

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Third Session — Seventeenth Legislature
18th Day

Monday, February 19, 1973

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

On the Orders of the Day.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Mr. Meakes (Touchwood): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce to you and through you to the House a group of 20 Grade Eight students from the school at Lipton. They are in the east gallery accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Ast and their bus driver, Mr. Hepting. I will be meeting with them later on this afternoon. I know that all Members of the House hope they will have an enjoyable and educational day and a safe journey home.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan (Regina North West): — Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to introduce to this House two groups of students from the Al Picard School in Regina North West. The school is named after a popular teacher, Vern Byrne. They are Grade Eight students and I understand they are studying the history of democracy.

The second group of 48 students from the same school, are Grade Four students. They are in the east gallery with their teacher, Vic Craig. I understand they are studying the Government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, on behalf of the Hon. Member for Regina North East, the Hon. Walter Smishek, the Minister of Health, I should like to introduce 74 Grade Eight students from St. Augustine School. Their teacher is James Frolick and Rose Marie Makelski is with them. They are located in the Speaker's Gallery and in the west gallery. They are from the Regina North East riding. Members welcome these students, I am sure, to the Legislature and we hope that their stay will be pleasant and educational while they are with us.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Gardner (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, I should also like to be permitted a word of welcome to the students who are here today from Al Picard School. My son teaches Grade Seven and Eight at this school and I am sure that he would want me to welcome these students here today. Perhaps they can give him my regards when they return to Al Picard.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Regina Wascana): — Mr. Speaker, I too should like to join the Member from Touchwood (Mr. Meakes) in welcoming the students from the Lipton School. I may say that was my home town where I was born and raised. I couldn't think of a better place to have

this happen, than to be born in a place like Lipton. That is where I took my public and high school education. I want to greet them and hope they will have a pleasant stay this afternoon.

I should like to include in my greetings a welcome to the students of St. Augustine School. I see the Minister isn't here as their Member to greet them. They were in my constituency for a good number of years until 1970, and hopefully they will be back in my seat after the next redistribution. They are seated in the Speaker's and other galleries. May you have a pleasant stay here and that your experience will be most fruitful.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. MacMurchy (Last Mountain): — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and to Members of this House some 40 students from the high school at Nokomis which is at the centre of Last Mountain constituency. They are seated in the west gallery and along with them is their teacher, Mr. Pirie. We welcome them. We hope that their day has been enjoyable and educational. I am looking forward to seeing each one of them a bit later this afternoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENT

Completion of Highway to Uranium City

Hon. Mr. Bowerman (Minister of Northern Saskatchewan): — Mr. Speaker, I want to read and lay on the table for the information of the House a communication which was received from Uranium City, the Saskatchewan town that is the farthest to our northern borders. It is with respect to the decision of the Government for the provision of a road to the community of Uranium City. I quote:

Sincere thanks and hearty congratulations on your completion of the road from Prince Albert to Uranium City. This is the first time that a Saskatchewan Government has risen to its responsibilities and put a road out to the south. Even our previous requests for snowplowing assistance on winter roads were rejected. This road is a great help to all Uranium City residents. Practically all merchants take advantage of cheaper freight rates, the saving of 1 1½ cents per pound on staple goods, which is passed on to all consumers. The increased payroll has helped the economy of the town and, last, but by no means least, the knowledge that we can drive out for a weekend for a visit without first having to pay a return fare of \$110, and just knowing that we can get out has given us all a wintertime psychological lift.

Once again, congratulations and thanks.

Signed by: The President, Chamber of Commerce, Uranium City.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Guy (Athabasca): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to make just one or two comments. Certainly I am very happy that the road is being completed to Uranium City. They have been asking for it for several years. However, the statement is not absolutely true that this is the first time that there has been such a road. We contributed sums of money on two or three separate occasions to complete a winter road to Uranium City.

We all recognize, of course, that it is only the last two years that the road has gone through to Cluff Lake which is, of course, not that far from Uranium City and makes it a much more viable economic fact to be able to complete the road from Cluff Lake to Uranium City. This is really the reason why the road has been completed on this particular occasion. We are certainly happy that it has been done.

I should like to ask the Minister: Will this road be also available to them during the summer? I think this would be of great assistance also.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Bowerman: — It is obvious that the Member who represents the Athabasca constituency doesn't realize that the ice breaks up in the summertime. Obviously, if we are going to have a road across Lake Athabasca in the wintertime on the ice, it will not be there in the summertime. However, I am sure that if he gets back into his constituency at least once or twice during the next two or three years, it is available to him. The people in Uranium City will advise him of that fact.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Four-lane Extension on No. 1 Highway East

Mr. Gardner (Moosomin): — Before the Orders of the Day I should like to ask a question of the Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer).

In view of the continued tragic accident toll on No. 1 Highway east of Regina — you will recall this from last year — as recently as last night two people in my constituency were killed in a head-on collision at Broadview. I should like to ask the Minister if he would reconsider his announced policy of cutting down on building and improvements on these high traffic and therefore dangerous roads, and specifically, would he consider resuming the four-lane extension on No. 1 east of Regina?

Hon. Mr. Kramer (Minister of Highways): — Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge there has been no discontinuance of any roads, any four-lane roads. And, secondly, everything possible has been done during the last summer to upgrade some of the areas that are considered to be accident prone and everything will be continued to be done at a greater rate than ever before.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Absence of Mr. Speaker

Hon. Mr. Blakeney (Premier): — Mr. Deputy Speaker, may I take this occasion to advise the House that the absence of Mr. Speaker, is that he is on behalf of the Government and the Legislature of Saskatchewan responding to a request from the Government that he be present at the funeral of the Late Hon. Frank Bastedo, the former Lieutenant-Governor. Mr. Speaker is in Victoria representing the Government and the Legislature. That is why he is not with us today.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION

Special Committee on Highway Traffic Safety

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. R. Romanow (Attorney General):

That a special committee consisting of nine members of this Assembly, to be named at a later date, be appointed to conduct an enquiry into all matters relating to highway traffic and safety, including a consideration of the number of accidents and the loss of life and the causes thereof and preventative and rehabilitative measures which are being or might be taken to reduce the same and including the laws relating to highway traffic and the enforcement thereof

And that such Committee will have power to sit during the intersessional period and during any Legislative Session, except when the Assembly is sitting;

And that such Committee will have power to send for persons, papers and records and to examine witnesses under oath; to receive representations from interested citizens and organizations; to engage such advisors and assistants as are required for the purpose of an enquiry; to require the assistance of staff employed by departments and agencies of the Government and to hold meetings at and away from the seat of Government in order that the fullest representations may be received without unduly inconveniencing those desiring to be heard.

Mr. Weatherald (Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, because of some remarks I made about this Resolution before the House last week I don't expect to be very lengthy this afternoon. However, I do want to bring to the attention of the House one of the points that my colleague the Member for Moosomin (Mr. Gardner) has just raised regarding No. 1 Highway.

If you will recall, last winter we raised a question of the problems of traffic accidents, I believe, that 19 had taken place in a space of 14 months on this stretch of highway. We raised this to the Government benches at that particular time saying that this was a very, very high death rate and that the Government needed to take into account the problems of accidents on this section of road and that they needed to consider this

in future programming for highways.

This, I believe, is very, very closely related to what we are discussing in this Resolution, because it is very obvious to those of us in the Opposition that there is a great deal that the Government can do that is not connected necessarily with alcohol that would reduce death rates on our highways. I think that the tragic accident of the weekend demonstrates the position that we took at that time, a year ago. I think that it should demonstrate to the Minister of Highways how wrong he is when he talks about the so-called champagne roads that he is going to discontinue.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald: — I think, Mr. Speaker, that the Members would be very, very wise were they to forget about their old harpings of building four-lane highways such as was built to Moose Jaw and were quick to adopt such a policy of building a four-lane highway from here to the Manitoba border.

It is certainly noteworthy that Manitoba, this year, is building a four-lane highway as far as Brandon. There is a possibility of them coming farther than Brandon from Winnipeg. It is already as far as Portage and will come this year, my understanding is, as far as Brandon with a possibility if this is a good road building year it may come even farther.

It appears that Saskatchewan is going to be the province in the middle of Western Canada that people, driving on four-lane roads, as soon as they hit Saskatchewan at least if they are coming from the east going west, are automatically going to be back on two-lane highways. I think that it has been already demonstrated the difficulties that are being experienced there.

I think it is very unfortunate if the Governments puts too much emphasis in our problems regarding traffic safety and connects it too closely with liquor. I think what we want to make clear to the Government is that there are many things that they can do now that will help the avoidance of accidents and that there are some things which they are seriously doing in a deliberate manner because they are spending money elsewhere, which we think is false economy.

Mr. Speaker, with these few remarks I want to reiterate what the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart) said. That while we support the setting up of this Committee, that we do not think that it should be any reason why the Government does not bring into action methods which can bring about improvements as far as reducing our accidents is concerned. We intend to press the Government for a change in this policy as far as four-laning of the highway east of here is concerned. We think it is imperative. We think that they should reconsider it. I think it is very unfortunate that the Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer) has dubbed this type of road as a champagne highway, and therefore not necessary.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meakes (Touchwood): — Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to enter this debate

until just before the Hon. Member from Cannington sat down the other day. He made a statement, and I would have liked to have answered him at that time, but he moved adjournment and you can't argue with adjournment so I waited until today.

I want to quote from the records of February 7, 1973 on page 473. Mr. Speaker, I want the Members of this House to hear what he said, in part:

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that some Members have taken advantage of the Committee system and that this should cease.

And then further down near the bottom, I am going to quote his last little bit. He said:

Mr. Speaker, I simply say that the Committee system has its usefulness, but I believe abuses have been setting in. I want to say personally as a Member of this House that I intend to watch closely on this Committee and how it conducts itself. I have no knowledge whatsoever as to whether I will be a Member or not, but I am serving notice that if I was a member I think that some of the advantages, financial and otherwise that members have taken of this committee system, should not be allowed to continue.

Mr. Speaker, I say that that statement — he should either put up or shut up. This accusation, the statement in the House, can certainly be construed by any member of any committee of this House, but in particular the committee that he and I served on. If he is going to make this kind of a statement, I think he should explain what he meant. Either that or apologize.

The only other thing that I am going to say is that I think this Committee is a very important committee. It is a committee that should be given lots of leeway to explore all possible accidents and the safety of the highways. I certainly take great pleasure in supporting this. I don't know whether I will be a member but I am sure that a committee of this kind can be of great benefit towards finding the answers to this tragic rising accident ratio, not only in this province, but all over the North American continent.

