million people. At a time when we have far better roads, telephone service, communication that we ever had before and yet apparently in this Bill it shows a desire to increase to 65 Members. I don't have an objection to an increase above the 60 Members but I do think if it is necessary to go above 60 that this increased number of Members should be in Northern Saskatchewan. I personally fail to see why we should increase the number of Members from 60 to 65, I personally fail to see why Southern Saskatchewan needs five more Members than we have today in our Assembly. If we have a fair distribution we don't need five more Members to represent the same geography that we have been representing for the last many years.

MR. ROMANOW: — That's how you got . . .

MR. WEATHERALD: — Well I could elaborate on the Attorney General's desire to increase to five Members in Southern Saskatchewan too if he wished.

MR. ROMANOW: — Well, elaborate.

MR. WEATHERALD: — Well, okay I will elaborate. I think your Party recognizes that you may be able to keep the same seats you got in rural Saskatchewan and by adding five you won't have to take any out of rural Saskatchewan to put them in the cities. You think you are going to be stronger in the cities in the next election so you are going to add five to the urban areas. That's exactly what you are going to do. You are going to add five to the urban areas so without taking one out of the country. Look at all Southern Saskatchewan. You have Notukeu-Willow Bunch, Bengough, Assiniboia, a lot of those are going to disappear. They are low in population. So if you want to have the same number of seats in rural Saskatchewan you have increased it five so you can add five seats to the cities. Now I don't think that's necessary, 60 Members in Saskatchewan and if you want to add one or two to Northern Saskatchewan, fine, that's good. We don't need five more Members for the southern geography of Saskatchewan. I have had many people coming to me and saying, what have you got 60 Members in the Legislature for, you don't need 60 Members. They didn't need 60 Members in the Legislature

In 1926, and yet we have more communication, a better communication system than ever before and apparently the Attorney General sees fit to raise the Members of the Assembly by five. Precisely why I cannot understand but the facts of the matter are that if he wants to increase the Members he should increase them in the North. Let's do away with this arbitrary line. Public hearings can be held to find out where the constituency should be. I don't know why he should any more draw a line across the North than he should draw a line across between Saskatoon and Regina. I mean there is no particular reason. I am sure if these people can decide where the boundaries will be in the rest of Saskatchewan they can decide where the boundaries will be in Northern Saskatchewan. So I hope that the Attorney General when he stands up will tell us exactly why he has seen fit to draw this line and the particular reason for it, and why he thinks — I know the Bill says we don't have to go to 65, Mr. Speaker, but it is certainly going to be the tendency of whoever that Committee is to go up to the limit. In all likelihood there will be that tendency so we will likely have five more Members in this Assembly after the next election than we have today. I personally do not think this is necessary for Southern Saskatchewan. I would welcome an addition of one or two Members in the northern parts of Saskatchewan. It is a remote area and a difficult area to get around in. I just want to say that I hope the Attorney General will give us somewhat of a satisfactory answer.

I would not have even particularly mentioned these points today, Mr. Speaker, but apparently the Members opposite want to belabor this and this is the third day we have been on Electoral Distribution so . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — You will be here longer.

MR. WEATHERALD: — I can stay all summer, I'm not in any hurry. We've been on it from 2:30 until 5 for three days now. Since they particularly want to belabor it, we hassled it for two or three years before but I do think that since he wants to belabor it he should give us some satisfactory answers as to why he is drawing this line, why he wants an increase in Members.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I must admit that this has been one of the very disappointing days for me listening to the debate from the Members opposite. I don't think I have ever had the 'mispleasure' if there is such a word, of listening to such confused logic, such cheap and petty backbiting, at a Bill as I have had by the contribution of the Members opposite. They did not get to the principle of the Bill. I was extremely surprised that the Members opposite adopted again this particular political stance. They have done this on so many occasions. They will come in, Mr. Speaker, on a particular Bill, criticize it in a million and one different ways. They strongly and vociferously undermine it, giving the impression to the public that they may yet vote for it because they think politically to do otherwise would be very bad. In the course of the debate they do not contribute one solid idea to improve the Bill that is before the House and before the people of the Province of Saskatchewan. If the people of Saskatchewan had the pleasure, and I use that word advisedly, of listening to the nature and the calibre of the debate, they

would never re-elect one Member from the Opposition to this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — I shouldn't say 'not one'. I am going to say that there is one man, again to him I have a great deal of respect, and that's the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart).