Many Members may know that I made a trip over the Christmas holidays and drove to Los Angeles and back. I don't know whether ours is any better or any worse, but wherever you go you see wrecked cars and accidents. Surely we must find some way to try to eliminate — I know that we will never completely eliminate the accidents — but surely we can find some way of cutting them down.

Mr. Speaker, that is all I have to say except that, again, I think the Hon. Member from Cannington is extremely unfair to the Members of this House, both on that side and on this side, when he makes a blanket statement that says some members of the committees took advantage both financially and otherwise. I am certainly going to support the motion.

Mr. Weatherald: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Privilege. If I were allowed to get back on my feet I would be most pleased to elaborate to the Member for Touchwood exactly what I meant.

Mr. Kwasnica (Cut Knife): — Mr. Speaker, I rise to take part in this debate to add my consent and wholehearted support to the establishment of a Highway Traffic Safety Legislative Committee and I bring to the experience of the House some 12 years as driver instructor in Saskatchewan schools.

I feel that the Resolution should not be limited to its studies only in highway traffic but I assume that it will have a fairly broad scope and will include every type of road in the province, street, grid, access roads and all sorts of land vehicles as well.

I should like to say a word or two about comments made by Opposition Members to date in this debate. The Member from Lumsden (Mr. Lane) and the Member who just sat down took this opportunity to attack the Minister of Highways, rather than to talk about the seriousness of the situation and the need for a committee to establish what the priorities should be in traffic safety in our province. What have they added to this debate so far to show that there is a need and a serious concern? One major comment that the Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer) is not building any more four-lane highways, therefore, that has ended all the traffic safety in the Province of Saskatchewan, that is their major attack so far, that is their major contribution to this debate.

Now really, that shows the depth of thinking of the Members opposite. Studies have shown over and over again that 90 per cent of the accidents that occur on highways and on roads are the direct fault of the driver. And the other 10 per cent is a fault of the automobile or some mechanical failure. Members opposite say that all you have to do to solve the accident problem in the province is build expensive roads. And they are 90 per cent wrong, as usual.

The comment made that this Government is stressing liquor as a solution to ending all the accidents of the highways is absolutely nonsense. That is what this Committee is all about. To find out what it is that needs to be done in this Province to help curb the sharp rise in accidents in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I see the problem of traffic safety in Saskatchewan as needing a three dimensional approach. That approach is known as the three 'E's' by highway traffic safety people. These are (1) Education, (2) good Engineering — the building of good roads which the Members opposite seem to stress only, and (3) Enforcement. I should like to take a minute to elaborate on each of these items and I see that the Committee has a big job ahead to decide what the priority should be in these three areas.

First of all as far as education goes, I have already made mention to studies that have proven that when accidents occur they are 90 per cent the fault of the driver himself; he has made some misjudgments. Therefore education has got to be pretty high in priority and we in Saskatchewan can safely boast that we have a fairly good driver education program in our province. However, not all high schools in the province have the advantage of a driver education program. We could do much better. But that is not to say that these students in Grade 10, 11 and 12 are the only ones who need training.

What about our older people? What have we got for them, as far as education and training to make them good sound drivers? They were born and raised during the horse and buggy days and today we have a different picture altogether. So our Committee will have to look at what more can be done in that field of education.

What is wrong with starting education regarding vehicles at the kindergarten level? After all young people like to drive, everything from toy bikes to cars and motor bikes and we have got to start very early to get them in the right frame of mind, so that they realize that it is not just a matter of jumping into a car which has 400 horsepower and tear into the wild blue yonder. There is no doubt that as far as adult drivers go, there should be across the province many driver education seminars being held. They should be free of cost so that anyone who feels that he wants to go and learn something about driving can attend those courses available in communities across the province.

There is no doubt that education will be very important in this matter. There is no doubt that driver education pays off. I want to bring to the attention of Members of the House that a study has been made, statistical studies of how well students do who are trained as opposed to those who are not trained. I bring to the attention of the House, a study done in Tennessee whereby some 5,000 students who were trained where their accident records were checked out very carefully and 5,000 students who were not trained where their accident record was checked out over a period of five years. This study showed that the boys who were trained reduced their accident rate by some 47 per cent. The girls who were trained of the 5,000 who were studied did much better, they reduced their accident rate by 53 per cent. So there is no doubt that driver education has its place.

Really a lot more should be done and must be done. Similarly we had a study done in Saskatchewan in 1960 when the high school driver training program was in effect for some 10 years in larger centres. That study showed again that driver education for high school students pays dividends. That study showed that our programs for the students taking them reduced their accident rate by 20 per cent roughly. So in other words one in every five accidents was avoided by students who were trained. Now that is not as good as the Tennessee study. We have our own problems here in the province regarding weather conditions and the like. So no doubt the Committee will have to really take a serious look at what must be done, what can we do better in the field of education right from the kindergarten level to the old age pensioner who is still driving his vehicle.

I said that education was one of the three legs we could use to prop up traffic safety in the province. The second one would be engineering. The Members opposite seem to stress this as the only method of solving the traffic problem. There is no doubt we have to look at our roads to see what more can be done. They have to be well designed, well lighted, properly designed, no doubt about that. We have already heard some talk about the problems of approaches to highways and how upon impact, serious accidents occur. Maybe these can be levelled and so on. There is no doubt too, that we could be looking along our highways at the matter of removing all obstructions like telephone poles and power poles.

There have been some studies done about the feasibility of planting certain types of shrubs as buffers at the edge of ditches. We find that a hedge that is very hardy in the prairies, is very suitable for this type of thing is the caragana hedge. If we would consider a program of planting hedges 10 to 20 feet deep along the road sides, these would make excellent crash barriers, reduce damages to the vehicles, reduce serious injury to people inside the automobile. Maybe such a program could be carried out. Well the Committee would have to look into this type of thing.

If education and engineering don't seem to solve the traffic problems, then obviously we are going to have to take a look at how our enforcement is doing. This is the third leg that I say we must look at to support traffic in the province. The Committee will have to examine whether the type of enforcement we have in the province is doing the job it is supposed to do. Or are we really in effect simply enforcing for a punitive reason. I feel that in too many instances the law enforcers, not meaning any disrespect to them, enforce in sort of a pesky way. Not really being fair to the driver, they enforce from the standpoint that I am the authority and you better do what I say or else. I think we need a more friendly, a more educated type of enforcement from our enforcement people. There is no doubt that the more people violate traffic laws the larger the number of accidents will be. Studies have shown this. An accident has occurred and our traffic people check back to see what this driver has done and we find that usually when a driver has gotten into an accident, he has violated several traffic laws prior to the accident. Here our Committee will have to do a lot more work in this area as well.

There is no doubt that liquor plays a major role in the cause of accidents in our province as it does in every other province. We are going to have to take a look at this too and we have already made suggestions that maybe the .08 should be reduced to .06, which I would be in favor of. There is no doubt that liquor is not only a problem with drivers but with pedestrians as well. I recall a study done also in the United States where they found that of the pedestrians that were involved in traffic accidents, one in every four of them had been drinking. So we have the problem also of drinking pedestrians as well as drinking drivers.

The proposed committee will be extremely useful. It will have a chance to explore all these areas, to bring in new ideas, new approaches to the problems of traffic safety in Saskatchewan. In comments made by Members opposite about legislative committees and the work that they do, it is pretty plain that this Committee, as all the others have been, will have to do a good job. There is a lot to be done. We ask that the Members opposite when they are asked to work on this Committee dig in and put their shoulder to the wheel and see if we can solve many of the traffic problems we have in Saskatchewan today.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt about it that in my view with the serious upsurge in traffic accidents in the province as of late, the millions of dollars of damage to vehicles in the province, that we in this Assembly must set up a legislative committee which will be able to examine the problems of traffic safety. We must be able to receive representations from interested persons and organizations, to engage whatever advisors and assistants that are required for the purpose of this

enquiry. This Committee should be set up with the greatest speed so that we can get down to work, perhaps by the next sitting of the House we will have a report which will be meaningful and will add some benefit to the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I certainly will be supporting the motion to set up the Committee

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel (Notukeu-Willow Bunch): — Mr. Speaker, there are four reasons why I am entering the debate to establish this Committee for Highway Safety.

One, committee work has a history of good results in Saskatchewan, regardless of what the Members opposite are saying. Second, the committee approach gives the backbencher and the Members sitting opposite a chance to have a constructive part in new legislation. Third, through the avenue of a legislative committee the public has a chance to participate in problem solving. And fourthly, a legislative committee when tackling this question of highway deaths can bring together the knowledge of people who work in our hospitals, of people in the police force and of people who are highway safety experts. Together the committee and these people can come up with some solutions that should dramatically decrease the accident rate in this province.

The first reason that committee work has a history of good results in Saskatchewan, is the first one I should like to comment on. A number of speakers have already indicated that the Highway Safety Committee that was established by the former administration had obtained good results. I agree with this. I should also like to say from personal experience that other committees on which I served, the Agriculture Committee and in this past year the Business Committee have accomplished much by going out to the people. I will be saying more about the results of our Business Committee when we table our interim report. Serving on this Committee has convinced me, Mr. Speaker, that this is the proper approach, to involve the people of Saskatchewan, to give them a chance to help us find solutions to pressing problems.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel; — And this Highway Safety Committee will be not exception. Saskatchewan people have indicated in the past that they are willing to co-operate and offer their suggestions to a committee. Through the avenue of a committee we can all work together to lower the death rate that is so staggering in our province.

The second reason I mentioned for speaking in this debate was that the committee approach gives the backbencher and the Members sitting opposite a chance to have a constructive part in the legislative process and in formulating new legislation. I am happy to have had this opportunity as a backbencher where I could add my ideas and to incorporate the information that I have received by listening to people in formulating recommendations. And I am sure that all the Members who have served on committees will agree that this gives them a special and unique opportunity, a direct line to the legislative process. I

think and I am convinced that this avenue has to be maintained and it is our responsibility to keep this door open to these legislative practices.

I should just like to comment briefly at this time on some remarks by the Member for Lumsden (Mr. Lane) — I see he is not in his seat — and by the Member from Cannington (Mr. Weatherald). He is not there either. I haven't decided which face they plan on taking should they serve on this Highway Safety Committee. Will they be a Dr. Jekyll or a Mr. Hyde? Before the Committee has even been structured they indicate suspicion about the work of a committee and whether it will be political. Who really is making the work of the committees political? Who in our Business Committee was so perturbed because we shut down the work of our committee during the Federal election campaign? If the truth were known who wanted a chance to campaign through the avenue of a committee during the last Federal election? Maybe the Member from Lumsden will indicate to us whether he is going to be a Dr. Jekyll or a Mr. Hyde. Up to this point his words have indicated he would like to be both. Members opposite and backbenchers have had a chance to participate in formulating recommendations that will lead to the betterment of our society, that will solve some of the causes of accidents on our highways. We have the opportunity we can wholeheartedly get involved, or we can get on a committee and then drag our feet. We can look for all kinds of ways to block the progress of this Committee and frustrate the work of it. Only dedicated Members should agree to serve on this Committee. My concern is that those who accept a position on this Committee is that they will do so from a non-political standpoint and will do so for the one reason and the one reason only, to lower the death rate on our highways.

The third reason I have for taking part in this debate, Mr. Speaker, is that I am convinced that the avenue of a legislative committee is one of the best ways of giving the public a chance to participate in problem solving. I cannot remember a committee hearing at which the public didn't indicate their appreciation for a chance to voice their opinions and to make their problems known to a committee. I am sure that opening up these various avenues and giving the public a chance to participate is the only reason that the Members opposite are trying to throw up so many road blocks and are trying to find so many ways of condemning committee work. They're not condemning committee work because they are worried about the cost or the time. Their opposition to committee work exists because they realize that the committee approach is popular. It is what the people of Saskatchewan want. Whenever an avenue is opened up that gives the public a chance to indicate their wants and wishes or whenever we come up with a new program that receives public support, that's when the Members opposite put up the road blocks. That's when they dig in their heels. And that is when they oppose simply for the sake of opposing. Or should I say simply because they are afraid of losing the little support they have left.

The fourth reason for participating in this debate, is that the committee approach is a channel that will bring together the knowledge of various groups of people. One group of people familiar with accidents are the people working in the emergency wings of our hospitals. They see accident victims as they are brought in. They are in a position to tell what causes most of the accidents. The people who are working in

the police department keep records and data on accidents. Our safety people in the province have been compiling statistics and have information that will be very valuable. With this information together with that from other sources, I am sure that by the time the next legislative session sits the Committee will be making recommendations. We are all concerned because of the increase in the death rate in our province.

I called an RCMP officer in the data gathering centre and I was astonished at some of the information they gave me. In 1969 they laid some 2,800 charges under the Criminal Code. In 1972 — maybe we have the impression that these people aren't doing their job — charges that were laid under the criminal code rose to 6,800. Our police are doing their job, I believe. They have increased their staff. They have made more charges. Of the 5,191 charges that were laid against drunken drivers, 4,565 were made through the use of the breathalyzer test. The officer whom I was talking to did not have the record of how many of those were charged by the courts but he does believe, Mr. Speaker, that it was well over 95 per cent. A personal comment on an observation he made that really impressed me was that because of the fact that more charges were laid, the stigma of receiving a charge is not nearly as bad as it was before the time of the breathalyzer test. In other words the more frequent the charges are made the less stigma is attached to a charge. I think this is a point that is very valid when trying to solve this problem.

We must find a different way to make people realize that if they drink they can't drive. It is not only criminal code charges that have increased so dramatically, provincial traffic offences have increased as well. Our highway patrol people are out on the road, they are stopping more people and yet more people are involved in accidents. I agree with the statement the Attorney General made when he introduced this Bill that society is neglecting the problem of highway safety. I met a gentleman while I was in Washington just recently, a Mr. Obmen from Sweden. We discussed the many problems that society faces and you can well imagine I was quite anxious to compare Saskatchewan and Sweden. We both have a good socialistic record. We agreed that in our society when it comes to placing restraints we have got — let me call it a disease. This disease slowly and steadily has taken hold and spread through all levels of our society. Most of us are carriers. We are unaware of the virus and yet as it spreads from one generation to the next, it grows and expands until today it seems to be out of control. This disease thrives on an affluent society.

What are some of the symptoms? Let me just give you one example. You are driving home after a day's work and you are in a hurry, so what do you do? You watch in your rear-view mirror. You look around, nobody is coming so you hesitate at a stop sign, you don't use your signal lights, you make it home. After dinner your son wants the car and you give him the keys and you say, "Drive carefully". What are you really saying — drive so that you won't get a traffic offence or drive within the law. We wonder why our young people are involved in so many accidents.

Mr. Speaker, I haven't touched on this program of how to develop attitudes toward the rule of the law. Another area that I thought our Committee should really study and look into in depth is with a proper education program the public will want,

or will ask for, the lowering of the alcohol content to .06 per cent, maybe even lower than that. The Liquor Committee Report recommended that a breathalyzer test equipment be placed at liquor outlets. We need to help people obey the law, rather than try and trap them. I agree with the former speaker who said, "It's nobody's business how much a person drinks, but when that person drives it becomes the nation's business."

The Member for Melfort-Kinistino (Mr. Thibault) covered the material adequately when he was in this debate and I agree with him when he said, "We have to start with Sesame Street." We have to begin with demonstrating ourselves, we have to involve all segments of our society in training and educational programs that will put a halt to all these unnecessary deaths.

Mr. Speaker, I have just indicated four reasons why I support this motion to establish a committee. There are many more. I will leave it up to the new committee to find the solutions, to get out and get a job done quickly. I heartily support this motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wiebe (Morse): — Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a few comments on some of the discussion that has taken place this afternoon. I was very unhappy with some of the remarks from the Member from Touchwood (Mr. Meakes), that he would desire to bring in at this time some of the comments or some of the things that had happened in committee work to some of the Members on this side, where he called for the Member from Cannington (Mr. Weatherald) to put up or shut up. I must remind the Members opposite that any conduct of any committee in its travels and this sort of thing throughout the province, the responsibility of what happens in that committee is the responsibility of Government Members. I am not talking about Opposition Members because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government Members have the majority on that committee. The majority on those committees Mr. Deputy Speaker is 8 to 3, so that three Opposition Members can put in suggestions, they can holler, they can scream about how things should be and if Government Members want it a certain way that's the way it's going to be.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wiebe: — I think as far as the Member mentioning something about taking financial advantage and this type of thing, if the Government would only answer some of the questions that we have put on the Order Paper as far as the cost of the committees we might be able to get down and start debating some of these things. We are still waiting for these answers and I am just wondering when they are going to answer them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wiebe: — I might also mention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the main reason for these committees in my mind is to go out and investigate the problems, to get answers, and to find solutions of what we are designated by this Legislature to do.

We are not set up as a public relations committee, it is not up to us to go throughout the country as a public relations group of people. We are out to solve problems, we are out to find answers and bring those answers back here. If the Government wants public relations then set up a public relations committee.

An Hon. Member: — They've got enough of them now.

Mr. Wiebe: — I don't feel that the taxpayers of this province should be paying these fantastic sums to go around and do public relations work. If you want public relations work done, all right bring in a Bill or set something up like this, but don't ask your committees to do it. Committees are set up to find answers, let's get the answers as soon as we possibly can and report back to this House.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I am rather amazed that the Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer) has not had an opportunity as yet to participate in this debate. I am sure that he considers this problem of utmost importance and before this debate concludes that he will have a few words to say as well.

I must criticize a bit the decision of the Government in regard to the four-lane program of this province. I don't want so much to criticize the Minister of Highways because I imagine that his hands are tied when it comes to budgeting. I don't know whether we should criticize the Finance Minister (Mr. Cowley) or whether we should criticize the entire Government. When you look at the Highways budget the percentage of increase that was allocated to highways is pretty meagre compared to the other budgets of the other departments of this Government. They are concerned about highway safety, if they are concerned about cutting these accidents down, then why don't they look at highways, why don't they look at the heavily travelled highways, why don't they look at No. 1 Highway? They are doing a little bit between Moose Jaw and Swift Current, why don't they complete that stretch this year. Why don't they continue the highway further on No. 1 east? As I mentioned in my speech, or in some of my comments earlier, an additional \$5 million should have been spent on highways this year. An additional \$5 million to complete No. 1 Highway, east. This is where all your traffic is, this is where all you vacationers are in the summer time and this is where all the accidents have been happening in this province.

I note another question which I asked the Government that hasn't been answered — how many accidents have been happening on our provincial highways and their locations — so we as an Opposition can pinpoint the highways where the problems are. This question hasn't been answered, and I hope that the Minister will answer that question shortly.

Mr. Romanow: — It is a Motion for Return.

Mr. Wiebe: — Yes, well that Motion for Return could be on there until the end of the House too.

Mr. Romanow: — It is wrongly worded.

Mr. Wiebe: — Well, if that question is

wrongly worded, then I would ask the Attorney General to make that known to me and the question can be worded in the proper manner . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wiebe: — . . . instead of trying to hold up that question for another later month. I might mention here as well that I received on my desk today another question which I put in that was wrongly worded. The Minister involved with this department had the courtesy to point this out to me and ask me to resubmit it. Now if you are concerned about answering that question then why don't you do exactly the same thing as this Minister did.

With those brief statements, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to again urge the Government when they do set up this committee that they don't look at it as a public relations committee, that they look at it as a committee that is going out to solve the problems and to bring their answers to this Legislature as quickly as possible.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacLeod (Regina Albert Park): — Mr. Speaker, I thought that I would just have a few remarks to make to this particular motion. It is my desire that the entire House have an opportunity if it should be their pleasure to express their support or failure to support this committee, or give comments on it to assist the committee. I observe, of course, that we shall be missing some of the good advice of some of the Members because they are not in the House today. I notice that Mr. Hanson, the Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle-Wolseley is not in the House. I notice the Hon. Mr. David Lange is not in the House today. I observe that the Hon. Mr. Rolfes from Saskatoon Nutana South is not in the House today, or is he just not in his seat. The Hon. Mr. Mostoway doesn't appear to be in the House today. I see that the Hon. Mr. Gross from Gravelbourg is not in the House today. I would be interested in the comments, Mr. Speaker, on this motion of the Hon. Mr. Cody from Watrous, Mr. Faris from Arm River and Mr. Richards from Saskatoon University. I would be interested in the Hon. Mr. Irving Carlson's remarks. Now I fully recognize that I am out of character in doing this but the Hon. Mr. Foster Hewitt from, I believe, Saskatoon Nutana Centre normally goes through the procedure of describing who is in the House. Of course since we all reckon ourselves as Foster Hewitt perhaps I could follow his example. I see that Foster is in the House today so that he will be able to observe the conduct of the proceedings. I observe that the Hon. Member from Regina North West (Mr. Whelan) is not in, nor is the Hon. Mr. Thorson from Souris Estevan. The Hon. Mr. Baker from Regina Wascana, is not in the House, nor is the Hon. Member for Melville (Mr. Kowalchuk). The Hon. Member from Pelly (Mr. Larson) doesn't appear to be able to assist us in this debate either. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Hon. Mr. Wood (Swift Current) is temporarily absent from the House, as is the Hon. Member of Public Health (Mr. Smishek) from Regina North East. I observe that the Hon. Mr. Messer, the Minister of Agriculture is not able to present himself to this body today at all. I observe that the Hon. Member from Moose Jaw South (Mr. Snyder) is absent, as is the Hon. Mr. Bowerman (Shellbrook). Now if I am correct in my

calculations – oh, here comes the Hon. Member for Yorkton (Mr. Carlson) – as at this count, Mr. Speaker, at least 18 of the Members opposite are not in the House.