It fell again on the Leader of the Opposition to advance, I think, throughout this debate a consistent point of view. The Leader of the Opposition said the Bill was a good Bill yesterday or a few days ago when it came up for the first reading. He said he didn't quarrel with the make-up of the Independent Commission. He also went on to say that he agreed with the composition of two seats in Northern Saskatchewan and I'm going to come back to that specifically.

Now I suppose I'm entitled, as the man who drafted the Bill and the man who introduces it, I'm entitled to assume that the Leader of the Opposition, in fact, speaks for the Opposition Party and not just for himself. But I'm not so sure that's the case. We have again, as we've had in other debates, Mr. Speaker, several of the Opposition MLAs debating without having thought out political strategy. They find fault with the various concepts and ideas of the Bill but not the principle of the Bill and thereby destroying the entire nature of the attack.

I want to say to the Member from Athabasca (Mr. Guy) that his arguments, in particular, I thought were fallacious. Fallacious because I know that he, I suppose thinks that he can use the arguments in running in the next by-election which will be in Athabasca. He is trying to misrepresent the NDP Government as being a Government of gerrymandering. I'm sure that that's exactly what he's going to do, exactly why he made those statements.

I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, and I say to the Member from Athabasca, the principle of this Bill is very simple. It is representation by population in constituencies the boundaries of which have been drawn by the Independent Commission. You are either for representation by population, drawn by an Independent Commission or you're against it. I'm going to deal with the North in just a minute.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — That's the principle and the result of that principle is that there is an elimination of gerrymandering, Mr. Speaker. We've defined already what the purpose of the Bill is, what's the result of the Bill. To defeat gerrymandering. And what is gerrymandering? Generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, it's the manipulation of electoral constituencies for petty, partisan, political advantage. I stress the words "the drawing of constituency boundaries". Constituency boundaries be they in the North or in the South, for partisan political advantage. I say that's what the Bill eliminates. I say what the Bill establishes is representation by population the lines of which are drawn by an Independent Commission.

Now the Member from Athabasca (Mr. Guy) says that he's

going to vote against the Bill because he says up in the North what we've done is we've reduced the number of seats from five to two. He says I can't go for a representation where in effect there are going to be five northern seats now and it's going to be reduced to two. He's referring to Meadow Lake, Prince Albert East, Nipawin, Shellbrook and Athabasca.

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be more fallacious than that point of view and argument advanced by the Member for Athabasca. But I can give him credit because if there is anyone who has the right to say it in this House, it's the Member from Athabasca because that's the only seat that comes from the North, the Member for Athabasca, under the present set-up. Meadow Lake, Prince Albert East, Nipawin and Shellbrook – I invite any Member to dispute me on this – can be determined electorally solely on the basis of the votes of those voters who are located south of the line that's been drawn. The only constituency that can be truly representative of the North, that can only truly elect the people of the North and their interests, is Athabasca on the present boundary line. But yet the Member from Athabasca he says that we are cutting the northern representation down from five to two. The Member from Cannington (Mr. Weatherald) who took his seat, said, "What's the reason for putting specifically two northern seats in the riding". Specifically the reason, Mr. Member, is that if you left the basis of the constituency boundaries for the North to be determined on the same formulas we use for the South, we'd have a grave danger that there would be no seats coming out of the North because there isn't enough population to justify one. If we want to have a northern presence, if we want to have a strong northern voice, we've got to legislate a special northern interest and we're giving an increased northern interest from the one Athabasca to two.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — And I want to say to the Member from Athabasca that the Commission is in fact going to be drawing the lines for those two boundaries. What we have to do though for the Commission if we are going to say in fact that there is a policy decision of this Government and of this House to have a voice for the North what we have to do is to draw the line for the North. Nobody would dispute that, even the Leader of the Opposition. He spoke up the other day in this House. I have here a copy of the Hansard, the 29th day, page 32 and he says this:

When you look at the Bill and you consider what they are doing in the North, (again I'm sure Mr. Guy will have a point or two to say about this).

I might stop, Mr. Speaker, from the debate and I would say the Leader of the Opposition at the time didn't think that the Member from Athabasca would have that many points to say . . .

will have a point or two to say about this. Mr. Feschuk, Mr. Coupland and other Members who represent Northern Saskatchewan. I think that the idea that we will guarantee so many seats for the North is sound . . .

the Leader of the Opposition said.

MR. GUY: — He didn't say . . .

MR. ROMANOW: — Pardon me!

MR. GUY: — He didn't say that you would set the boundaries.

MR. ROMANOW: — The Member says that we were going to set the boundaries. The Leader of the Opposition when he said that in second reading had the second reading, the printed Bill before him and knew that the boundary was going to be set by the division line. I assumed that he reads the Bills that he gets on his table. I assume that he understands what the Bills are when he gets them on his table. I know he did in this case because he talked about the division line and he still said that he agrees with the principle which guarantees two northern seats because it's an increase in the one northern seat we have now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — Hon. Member from Athabasca talks about this great northern representation. The Member from Meadow Lake (Mr. Coupland) how many times has he toured the North? I'm not criticizing him. The Member from Prince Albert East Cumberland comes from 14 miles out of Prince Albert. How many times can he possibly understand and represent the wishes of the North? The Member from Nipawin (Mr. Comer) comes right from the town of Nipawin. How many times can he get around to see them? The Member from Shellbrook, right from Shellbrook (Mr. Bowerman), how much can he get around? The only Member who speaks, and I'm not so sure that he even speaks for the North now in the light of the June election, is the Member from Athabasca (Mr. Guy).

Now the Member from Athabasca gets up and he would represent to us that that is a cut-back of northern votes. Then I thought even more disparagingly of the Member's integrity and the strength of his arguments in this regard when he made the suggestion that we were cutting it back. That was the comment across the floor. It was "Roy's gerrymander" because there were five seats and the implication was that we were going to be using this to cut back on Liberal held seats. Nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker, because of those five so-called northern seats, three are on our side and two are on their side — a correction, one is on their side and one is presently being held in trust by the Court of Appeal for their side.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — Now, Mr. Speaker the Member from Athabasca goes on to say about what they've done in this gerrymander. And I remind you now, Mr. Speaker and Members of this House to keep in mind the definition of gerrymander. He says, why, they have taken a third of the riding out of Shellbrook, they've taken a third of the riding out of Meadow Lake, what he's talking about, of course, is a third in terms of area. To that extent he may be 100 per cent right, but I say to him, as I said at the very beginning, the principle of this Bill is representation not by area but by population. Representation by population, based on constituency lines drawn by an Independent Commission.

For the Member from Athabasca or any Member to get up in this House and to suggest that a third of the riding has been manipulated out of one riding into another and to attach the word gerrymander to that, is the most crass form of political debate this House has seen. And there is no other way around that because it is a simple attempt by the Member from Athabasca to be able to catch a headline or two in the Press and go back up to Athabasca when he is campaigning and say, look what they have done with respect to the riding, a third of the riding is going to go. Gerrymander, that's what the Member for Milestone (Mr. MacDonald) described it. Gerrymander, that's what the Member from Athabasca described this Bill. That's what he says this Bill is. He says he's going to vote against two guaranteed northern seats that his Leader supports. He says that he favors the present system, where there are four out of five Members who now live in southern Saskatchewan. He says that this Government is drawing the basic gerrymandering line. He's going to vote against this Bill. Well, good luck to him for voting against this Bill. I challenge every Member on that side of the House to vote against this Bill if they support what the Member from Athabasca does . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — . . . because I'm going to, like everybody in this House who votes for the Bill, to Meadow Lake or to Athabasca, and put forward the view of those on the opposite side who vote against it on the basis that somehow drawing a north-south line that roughly parallels the northern administration district that somehow that's a form of gerrymander. Well I'm going to tell the people of the North that that's not a gerrymander. If it's a gerrymander, it's a gerrymander to give them a stronger voice and for that I make no apologies.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — And then the Member for Milestone (Mr. MacDonald) got into this debate in what I think he said were the weaknesses of the Bill. I say it was the weakest speech I've heard him ever deliver.

And I want to combine what I say about the Member from Milestone with the comments made by the Member from Wilkie (Mr. McIsaac) on this question of rural interest.

I'm very concerned about rural interest. I think every Member in this House can legitimately take the position that we are very worried about maintaining a strong rural voice. I still can't understand the Member from Cannington's mathematics. I don't think that if I'm in this House for 15 years I'll ever be able to understand his mathematics. But it doesn't matter. If we did as the Member from Cannington says we should do, he says we shouldn't have 63 in the South, we should remain at the 60 and then add on anything that we have for the North. He seems to imply that there should be a northern form of division.

MR. WEATHERALD: — Mr. Speaker, what I said was we had no objection to creating more seats in northern Saskatchewan but I did also go on to say that if we were not creating more seats in northern Saskatchewan 60 was sufficient to serve the province as it is.

MR. ROMANOW: — Now, the Member says he has no objection to creating northern seats. How do you create northern seats but by drawing a division line between the North and the South to say they're northern seats? The very thing you're opposed to. How do you create northern seats if you say you are for it and the Member from Athabasca says that he's for it without saying there's going to be a boundary line dividing the North and the South? What's northern?

MR. WEATHERALD: — Let the Commission draw the line.

MR. ROMANOW: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can't understand the thinking of the Member from Cannington. He says there should be 60 Members. He argues that. The Member's deskmate from Wilkie (Mr. McIsaac) says that we should maintain a strong rural voice.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the Members of this House to contemplate what degree of rural representation there would be if we left it at 60 seats, on the basis of representation by population. It would be inevitable that on that basis out of the 60 seats there would be a dramatic shift over from the rural to the urban. This is the very thing that the Member from Wilkie and his deskmate complains of.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — And yet the Member from Cannington argues that we should maintain it at 60, apart from the ones in the northern constituency lines we were drawing. He may have even suggested there is a need for a rural voice, I don't know but I want to tell the Member from Cannington that there is no easier way to kill the rural voice than by limiting this Bill to 60 seats, period.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — The Member from Milestone, and his deskmate the Member from Wilkie, say they are very worried about Section 16 and the effect this is going to have on rural Saskatchewan. And then the Member from Milestone goes on to talk for the Press about the importance of rural Saskatchewan. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that Section 16 covers the points that he raises. If you look at Section 16 the Commission has several options open to it to take into account the interests of rural Saskatchewan. It says quite clearly in the Bill — "the Commission shall consider special geographic considerations, particular and peculiar densities of population, particular and peculiar community interest and so forth". You don't have to talk about a rural interest. Any Commission that comes from Saskatchewan knows a rural interest that will exist there.

So I say that the contents of Sections A and B in Section 16 give the Commission the flexibility to take into account the rural interest.