Now it does seem to me a bit unfortunate that the Government Members who have no reason to be elsewhere because they have got the full facilities of the Government, 44 Members to our 14, sitting there as opposed to here, find it necessary to go through the procedure at all times of this play by play of who comes and who goes. As I say Mr. Foster Hewitt from Nutana Centre (Mr. Robbins) certainly must feel upset that I am sort of reversing his position. Now I realize with the Members they have, if a vote were called, they would undoubtedly outvote our hardy band. However, we are here in just as great a percentage on most occasions as the Hon. Members opposite and I tend to resent the continued wasting of this House's time by the Hon. Members opposite in describing who is here and who isn't here all the time. Surely the motion is sufficiently important to deserve the attention of Members without all this childish byplay. Perhaps I have made my point, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacLeod: — To this Government Motion, of course, I express regret that they feel it necessary to have a committee to do what has already been done by so many other people. Probably there is no area in North America that has been subject to more study and more reports and more expert evidence and testimony than has highway safety. Surely to goodness if the Government was properly doing its job and the Highways Minister was properly doing his job, they wouldn't have to have all these political committees running around the country.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacLeod: — I know from personal experience, Mr. Speaker, that the choice of location of the hearing places is dictated more by politics than by the necessity of holding a particular committee meeting at a particular place. In any event the Premier doesn't feel bound by these committee reports, they are obviously exercises for politics. Now having made a point or two, Mr. Speaker, I shall now give way to the next speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Guy (Athabasca): — Mr. Speaker, I don't want to make a speech, I just want to make a few comments.

I am, first of all, pleased to support this motion as are my colleagues on this side of the House. I think there are three reasons today why we need this committee more than ever before. One is the 25 per cent increase of fatalities on our highways; two, the decision of the Saskatchewan Government to lower the standard of highway construction; and three, certain recommendations of the Special Committee on Liquor Regulations which refer to the use of liquor as related to automobiles. I think those are three valid reasons why it is of extreme urgency that this committee should proceed with its responsibilities.

The 25 per cent increase in the fatalities, of course, should cause concern to each and every citizen in this province and that in itself is probably sufficient to have a study made in the hope that we can come up with some answers to the problems which have led to this 25 per cent increase in one year.

Secondly, the Government as represented by the Minister and I am not speaking about the Minister in a personal way as was referred to him by some of the Members opposite, but the fact that as Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer) is responsible for the standards of road construction that are established by his Government. I think when we see comments coming from the Government, through the Minister of Highways, that they have no intention of projecting the roads of today into their use for the future; that they are prepared to reduce costs from \$70,000 to \$45,000 a mile because the amount of money is primary rather than safety factors or anything else. The proposal concerning newly constructed roads, he says, may cause a little problem, but it is merely a question of education. Now I don't know whether this was the education that the Member from Cut Knife (Mr. Kwasnica) was referring to, that we have to educate the people in order to accept a lower standard of highway construction. I would hope that he is referring to some other form of education than that because I think that that is a very dangerous approach – trying to educate people to accept lower standards of highways or anything else when it is going to affect their safety.

Roads for today's traffic rather than for tomorrow is, of course, a negative, backward approach that has not been accepted by any province or any state or any country in the free world. The idea of building highways is one area where all engineers and departments involved with highway and road construction are always looking to tomorrow because they know the automobiles are becoming more powerful. Considering highways in other parts of the world, you get used to driving on better highways.

The tourist industry is being upgraded. There are more tourists on the road everyday and we are encouraging it and there is no reason why we shouldn't. However, it means more traffic, more cars, more campers, more trailers, so you need wider roads, you need roads whereby you can pull off into a safety lane well off the traveling surface so that you can prepare your trailers or rest or whatever the case might be. So, certainly, there is no reason today why you would be looking to roads of yesterday, or of reducing the standards, or anything that would create additional traffic hazards in view of the fact that the amount of traffic, the type of traffic, the standards that the travelers today are demanding and are entitled to, are increasing that you should have any policy whereby you're going to downgrade the standards. You could imagine what would happen when people who are traveling across Canada come from Manitoba, as my colleague mentioned, where the roads are being four-laned west of Winnipeg, or they come into Saskatchewan from the West off of the highways in Alberta, they come up through the States and then they hit a province where all of a sudden the standard of the road has been lowered, decreased, there are patches on the patches on new roads, and naturally they are going to start overdriving, at least for the first few miles until they become accustomed to the lower standard. I couldn't agree with the Member from Cut Knife (Mr. Kwasnica) that 90 per cent are the effects of the result of the drivers rather than the road. I think the two have to go together. There's no question that drivers are at fault,

more often than not, but many times their faults result from the fact that they have changed from a different standard of road, and particularly at night, before they have had an opportunity to adjust to a lower standard of road. Certainly, maybe they have made a mistake, they've gone over a hill where the curve is sharper than they anticipated and so on. But you might put that down as traffic or individual driver fault, but in reality it is also related to the standards of highway construction.

We all know that in this part of the country particularly, the winter driving conditions are more hazardous, icing, snow storms and blowing snow. You need wider highways, you need stopping areas, wide stopping lanes on the outside. That is a higher standard than what we are used to on most of our highways and certainly one that should be continued and upgraded rather than having them narrowed and of a rougher surface and so on for the winter months.

So I would suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the policy of the Government, as was outlined by the Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer), is a most regressive and backward step at a time when everything needs to be done to upgrade the highways in this province so that we can cut down the fatalities as they are related to the engineering of the roads and the type of roads that we drive on.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Guy: — And as I said earlier, I think this makes the work of this Committee of the utmost urgency. In fact, I would respectfully suggest to the Government recommend to the Government, that no change in highway construction and maintenance standards be carried out and that no legislation relating to the use of liquor in vehicles, be brought before this House until such time as the Traffic Committee has had an opportunity to report in full its recommendations and its study.

Therefore, I am very happy, as I said, to support the idea of a Committee in order to cut down on what has become one of our most serious problems in the province today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Kramer (Minister of Highways): — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say a few words on some of the things that have been said and possibly some of the things that have not been said in this debate. Some of the things that were said this afternoon, I believe are worthy of some comment, and I find it rather strange that these people opposite, and I would like to congratulate the last two speakers over there, Mr. Speaker, that they did not follow the line that was being pursued a little earlier, which I considered to be a bit petty and destructive and not very constructive. I may differ with what the last two Hon. Members from across the way say, but at least I think they were more objective than some of the people who spoke previously on that side of the House.

Accidents are just not in one particular place, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Accidents occur all over the place. And I think the asinine arguments that were being put forth here for instance by the Member for Cannington (Mr. Weatherald) a

little earlier, are not even worthy of a kindergarten. It's the fellow that stands with his nose in the bush and can't see the forest for the trees, or the ostrich with his head in the sand, simply looking for some little destructive, mean and piddling little thing to say, rather than to get on with the job. I support a committee, and I think it's too bad this kind of a committee was not set up and continued back in the middle '60s, as my friend from Melfort-Kinistino (Mr. Thibault) has said.

Accidents occur anywhere. Accidents occur less in Saskatchewan on the highways than in other places. About 29 per cent of the accidents, Mr. Deputy Speaker, occur on the Saskatchewan highways. So I suppose, Mr. Speaker, that we should not involve anyone else. The argument that the committee should only look at highways; says we should only be concerned with 28 per cent of the fatal accidents, or any of the accidents that occur, and that I say is an asinine argument. We have to look at all over Saskatchewan. I suppose that by the criteria that's being used by the Hon. gentlemen opposite that Regina, the Mayor of Regina is far more responsible for accidents than the Mayor of Saskatoon. I believe that there were 15 fatal accidents in Regina last year, compared to about 3 in Saskatoon. So we really have to get Harry Walker on the mat, according to the arguments of these people and that's ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. There are other factors. There are so many other factors that we are not aware of and that is why an examination for discovery, (if I could say that to my legal friend) would be a good idea and that's what the committee is all about.

I object a little to the crocodile tears they are shedding over the discontinuance, or so-called discontinuance of four-lanes, if in fact there are accidents east of Regina, I lay the blame on the Liberal Party and the people opposite because they ignored the traffic count and the value of the traffic count east of Regina when they decided to build between here and Swift Current. The highway traffic count, Mr. Speaker, was 600 vehicles a day average higher, yet they chose to go out into the hills to Swift Current. Why? I ask you why? The indicators were that if those accidents occurred because of a lack of four-lane highways, Mr. Member for Moosomin (Mr. Gardner) then you had better take a good look in the mirror because you sat in the House when those decisions were being made.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Kramer: — Take a good look at yourselves. Political decisions, Mr. Speaker, determined where those highways should go, rather than the criteria of traffic count and let the blame rest exactly where it belongs, and that's with the Party opposite, if in fact there is blame, and I'm not saying there is, but they chose that topic, not I.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me say something else. Simply building an expensive highway does not guarantee that there shall be no accidents and I use a horrible example of my own city, my own constituency where the former Government spent, on a bridge and the approaches, a beautiful complex of interchange, more than \$5 million. Then they spent another nearly a million to try to keep the bridge from falling into the river after that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Kramer: —After the engineers told them they were building on a landslide and so on they still insisted on going ahead. Well, all right, Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about safety. Now the bridge, that bridge, the official opening of that bridge and highway was opened the summer of 1967, our year of celebrations. Officially opened and in the first nine months — mind you it was closed for three months because of the repairs due to landslides — but the first nine months that it was actually operating, at a certain intersection in my city, on the high-priced, expensive highway, there were three deaths, 22 people hospitalized and 37 cars wrecked at one intersection. They continued to ignore the fact, that Government and the former Minister of Highways at that time, continued to ignore that situation, they continued to ignore the pleas of the city police, the RCMP, the Chamber of Commerce, the City Council and the Member, myself,. Finally, the story is history now, I took the law into my own hands and erected stop signs where they should have been erected when the road was built — or slow downs. The history since that time, in four years, Mr. Speaker, no accidents — the same intersection after that situation occurred. That is a statistic that you can't get away from, Mr. Speaker, and I say it is one that was ignored. They ignored the facts simply because of the stubbornness on the part of an individual who refused to recognize that there was a problem. Simply because they couldn't see an accident, or an accident prone area if they were hit in the face with it.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say one more thing. The other end, is not much better as a costly interchange, costing nearly half a million dollars. There have been more accidents at that interchange of trucks coming in from Edmonton and rolling over because they can't make the turn. There has to be a slowdown, there has to be a slowdown there too and the traffic has been slowed down there. So, spending money doesn't guarantee that you are going to have highways that are free of accidents. I said, and I repeat, that we don't have to have the emphasis on high-class expensive interchanges, expensive tops, putting a foot of blacktop down when one-third will do for the day's traffic. I am not talking when I talk about economy, I am not talking about alignment, I'm not talking about curves, I'm talking about more miles for our money. And if, on highways, you get more miles of highway surfacing for your money, and good topped highways prevent accidents, then my suggestion is the best way to go about it — good topping of the road gives more miles of road hence more value for less money and no one is going to know the difference.