As for the Member from Wilkie, I don't think he read the Bill. He argued that the 15 per cent fluctuation should be taken away because he argued somehow the 15 per cent fluctuation

could affect the rural interest. I want to tell the Member from Wilkie and those opposite that that's precisely why the 15 per cent fluctuation is there. To give the Commission the necessary flexibility to take 15 per cent less of the quotient for a rural seat and 15 per cent more of the quotient for an urban seat, thereby cutting down the amount of urban representation and increasing and maintaining the amount of rural representation. We're not going to remove that 15 per cent quotient, Mr. Speaker, it's there to help rural Saskatchewan, notwithstanding how confused the Member from Wilkie may be and tells the people of Saskatchewan in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — I've already said to the Member from Cannington and to the Member from Wilkie when we say there are 63 seats, I'm not requiring that there be 63 seats. That the Commission will decide. If your Party feels very strongly that there has to be a rural need, as I think our Party does, you'll have a chance to appear before the Commission and make that point for 63. There are going to be public hearings and I personally hope the Commission very carefully studies this question of 63 seats. But the Government is not requiring 63 seats that's given to the Commission to decide on the basis of the representations and what it feels the needs are for the people of Saskatchewan.

I ask all Members to keep in mind that this is a Legislature based on the principle of representation by population. It's not a Legislature that is designed to reflect special interest groups or small, narrow constituencies. Democracy is rooted in the principle of representation by population.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — We must reflect on the composition of this House what is Saskatchewan today. If there is a trend to urbanization, it must be reflected in the seats that are held. It's got to be reflected if it's going to be truly a Legislature of the people of the Province of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — We must not at the same time allow ourselves to be over-governed, purely for the interests of any special interest group. I suppose that argument may be applied against drawing a special line for the North, in the sense of over-representation, but I think that that is necessary for northern Saskatchewan and I make no apologies for recognizing that special interest. But we must guard against being over-represented simply because of certain particular economic interests that may or may not exist in the Province of Saskatchewan today.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks with respect to this debate by saying what I said at the very outset.

I'm disappointed and all of Saskatchewan is disappointed that the Liberal Party is going to vote against this Bill. I'm very disappointed that the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan will vote on reasons that have been advanced like the Member from Milestone advances. He says, "Why, Mr. Speaker, you shouldn't

be allowed to appoint a Member. Not that we're suggesting you are not impartial, Mr. Speaker", he says. "Far be it from us to suggest that you're not impartial, but just in case that you might be, we're not going to allow or agree to that principle that you should appoint a Member". And when my colleague from Arm River (Mr. Faris) got up and said, "What does he say about the Federal House where the Speaker appoints two Members of the three?" He says, "Oh, I would have thought we've already advanced above that point".

Now it's strange for the Saskatchewan Liberals ever to advance beyond the Federal Liberals in any area.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — . . . or to advance beyond any political party in any part of Saskatchewan on any issue.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — It's a funny thing, all of a sudden the Member from Athabasca and the Member from Milestone say I hope that we would have advanced a little further than something that we've only pioneered five or six years ago.

Somehow this Bill, Mr. Speaker, to them, doesn't represent an advancement from the days in the dark corners of the Cabinet Chamber dominated by the Liberals when that infamous committee drew the line. Somehow that is not an advancement to them. Somehow they are going to vote against that principle. Well, I am very saddened that they are going to vote against it, Mr. Speaker, because I think that this Bill needs more or less unanimity to really make it work. But in many ways I think it is important for the people of Saskatchewan to know that the Liberals of this Province don't now, never have and never will believe in the principle of an Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — I think it is important to know that the man who has publicly said that he is going to vote against this Bill, the Member for Athabasca, was one of the five who gerrymandered the province so infamously in 1970. The man who is now Leader of the Opposition was the man who introduced that Bill back in 1970. I am not surprised that for four of the Committee there is abhorrence of this type of a Bill. Therefore, they are going to vote against it. I think it is important for the Province of Saskatchewan to spot that type of activity by the Liberal Party. I can only say this, Mr. Speaker, that if the Liberals vote against this Bill all of them, or a significant portion of them, they will have registered their political faith for years to come in the minds of the people of Saskatchewan. I say that anybody who does vote against the principle of this Bill in fact deserves to have his fate sealed and not return to the Treasury Benches of this Government again.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — It gives me a great deal of

Blakeney	Whelan	Oliver
Dyck	Carlson	Feschuk
Meakes	Engel	Kaeding
Romanow	Tchorzewski	Flasch
Snyder	Richards	Steuart
Bowerman	Owens	Loken
Kramer	Robbins	Grant
Thibault	Matsalla	MacDonald (Milestone)
Larson	Cowley	McIsaac
Kowalchuk	Gross	Gardner
Baker	Feduniak	Weatherald
Brockelbank	Comer	McPherson
MacMurchy	Rolfes	Lane
Pepper	Lange	MacDonald (Moose Jaw North)
Bvers	Hanson	

Coupland Guy

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Blakeney that Bill No. 68 – **An Act respecting the termination of the Athabasca Pulp Mill Project** be now read a second time.

MR. H.E. COUPLAND (Meadow Lake): — As I said before I adjourned debate last week, the previous Government was seriously interested in providing jobs for the people of Saskatchewan. That is why we invited and encouraged industry to locate in the province.

I was home over the weekend and my attention was drawn to a picture in the front of our local paper. It was a picture of the first carload of over 40,000 board feet of studs going to the States. They all indicated to me that this was just an indication of the big things that could have taken place in Meadow Lake if we still had the pulp mill. There are over 70 men working in that sawmill and I might add here that their work record is perfect, there are probably double that in the bush operations.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion this is the most backward step a Government in Saskatchewan has ever taken in the history of this Province. I feel they listened to a group of professors

on pollution and used this politically to get elected. It is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that this same group who helped the Party opposite get elected were not allowed into their convention. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if they realize that this pollution bit was so much propaganda and they do not want the same group to embarrass them now that they are the Government with more of that type of propaganda. You know they always make a big thing about K.P. Lucas, Assistant Deputy Minister making a statement, and I can assure them that as soon as I read the article I sat down and wrote this gentleman a letter and told him that we didn't appreciate these irresponsible statements coming out here in Saskatchewan.

They also had a promise to keep, to the Waffle element of their Party who were pressing for the cancellation of the pulp mill. Mr. Speaker, much as they like to try and deny it, the cancellation of the pulp mill at Meadow Lake was purely political and with no regard to the benefits of the people of Saskatchewan. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that hundreds of people, not only in the Meadow Lake constituency, but all over Saskatchewan tell me they wish the Premier had not called the election until this spring so that the pulp mill would have been far enough along that there would be no way you could have cancelled it. The Premier seems to think he is making mileage by crying about a signature on May 17th but I wish for the welfare of the people of Saskatchewan that I could have signed some agreements that would have guaranteed over 1,000 people a job in this Province. We wouldn't have the unemployment we have today, if we were still the Government.

By cancelling the pulp mill at Meadow Lake and the iron mine at Choceland the Government has set the pattern for industry in Saskatchewan. We are seeing since the cancellation many other industries packing up and leaving the province, before the socialists get their fingers into their business any deeper. With unemployment at the highest level in this Province I believe it is time the Government opposite, Mr. Speaker, tell industrial people that we want industrial expansion in this Province. They seem to think the tourist industry is the answer. I am not opposed to the tourist industry and in fact I have always been in favor and tried to encourage more tourists into Saskatchewan and especially the northwest. Mr. Speaker, more tourists were coming into the Meadow Lake area where there was activity and construction and development and coming in because of the pulp mill. When you think of the number of workers that would have been working that area that could take advantage of the beautiful lakes and rivers and so on with fishing and hunting that we have, this would have increased our tourist industry.