The Member for Athabasca (Mr. Guy) talked about a certain experimental section that I spoke of that has nothing to do with all the rest of the 11,000 miles of highway in Saskatchewan. What I'm talking about is an experimental section that may require some patching, but I'm sure that the people of his constituency and the people of Prince Albert constituency and those tourists who will use that road, if they can get a dust-free road within the next four or five years for 25 per cent of the money that they will appreciate it. The other alternative, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to go along on the gravel road that exists there now and the alternative is to continue on some other gravel roads because we just don't have the money to do the job unless we economize. Let me make it abundantly clear that I am not talking about cutting down the alignment, the foundation, I'm simply saying we don't have to build, we don't

have to overbuild, we don't have to build a complete non-fail road for today's traffic when we don't anticipate that traffic until fifteen or twenty years from now. It's like a man building a house and he's got a 2' x 8' joist every 16 inches. Sure he can put one every two inches, he can build a solid ruddy floor and it's going to be a no-fail road, to be able to drive a tractor through the house, but he doesn't keep his tractor in the house, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Neither do we have to build great thick tops which benefit nobody but the paver who gets an awful lot of work in a concentrated area. It benefits no one. I am saying we can build more miles, more safe miles, more economically and get a lot further down the road and benefit more people, so let us not hear any more about the nonsense of cutting down on highways at the cost of lives and people.

Mr. Speaker, there is another area that I don't know, I haven't heard the gentlemen opposite say anything about. I'm sure that the people on this side of the House have suggested the use of seat belts and this is something that all of us can participate in by simply setting examples. There is ample proof now that if we, everyone who was involved in an accident, wore a seat belt that the cost of accidents would probably be down to 50 per cent and half the lives, nearly half the lives would be saved, instead of stubbornly saying, I refuse to wear that thing and buckle it behind you and get caught dead sitting on the seat belt.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe and I recommend this to the Hon. the Attorney General that as soon as possible he persuade the insurance people to look at penalties in insurance for those people who were involved in accidents and not wearing seat belts. I believe that other jurisdictions have done this now and I certainly think that we have to move in that direction. There comes a time when you have to call a halt.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have lost \$35 million to \$40 million last year in accidents, the cost of accidents, directly and indirectly in this province and that's too much. I said in an earlier debate that besides having an inquest over the unfortunate person who died, there should also be an inquest, an autopsy on the automobile. That too is something for the Committee and all of Saskatchewan people to look at.

Mr. Speaker, there are many things that we probably don't know about that could be found and could be uncovered and investigated. That's why I support this legislative committee. That's why we didn't wait, we are not waiting for a legislative committee. That's why last May we set aside \$400,000 immediately to take care of accident prone areas like Sintaluta, like other places, like the Borden Bridge. I've said this in debates before — approaches, unused approaches that have been redundant. People go off those good roads, they wind up smack-dab against a solid wall approach and there's an accident, sometimes fatal. The 'T' crossing ends on highways. Not too long ago, and there it is again, that was No. 11 I can quote another one, No. 4 North of North Battleford, at the intersection of 26, a young man coming home early one morning from Prince down 26, forgot where he was, overshot the mark and rammed right into a hole off the end of the road and was killed. A few dollars, just a few dollars, Mr. Speaker, spent on an escape ramp might have bruised him up a little, put him through a barbed-wire fence, but it wouldn't have killed him. A little

foresight could have saved him. There are many other such places that are being looked at. I could go on and on but it isn't just accidents on highways. It's accidents in cities, it's accidents on municipal roads and it's accidents that people bring on themselves, through their own carelessness, like I've said, through not wearing seatbelts. There are so many areas that need discovering and need examining. That is why we, the Department of Highways, spent \$3,000 to assist in the first safety seminar in Saskatchewan and brought people in from all over Canada and the United States to participate along with the Saskatchewan Safety Council, the first one of its kind. No, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Highways hasn't been sleeping at the post. And I challenge anyone to produce facts to show we have. That's why, Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in supporting this motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Gardner (Moosomin): — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I won't dwell on those famous words about not planning to enter the debate, however, I have certainly been prompted by the Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer) and I can tell him that I was in the House for several years when he was over in the Opposition, and I can remember very well his criticism of our four-lane highway program. No one spoke stronger against it in this House. And apparently he's carrying his prejudice against the four-lane . . .

Mr. Kramer: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Privilege. The debates are recorded. I should like this gentleman to produce one record of debates anywhere where I have criticized the four-lane highway.

Mr. Steuart: — That's not a Point of Privilege.

Mr. Gardner: — He's been in the House that long, he should know a Point of Order when he sees one and that's certainly not it. Apparently, he's carrying his prejudice against the four-lane highway system into his new job as Minister of Highways and this is certainly unfortunate for the people of this province. We built many four-lane highways and we built them over the very strong objections of people like the present Minister of Highways. We're talking about the four-lane highway system, and, of course, the Minister got up and talked about everything else under the sun and didn't bother too much about the four-lane highways. We built them and we would have continued to build them.

We told them last year about the problems on No. 1 Highway east and we did it respectfully. We hoped that he would do something about it. Now they did take a look at the situation at Sintaluta but we were thinking of the continuation of the four-lane highway. We had been working on these for years and the plans were there. I represent the area from Grenfell on No. 1 Highway to the Manitoba border, and I've had meetings with my constituents and we've had Department of Highway officials down. They've talked about the various moves that would have to be made when we had the four-lane highway system go past Grenfell, go past Broadview, Whitewood and so on. These plans were all well under way. If we had been the Government

we would be continuing them right now and we would have had four-lane highways well on east of where they are at the moment. You know, even some of the Minister's own Members over there are complaining about his highway priorities and he's having difficulties with some of his backbenchers who are certainly not satisfied. But I only hope that the policy of the present Minister of Highways regarding these good roads is not the official policy of the NDP Government or the party because I am more interested in seeing good highways built in this province than I am in the politics involved. And I would honestly hope that you people over there will get up and say that you are in favor of good highways, you're in favor of well-built roads, you're in favor of four-lane roads which are much safer and which will decrease the accident rate on our highways.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Grant (Regina Whitmore Park): — One thing about the Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer), I don't have to turn my hearing aid up, I can hear him, and I appreciate the way he speaks up I don't blame him, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for being a little sensitive about the highway budget because I don't think any Minister is pleased to have his budget stay as it is or have it cut. So we can't really fault him for the fact that he is getting up and defending his highway budget.

But I'm a little amazed that he is so well informed about the accident rate at North Battleford and the number of vehicles that have turned over and the number of people who have been injured and the number of trucks that have turned over and yet he can't answer those questions that are on the Order Paper for some information on accident experience throughout the province. He knows that this is fairly readily available and I think the information should be forthcoming very quickly.

It seems to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the conference which was held recently in North Battleford, when they suggested items they were going to discuss, I believe there were only two, but one of the items was the four-laning of the Trans Canada Highway. I didn't hear anything come out of that conference. I gather the Hon. Minister was able to convince the other three that this really wasn't of the high priority that they had thought it was.

Now I'm sure there is money being spent and will be spent in the coming year on highways in Saskatchewan with the far lower traffic counts than we have on Number 1 east of Regina. I like to think back at what happened on Number 1 west of Regina when the Hon. Member was on this side of the House and we killed more people per year between Regina and Moose Jaw and at the intersection at Albert Street and Moose Jaw turn than any place in Saskatchewan. You'll recall that the Albert Street and Number 1 Highway intersection was the most asinine section in Canada because it had a stop sign on the Number 1 Highway, the Trans Canada Highway. People were wheeling all the way from British Columbia and heading for Ontario but lo and behold when they got to Albert Street they had to stop. Well, there was the odd person who just didn't realize this, and I remember one very bad accident there at that intersection with a driving snow storm from the west that covered up the stop sign and as a result I think three or four people were killed at that point. One thing we did was to immediately put a red flashing signal there until we had an opportunity to make the necessary changes and ultimately

put in a clover leaf on which as far as I know, no responsible driver has been killed as a result of that clover leaf. There are a few irresponsible people such as the one on Victoria Avenue east the other morning and I don't think any road or any safety program or anything else can help an individual who is so foolish as to do a thing such as that. The same thing pertains throughout our highway system. It's not the loose nut on the car, nor is it the holes in the road, it's the loose nuts behind the wheel that cause most of our accidents.

There is the suggestion by the Hon. Member that possibly we spent too much on the bridge up in North Battleford. I know that he has always been against this bridge, the North Battleford Bridge. He doesn't like the location and he didn't like several things but I believe the people in North Battleford are quite happy with the bridge. There is an inference that it might have been built in the wrong place because the foundation on the one side, the Battleford side, has slipped a bit. Well, he knows perfectly well that the Saskatchewan River is one of the toughest areas in this province to build bridges over and there is slippage all along the river bank for many, many miles. I would also remind him that if that bridge did slip a bit, I think it has been stopped now and it's stable. But at least we haven't had a bridge collapse into the Saskatchewan River as the Swift Current Bridge did a few years ago.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Grant: — So I think the money spent on the North Battleford site was a good investment. We certainly need more four-laning. I doubt very much whether he can build a \$45,000 road that is as good as a \$70,000 road. I think an example of that was Number 4 north of North Battleford back in about 1963 when it was oiled and I think we took over in 1964 and during 1965 we spent almost as much patching that road as it cost to lay the oil which at that time was about \$1,500 a mile.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Take the high road.

Mr. Grant: — We'll take the high road as one of the other Members has said. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, this debate has been, I think, an interesting debate and a good debate because of, and I suppose it's typical of this House, the traveling from one end of the road to the other end of the road. Sometimes I think they are almost all impaired as legislators when we discuss things of this nature. Nevertheless, some very good points were raised by the Members and I should like very briefly to address my remarks in winding up the debate on this motion to those points.

Firstly, I can't help but make a comment or two about the

business of the role of the legislative committees. I think much has been said about this. My position is and I would hope it would be that of the majority of the Members of this House, that legislative committees are, in fact, an excellent device by the Assembly whereby Members can not only find out what the people think but whereby Members can report to Government certain actions to be taken with respect to correcting wrongs and remedying the complaints of our citizens. I disagree with the Member from Morse (Mr. Wiebe). Responsibility of the committee, I don't think, likes squarely on the shoulders of the Government Members on that committee. The responsibility of the actions of any legislative committee, in my judgment, is the responsibility of all the members of legislative committees to be either approved or to be censured by all the Members of the House when that committee so reports. The Member for Morse says that a committee's duty is the responsibility to find solutions, and with that I agree. Committees are set up by this House and all the public expect them to act responsibly to find solutions. But I would suggest to the Hon. Member and to all present that committees can only act responsibly if all of the members on committees are responsible. So that if, for example all members unanimously agree, as I am told is the case with respect to at least one committee, as to a certain location or locations of hearing, then I think it can be reasonably assumed by all Members of the committee that's the will of that committee and not just the will of the Government or the will of the Government Members. I think a committee member should be allowed to assume that when there is no voice of dissent with respect to location of hearings or no voice of dissent as to the nature of a recommendation or interim report, that all the members of the committee are for it and not to be surprised to read later on in print that one member of a committee or perhaps two says that this was something which appeared to have been foisted upon him with respect to the activities of the committee. I am sure the Member for Morse would agree as would all Members, that's not the proper way to discharge his responsibility to the committee. I am certainly hopeful that with respect to this one we shall rise above what I think is the natural instinct for partisanship in all of us and work on the business of find solutions to this very vexing problem.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — The Member from Regina Albert Park (Mr. MacLeod) talked about the business of why we should really have this committee. I'm not quite sure how he worded this but his remarks almost seemed to suggest that a committee was unnecessary. He indicated that this matter had been studied over and over again, the matter of highway traffic safety. Again, I'm not quoting him directly, but the effect of his remarks were 'and yet we have another committee', almost implying that this was a waste of people's money or a waste of the Legislature's money to set up a committee. Well, I wish to say to the Member that if, the former Liberal Government set up their highway traffic committee, in fact, the very first recommendation of that report was that a committee should be made a standing and permanent committee of this House on the question of highway traffic safety, that it should be done on a yearly basis because there was so much increasing knowledge and technology with respect to motorists, with respect to information about motor vehicles, with respect to highways, that a standing committee of this

nature should be operating on a full time basis, on a year to year basis, and not on an ad hoc basis as has been proposed here. So I can only say to him that it may be very well that the matter has been studied over and over again but, in my judgment, a committee of this nature is of such importance that the Members of this House and the people of the Province of Saskatchewan will all agree that it's money well spent if we can enact, ultimately, some law which will stop the death and destruction on our highways.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a word or two about the question of the business of the drinking driver and the effect of the Driver Licence Appeal Committee on the drinking driver. This pertains to the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart) when he spoke in the debate last day. I think the evidence is all in now and quite clearly no one disputes that the man who drinks and drives creates a greater menace on the highway than the man who gets behind the wheel and has no alcohol in him. The question is how do we keep the drinking driver off the road. Do we keep the drinking driver off the road by strict and tough law enforcement provisions? Or do we look to some other approach if the strict and tough law enforcement provisions appear not to have worked?

Personally, as I said in my opening remarks, I favor the former approach. And this Government will take wherever it can, I can assure the Members of this House, a strict, tough drinking law with respect to law enforcement against drinking drivers. But I do dispute the Leader of the Opposition's remarks that the establishment of the Driver Licence Appeal Committee by this Government in the early part of January of this year had some effect on the statistics for fatalities and injuries for the year 1972. I dispute it because I think the facts are simply that the Committee was established too late in the year to have any real impact on the 1972 figures. And secondly, this suggestion is obviously too simplistic.

The Leader of the Opposition is opposed to the Driver Licence Appeal Committee and he asks for its suspension pending the final report of this committee. There is much to justify the go-slow approach by the Leader of the Opposition. Some of the points that justify his point of view is that quite obviously this committee is new, it's still working on its guidelines, and there is going to be some disagreement with respect to how it ultimately defines the guidelines and its role. There are bound to be inconsistencies and there is always that nagging worry on the part of everybody, the worry that I have, that, in fact, we may be opening up that door which is going to cause increased fatalities and accidents. And so the call for freezing the activities of the committee has a great deal of appeal. But I think that these arguments for freezing the activities of the Driver Licence Committee are over-ridden by what I think, in my judgment, is almost, in fact, a more important principle, and that is to ensure that there is, in the minds of our public, a feeling of consistency that they are going to be dealt with fairly and consistently by all of the regulatory agencies in this province, that they will be dealt with consistently by the Criminal Code when they come before the Magistrate and that they will be dealt with consistently when they come before the Highway Traffic Board under the Provincial Vehicles Act, so that the inconsistency does not get to the point where he questions the entire judicial system or that, in fact, the law becomes a mass of contradictions and the objectives that we all aspire to are thereby frustrated.

This matter of the drinking driver is certainly not clear. On July 15, 1972 the Criminal Code was amended as I said in my opening remarks. I can only say to the Leader of the Opposition with respect to his plea for the freezing of the activities of this committee as follows. One, we will be watching very carefully, almost on a weekly basis, the activities of this committee and how its guidelines develop and to see whether or not the number of drinking drivers who receive their licences is opened up to the point where this affects our accident and our fatality rate. And if it does, we won't hesitate to take appropriate action. Furthermore, I say this, not in a political sense, if the Leader of the Opposition could convince the Minister of Justice that he should return to the Criminal Code position prior to July 15, 1972 which allowed the Magistrates the right to give back restricted licences, if he could convince the federal colleagues to go back to that pre-July 15, 1972 as we did before it came into power, then I can tell the Members of this House that I would be pleased to disband the Driver Licence Appeal Committee immediately upon passage of the amendment to the Criminal Code restoring the pre-July 15, 1972 position.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — But I said this matter of drinking and driving is certainly free from any real conclusive evidence. I was most impressed by the remarks made by the Member from Notukeu-Willow Bunch (Mr. Engel), who did an excellent job on research and an excellent job on presenting his point of view on this argument.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — He talked about the dramatic increase in charges. This is this business of strict law enforcement. If strict law enforcement keeps the drinking driver off the road, then how do we answer these statistics? Take for example in 1969. In 1969, according to statistics given to me by the Highway Traffic Board, the total number of offences in that whole range of .08 and impaired drivers and the whole series of offences that are involved in that area, the number of convictions registered 2,920, a little under 3,000. Today in 1972 that has ballooned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, up to 7,232 by way of convictions. Here is another interesting statistic. Drivers with three criminal code convictions in a five-year period in that category 996, three times round have been caught in these figures of 7,232. Drivers with two convictions 1,468 or nearly 1,500 are repeaters on a second time round in terms of a conviction.

Here is the situation. The law enforcement people are quite clearly doing their job. I think these figures prove that beyond a doubt, 2,900 to 7,200. From 2,900 to 7,200, yet we have more repeaters it appears, yet we have more fatalities. We had no driver licence appeal committee in 1971. That the 1971 figure where the convictions were 6,400 as opposed to 2,900 and the fatalities were then even on the increase. At the provincial level the Highway Traffic Board has been doing its job as well and at the provincial level we have moved up from something in the neighborhood of 4,200 to now 5,700 people under vehicle convictions in The Vehicles Act in the Province of Saskatchewan, yet we find this mounting toll of death and destruction. I don't think anybody in this House can say, because it is too simplistic and

the facts deny it, that simply tough anti-drinking laws and a strict law enforcement is going to be the answer to our driving records and our accidents. The statistics belie that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, although I favor the tough approach.

I want to tell this House and the people of this province that never before in Saskatchewan's history have we had as many drivers convicted of criminal code offences as we did in 1972. There are many points as a result of this fact. Notwithstanding these very obvious figures there are still a very large number of people who are going to risk everything, they are going to risk conviction, they are going to risk six months prohibition. They don't care whether there was a drivers' licence appeal committee or not. They are going to risk accident, they are going to risk loss of licence, they are going to risk loss of jobs, they are going to risk loss of respect in family and community. I think to tackle the problem we must think in terms of getting at the man's psychology, at getting at the person's understanding of his responsibilities, of which law enforcement is but one – granted it is important – but only one item in the overall story.

Let me just say one other parting word about the Driver Licence Appeal Committee and the question of tougher drinking laws. Members of the House might be interested in knowing, and I mentioned this in my opening remarks on the motion, that the Manitoba Government set up a licence appeal committee. In Manitoba the Driver Licence Appeal Committee has been in operation since 1959. It is now in its 14th year of operation. Theirs is a little more rigid than ours, theirs is built into law, we have decided not to take that position in case the experiment doesn't work in Saskatchewan and we have to abandon it by Order-in-Council, the same way we set it up by Order-in-Council. They don't have their complete statistics for the year 1972. They have a Driver Licence Appeal Committee and in the year 1970 accident statistics in terms of the frequency of accidents decreased 35 per cent from the year 1969. In 1971 the Driver Licence Appeal Committee they still remained at that reduced level for 35 per cent compared to 1969. So one is prone to ask, if the Leader of the Opposition's argument was totally right, how do you explain away the Manitoba figures; where they have a driver licence appeal committee and where yet in 1970-71 the accident rate dramatically decreased.