Mr. Speaker, it is a sad situation in this Province when the Government goes out of its way to do away with jobs, this they did in Meadow Lake where they put hundreds out of work plus many more who would have had the opportunity to get gainful employment. I say, Mr. Speaker, that we have to get away from the socialist attitude of the Government opposite and get back on the track of inviting and encouraging industry and yes even helping industry to stay and relocate in the province.

I should like to point out that even their Members opposite on some occasions have said they should encourage industry. I want to quote the Member from Touchwood (Mr. Meakes) who said in the 1969 Hansard, and I quote:

This Government boasts of its interest in getting industry into this Province.

This was the Member for Touchwood speaking in the Indian and Metis debate and he is talking about the Government at that time. He says:

Well I say that it is, let it do something about the situation, even to the point of giving incentives to industry that would locate in areas like Meadow Lake, Kamsack or Punnichy.

This is what the Member from Touchwood said. Now the Members opposite chase it out and I am wondering why he doesn't get in touch with some of his Members over there.

Mr. Speaker, the Government opposite say the Liberal policy didn't keep industry in the province, and we are not talking about what happened some years ago. They are the ones who promised to make Saskatchewan the land of milk and honey. Mr. Speaker, the way things are going, there won't be many jobs left for the people who want to work. If it hadn't been for the Federal Liberal money in the Meadow Lake area this past winter many more people in our area would have had to rely on welfare. The increase in minimum wage and shorter hours put in force by this Government put a lot of people out of work and will continue to do so as time goes by. It has also forced consumers to pay more for the goods and services.

All in all, Mr. Speaker, I just can't understand the Government, when the welfare in the Meadow Lake area alone has increased by 83 per cent within the last year, in fact, less than a year. I put it all down to the fact that it is due to the cancellation of the pulp mill and this in turn scares all industrial investment in our Province. I certainly can't support this Bill.

HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, this Bill before the House is important I think for a number of reasons, not only for what it does, but for what it symbolizes. I think it symbolizes quite clearly a very different approach that exists, as the Member from Cannington says, between the Government of the day, the New Democratic Party Government and the government of the Liberals opposite. I think that much has been said about the poor nature of the deal that was arranged by the Liberal administration. I think it is now well established and the people of Saskatchewan have really accepted that as an argument that the financial arrangements of the industry were somewhat risky, if I may term it that way at best, because of a heavy exposure on the part of the Government of Saskatchewan. I think the election results clearly showed, you can interpret election results any way you want, but in my view I certainly know that I campaigned everywhere throughout the Province of Saskatchewan against the Athabasca mill, for this reason and for another reason, the question of water pollution and what effect the mill would have on water pollution and I think the people bought those arguments. I think the work done by the former Liberal Government on water pollution was contradictory and was inadequate . . . Van Luven . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — I would ask the Minister of Health to remove his pipe. It is against the House rules.

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, that's not only a breach of the rules, but unhealthy, unhealthy in more ways than one.

I was saying, Mr. Speaker, that there is also a danger in that particular operation with respect to water pollution and that has been established as well.

A third reason for defeating the project was the question of the reforestation and forest management practices used by the operation. I think these can be said to be again somewhat ill-defined. I think there is legitimate debate as to the nature of the supply, certainly some questions were raised by the Opposition of the day about the Prince Albert experience in this area. I think enough legitimate questions could be asked in this regard. So that what I say, Mr. Speaker, on the Athabasca mill, is that for those three reasons clearly, there is adequate reason for cancellation of the agreement. Clearly, it was a bad, bad deal financially. The water pollution protection was inadequate and confusing and thirdly, the forest management aspect was I think similarly inadequate and confusing. The people of Saskatchewan bought that argument I submitted in the election of June 23.

Mr. Speaker, there are however, many other aspects to this proposed deal. Comments were made by many Members of the House about respective planning respecting the entire operation. These are comments that I think require further statement. I propose to make some further statements and comments with respect to this the next time this matter comes up. Because I am not prepared at this time, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:27 o'clock p.m.