Having said that, look what happens in 1972, this is the estimate, it is not final yet, accident rates having been reduced by 35 per cent and remained stable, they estimate in 1972 it is going to go up. Over 30 per cent of what it was in 1971! How do you explain that? I don't think the Driver Licence Appeal Committee can be faulted for that type of a development. It comes back to my point again, that somehow we have got to tackle the attitude of the driver. Somehow we have got to start at day one. This was the point made by the Member from Kinistino (Mr. Thibault) and the point made by the Member from Cut Knife, and I thought his was a very lucid explanation of this argument. You have got to start right at day one with the driving attitudes and the behavior and the responses of our people to teach them that they are driving a 2,000 pound deadly weapon and they have got to treat it with absolute respect for everybody who is on the road. The answer is not by simply saying that a Driver Licence Appeal Committee is a good thing or a bad thing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a word in closing – two more words – one on the business of the four-lane highways. I don't want to speak for the Minister of Highways. I am not sure that I know the mechanics or the economics of the problems of four-laning or otherwise. I am told by the Minister that Saskatchewan certainly has more four-lane highways on Trans-Canada in this province than any of the sister provinces in Manitoba or Alberta. It may very well have been in the Members' opposite regime, I am not here to score a debating point in that area. I am advised by the Minister of Highways that in the coming year the plans are to construct – is it 40 miles Mr. Minister – over 40 miles on Highway No. 11 of a four-lane highway. There are others as well, the Minister of Environment says No. 1, I don't know the list. The point is that we are involving ourselves in four-lane highways. I think it is irresponsible for Members opposite to say that because the Minister of Highways has said in a statement that we are finished with champagne highways, that he meant by that somehow we were opposed and we were finished with four-lane highways. That is quite clearly not the case. But I do know what the Minister meant when he said, an end to champagne highways. I think we can all support that there has to be an end to unnecessarily expensive highways. We can have good highways which may be four lanes and may be two-lane highways, depending upon the traffic count in the area, which can do the job just as well and do it without the exorbitant expense which is a drain on all of the citizens of the Province of Saskatchewan. If the Minister of Highways says, in fact, that the policy of this Government is to end champagne highways because he means it in the sense highways built without consideration to cost, then I for one and this Government is going to support the Minister of Highways 100 per cent in that regard.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — But with respect, I say to the Leader of the Opposition and the Members opposite, one ought not to stretch that statement to mean that this Government is against highways in the interest of traffic safety. I know the Minister of Highways does not mean this and I, like all of those on this side of the House, agree that he does not mean it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — The final point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the business of the grant to the Saskatchewan Safety Council which was also raised by the Leader of the Opposition in his remarks the other day. Quite frankly I cannot find the points referred to by the Leader in the argument that he advanced that we had cut down the grants to the Saskatchewan Safety Council. Perhaps I am not reading the Estimates or the figures accurately, after all he was Provincial Treasurer for years perhaps too many years and I was only financial critic once and sometimes I think that was once too many – but in any event I can't find any such record. I can tell the Leader of the Opposition and the Members of the House, that if in fact there has been a reduction of the grant to the Saskatchewan Safety Council, that was done inadvertently and I undertake to this House to make sure that the grant for this coming operating year will be at least the same as it has been in the years past. We support the activities of this worthwhile voluntary group in the Province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all Members of this House have agreed that they will support this Motion. I say this to all Members of the House. Talk is not going to be enough. The activities of the Committee and the activities and actions of the committee members I think will really be the test, will really be the proof that all Members of this House support the activities of this committee. I am sure that Members on this side of the House will approach their duties responsibly and in a non-partisan sense. I hope that the Members opposite will do likewise and if they do, something good will come out of this for all the people of Saskatchewan. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to move this Motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Steuart (Leader of the Opposition): — Would the Minister answer a question?

Mr. Speaker, certainly I will do my best to get that amendment, I agree with the Attorney General, of the Federal Government. Will he tell the House, or will he admit to the House that it is not necessary to get that amendment to give the Provincial Government the power necessary to withdraw the licences of drinking drivers. In other words, they still have the power in spite of that federal amendment to withdraw and the power in spite of that federal amendment to withdraw and withhold the licences of drinking drivers. Is that not a fact?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Yes we do. We do have the power under the licensing powers, the provincial powers. That is how the Highway Traffic Board does it and that is how we did it with the amendment that the former Attorney General brought in in 1968 or 1969. There is no problem there. The only problem is that if we have it at six months mandatory, nobody gets a licence back, my point is and it has been rehashed over and over again that puts it in conflict with the Criminal Code, or could put it in conflict depending upon the actions of the magistrate. He's right, we have that power.

Motion agreed to

SECOND READINGS

Hon. E.L. Tchorzewski (Minister of Consumer Affairs) moved second reading of Bill No. 8 – **An Act to amend The Collection Agents Act, 1968.**

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski (Minister of Consumer Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, this Bill seeks to amend The Collection Agents Act, 1968. The first amendment to this Bill is intended to give flexibility in the appointment of the Minister responsible for the Act. Previously the Act defined the Minister as being the Provincial Secretary. Under the present amendment, Minister is defined as a member of the Executive Council to whom is assigned the administration of the Act. This amendment is necessary to allow the Minister responsible for the Act to be changed as required without necessitating an amendment to the legislation each time.

This Bill also includes an amendment to provide for the forfeiture of a corporation's bond where that corporation has violated a provision of its licence or the Act, and its name has been struck off the Register of Companies. This Act essentially means that the bond forfeiture provisions will apply equally to a corporation as well as to an individual.

The amendment also brings The Collection Agents Act, 1968, into conformity with similar provisions in The Pyramid Franchises Act, The Sale of Training Courses Act, The Credit Reporting Agencies Act.

Mr. Speaker, The Collection Agents Act, 1968, ensure that any costs incurred by a collector or by a creditor employing a collector to collect a debt may not be added to the amount of the debt recovered from the debtor. With this brief explanation I move second reading.

Mr. Steuart (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, as the Minister pointed out this is . . .

An Hon. Member: — It's a good Bill!

Mr. Steuart: — It's a good Bill. Well, it is a good Bill because I think it is necessary, we wouldn't want the new Minister to be illegal, irregular or we hope inconsistent, so we support that clause.

I would point out that we passed this Act in 1968 and what this second amendment will do is apply to corporations to businesses what the original Act applied to individuals. I think this is a good move and we will support the amendments brought in by the Minister.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

Mr. Tchorzewski moved second reading of Bill No. 9 — **An Act to amend The Motor Dealers Act, 1966.**

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, this is an amendment to The Motor Dealers Act, 1966. This legislation was introduced by the former Attorney General of the previous government, to license, regulate and control the operation of car dealers. To the present time it has served as good legislation protecting consumers by providing that all dealers and salesmen be licensed and all dealers be bonded. The Act requires a dealer to maintain a satisfactory place of business. Businessmen in this field of business have also been protected from operations that provided no service or guarantee of parts when needed.

The first amendment in this Bill changes the definition, as in the other Bill, of Registrar so that the Minister has the authority to appoint a member of the Public Service as Registrar under this Act. Previously the Registrar of Companies was designated as Registrar under the Act. This amendment will allow the Minister to appoint as Registrar someone other than the Department of Consumer Affairs and therefore this minor amendment is necessary. It provides more flexibility as to designating the Minister who is responsible for the legislation. Dealers often handle, Mr. Speaker, large sums of money belonging to their clients. The bonding requirements have insured and continue to insure an important and essential financial responsibility. If a dealer is unable or unwilling to perform under the contract, the bonding requirements have made it possible for the client to regain any money he may have invested or paid in while being a party to the contract. The

bond has provided protection in the event of bankruptcy as well.

The second amendment in this Bill provides for the forfeiture of a corporation's bond when that corporation has violated a provision of his licence or the Act and its name has been struck off the Register of Companies. Once a corporation's name has been struck off the Register of Companies, it is no longer a legal entity and is in the same position as a person who has left the province. The amendments will mean that the bond forfeiture provisions will apply equally to a corporation and to an individual. The amendment also brings The Motor Dealers Act into conformity with similar provision in The Pyramid Franchises Act, Sale of Training Courses Act and The Credit Reporting Agencies Act.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that Members opposite will agree that The Motor Dealers Act has been useful and a good piece of consumer legislation. I note from *Hansard* that when the Hon. Mr. Heald, the former Attorney General, introduced it in 1966, there were no speeches in opposition to it. The then NDP Opposition being a responsible opposition supported good legislation if it was for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan. That is the way it should be, Mr. Speaker, in a responsible democratic parliamentary system.

I do hope that the Members opposite will see fit to support this amendment which strengthens The Motor Dealers Act, the amendment eliminates a special exemption for corporations which has been denied individuals under the Act. It makes them equal. I feel that the great majority of car dealers in the province are reputable dealers and this Act has been of value to them as well as the consumer. It has curbed the operations of the very small number of those who might have been questionable. It has prevented persons from other jurisdictions from moving in because they were unable to get a licence at home. We believe that the individual small businessman in this case, the motor dealer, should have rights equal to corporations when it comes to forfeiture of bonds. We believe in the small business communities in this province.

As I introduce this amendment regarding bonding, Mr. Speaker, I have to wonder at statements made by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart) when he said that Liberals will introduce amendments to The Motor Dealers Act in this Session. I should just like to comment that I hope he doesn't propose that this legislation should be weakened so that it is ineffective, particularly since in 1966 there was no opposition by anyone on either side of the House when the legislation was passed.

Mr. Speaker, I believe these are improvements to The Motor Dealers Act. I think that all Members of this House could support it and I therefore move second reading of this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the Member spoke so glowingly of this Act as he has. I would point out that all these Acts that we will be dealing with in the next few minutes were put on the books by the Liberals. The Collection Agents Act was put on the books in 1968, The Motor Dealers Act 1966, by our government, The Cost of Credit Disclosure Act, 1967, by our government and The Direct Sellers Act

was put on by our government. So I just want to point this out to remind the Members opposite that sometimes they are inclined to think that all the sanctity is lodged in the hearts and the breasts of the NDP. And it is very refreshing to hear one of the Members admit that the Liberals, from time to time, did some good things. As a matter of fact they did many more good things than bad. We made the odd little mistake, very rare, but the odd one.

I would point out that I will support these amendments because as they are in the last Act the Minister amended, they make the necessary changes to accommodate the new Minister and, naturally, the new people in his Department which, of course, are necessary. And, as well, they make applicable to corporations the same law, the same situation as was applicable to individuals and this is a good move.

I will be bringing in a Bill to amend this Act further, within the next few days and it is one that will not emasculate this Bill. In fact, I am hopeful that the Government will see their way clear to supporting it, because I think it will make it a much fairer Act and give some needed protection to the vast bulk of dealers who are dealers now or who want to be dealers, who are, as the Minister says, legitimate, straight-forward businessmen. So I am very pleased to support the amendments brought in by the Minister.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

Mr. Tchorzewski (Minister of Consumer Affairs) moved second reading of Bill No. 10 – **An Act to amend The Cost of Credit Disclosure Act, 1967.**

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, the Bill to amend The Cost of Credit Disclosure Act is intended to give, once again, flexibility in the appointment of the Minister responsible for the Act.

Previously the Act defined the Minister as being the Provincial Secretary and under this amendment the Minister is defined as a member of the Executive Council to whom is assigned the administration of the Act.

This amendment is necessary in order to allow the Minister responsible for the Act, to make the changes required without necessitating an amendment and legislation each time.

The Cost of Credit Disclosure Act requires a full disclosure of cost of borrowing, to make it simpler for a person who purchases goods on a time basis plan or who borrows money, to ascertain the direct cost of credit. And as a requirement of the Act that the cost of credit be expressed in dollars and cents as well as by an annual rate of interest.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this Bill.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

Mr. Tchorzewski (Minister of Consumer Affairs) moved second reading of Bill No. 11 – **An Act to amend The Direct Sellers Act.**

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, this is an

amendment to The Direct Sellers Act, which governs the sale of goods or services which take place in the home of the purchaser.

The first amendment in this Bill is intended to give some flexibility in the appointment of a Minister responsible for the Act as has been the case with the preceding Bills. And as has been the case previously the Act defined the Minister as being the Provincial Secretary. Under the present amendment the Minister is defined as a member of the Executive Council to whom is assigned the administration of the Act.

This amendment is necessary in order to allow the Minister responsible for the Act to be changed as required, without necessitating an amendment to the legislation each time.

This Bill also includes an amendment to provide for the forfeiture of a corporation's bond when that corporation has violated a provision of his license or the Act and his name has been struck off the Register of Companies.

The amendment also brings The Direct Sellers Act into conformity with similar provisions in other legislations such as The Pyramid Franchise Act, The Sale of Training Courses Act, and The Credit Reporting Agencies Act.

The third amendment, Mr. Speaker, prohibits a direct seller from advertising or otherwise holding himself out to the public as being licensed and bonded by the Government. Such advertising implies that the Government has given its approval to the person's business and this will no longer be allowed.

The amendment, again, brings the Act into conformity with other legislation. I trust, again, Mr. Speaker, as with the other legislation that the Members opposite as well as all the Members on the Government side of the House will support this Bill which strengthens The Direct Sellers Act. It enhances the position of the consumer and guides legitimate sellers in their activities.

Mr. Speaker, I believe these are improvements to the Bill which I think all Members can support and therefore I move second reading of this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart: — Mr. Speaker, I should like to say that this new Minister has an unbelievable record. Four times at bat, four hits. We agree with him on everything. He has a no hitter going for him and I hope he doesn't soon louse it up. We also agree with this Bill.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Thorson (Minister of Industry and Commerce) moved second reading of Bill No. 2 – **An Act to amend the Power Corporation Superannuation Act (No. 1).**

Hon. Mr. Thorson: — Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill to amend The Power Corporation Superannuation Act. The only purpose of the amendment is to expand the definition of 'employee' so that it will now, if this Bill is passed, include employees of subsidiary companies of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation.

At present the wording of the definition of 'employee' under The Power Corporation Superannuation Act is so limited that it would not cover employees of subsidiary companies.

Now the only subsidiary companies which have employees at the present time that could be affected by this amendment are those who are employed by the North Sask Electric Limited. Presently there are three such employees. I do not have the particulars respecting each one of them, but I am quite prepared to answer any detailed questions in Committee if the House is inclined to give second reading to this amendment.

That is the purpose of it. There is no other purpose whatever behind this amendment except to make it clear that employees of subsidiary companies will be covered by the provisions of the superannuation legislation.

I move second reading, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Grant (Regina Whitmore Park): — Mr. Speaker, this is one of those things that I wonder why it was slipped up on when North Sask Electric was formed but I suppose the best laid plans of mice and men go astray occasionally.

The three people involved are, or were, first the manager. I don't know whether he is still the manager or not and he was already receiving a pension and wasn't pensionable under the SPC. The secretary, I think, she didn't wish to go into a pension plan or something of that sort. And the third person has been making contributions into a special fund that can be absorbed into the SPC plan very quickly. It certainly meets with my approval. I don't know how it was omitted.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

Hon. Mr. Thorson (Minister of Industry and Commerce) moved second reading of Bill No. 3 — **An Act to amend The Industrial Development Act.**

Hon. Mr. Thorson: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to move second reading of a Bill to amend The Industrial Development Act.

The intent of the amendments is two-fold. Firstly, there are several amendments which remove all references to grants from the statute. The reasoning behind that is, in my view and in the view of the Government, grant programs ought to be administered by some agency other than the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation.

Members will be aware that The Industrial Development Act is the statute which authorizes the establishment of, and the operation of, SEDCO — The Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation.

It is not the intention of the Government to use SEDCO as a vehicle for providing grants of any kind to any of the clients or prospective clients of SEDCO. Since it will not be necessary therefore to use this legislation in the administration of the programs under the jurisdiction of SEDCO it is thought, as a matter of housekeeping, that all references to grants should be removed.

I may say that it is my view that when people approach the Government with the idea that there ought to be grants and wish to discuss it, I would prefer that that pressure, if indeed it becomes pressure, is felt directly by the Ministers and the Department of the Government and not by this Crown corporation, which in my view, ought to confine its activities to lending money.

The second amendment to The Industrial Development Act is simply to bring into line the provisions where SEDCO guarantees a loan, so that they will be the same as the provisions where SEDCO actually makes a loan insofar as it is necessary to refer those questions to the Cabinet, to the Executive Council.

Presently the Act provides that if SEDCO approved of a loan which will exceed \$1.5 million for its client, that loan must first obtain the approval of the Cabinet. But the Act permits the SEDCO board of directors to approve a guarantee of a loan for a client of SEDCO of \$1.5 million, more or less — it is without limit at all — and that matter does need to be referred to the Cabinet. Any guarantee which SEDCO wishes to make has to go to Cabinet for no matter how small an amount. If the SEDCO board is given the authority, as it has to pledge the credit of the province up to \$1.5 million with any single borrower by way of direct loan, it seems to me that it ought to have the same powers with respect to guarantees.

That is the only reason for this amendment being brought forward at this time. So that the SEDCO board will be in exactly the same position when it gives a guarantee as it now is in when it actually makes a loan. It can make a loan without reference to the Cabinet up to \$1.5 million. It cannot make a guarantee of any amount without reference to the Cabinet. We are asking the House to approve the amendment which will permit the board to do the same thing by way of guarantee that it now does by way of actual loan.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Grant: — Mr. Speaker, taking these amendments in reverse order, I certainly concur in the latter amendment. I can't recall the reasoning of requiring Cabinet approval on a guarantee, because as the Minister points out if SEDCO is able and capable of making loans in excess of \$1.5 million certainly they should have the same freedom in a guarantee.

However, in connection with the reference to the deletion of — or at least the amendment referring to the deletion of grants under The Industrial Development Act — I can't, at first hand, agree with the Minister when he feels that SEDCO should not be in charge of making these grants because they are strictly a loaning body. I can see some merit in restricting them to their loaning activities, but I can also see some demerit in having the decision-making process, as far as grants are concerned solely in the hands of the Minister.

The Minister and the Government have the final say as far as these grants are concerned, but I feel that SEDCO plays an important role being a good board throughout the years, and I hope it will continue to be of high quality because it is very important to keep it that way. I feel there is certain benefit

from their judgment in making these grants and it should be retained in the picture or delegated to some similar body. I would hesitate to see a similar board or body set up merely for this purpose, because I don't think the scope of the grant program would justify a separate jurisdiction in this regard.

I find it, and I am sure the other Members of this House find it, somewhat difficult to follow the changes that have taken place in the grant programs over the last two years. I am not like the Hon. Member for Rosthern (Mr. Boldt) who has decided that there is really no place in society for lawyers. I feel that it is getting more important every day to have lawyers to straighten out what lawyers in preceding days have done and what lay people do as well.

Looking at the Acts and there seem to be about three Acts involving grants. The first, of course, is this Industrial Development Act and the amendment would delete all reference to grants from that Act. The Industry Incentive Act in 1970, had certain grant provisions for the establishment of manufacturing plants in centres under 35,000 people and there were some other restrictions and there is a forgiveness clause. But along in 1972 we made a number of changes in that Act, removing the word 'manufacturing' and removing reference to the Federal Regional Development Incentive Program and several others.

The Industrial Development Act passed in 1972 gave a very wide definition to business and set up the system of grants and almost any business would fall under the provisions and the Minister is given pretty well complete authority to determine to whom these grants should be given.

I am sure that Members on both sides of the House have had questions on their minds on more than one occasion about the pros and cons of incentive grants. I know the Leader of the NDP in Ottawa certainly has some reservations about incentive grants to the 'corporate welfare bums' and I think it could be argued that here in Saskatchewan some of the grants might fall in this same category. We don't refer to them as corporations, we refer to them as small businesses, but if the Minister has not already encountered it, I'm sure he will. Whenever assistance is given to any new business or industry, there is a hue and cry from existing industries claiming they're paddling their own canoes and haven't had any provincial help and they are providing a good payroll without any help, so therefore, why should they as taxpayers be taxed to pay an incentive grant to some newcomer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, after the Minister's explanation I would like to have a little more to say on this and ask leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Hon. Mr. Messer (Minister of Agriculture) moved second reading of Bill No. 19 — **An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Act.**

Hon. Mr. Messer: — Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 19 which is now before this Legislature is a Bill to amend The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Act.

It is, in my opinion, another example of the progress that

this Government is making in developing a comprehensive agricultural program for the province.

Agriculture in Western Canada, and particularly in Saskatchewan, has been continually plagued with instability of production. A grain producer, seeding his crops in the spring knows that the yield level of these crops is going to be severely affected by many factors, factors completely beyond his control. Some of these factors have to be variable rainfall levels, frost, insects, flooding and hail. Coupled with this uncertainty of yields, the farmer is uncertain as to the final price that he will receive for his products and the opportunities he will have to deliver those products to market. A combination of uncertainty and yields and market opportunities leads to a very serious instability factor in relation to farm income. Unstable farm incomes force established producers to accept periods of very low incomes. In extreme cases farmers are forced or faced with bankruptcy or loss of savings which have been accumulated over a period of a number of years in his farming operations. Unstable incomes cause farmers to be reluctant to enter into major expansions of their farming enterprises which would require the use of borrowed funds or long-run obligations which may be difficult to meet in the event of a crop failure.

This Government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government takes the position that the past levels of variation in farm incomes are completely unacceptable and to alleviate the problems we are attacking instability on two fronts:

1. The Department of Agriculture is undertaking many new activities related to the marketing of agricultural products in an effort to ensure adequate markets at prices which cover the cost of production and provide producers with reasonable returns.
2. The Department of Agriculture is attempting to provide improved and more comprehensive crop insurance to stabilize the tax of detrimental weather patterns and other natural risks which are beyond the control of farmers in this province.

The need for all-risk crop insurance in Saskatchewan has been recognized since the '30s when studies were undertaken to look into the feasibility of a crop insurance program. It was, however, not until 1961 that the plan was started in Saskatchewan under the then CCF Government.

It is indeed unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that during the period of 1964 to 1971 there was no progress and no further development to such an important program to farmers. Today, the farmer is more vulnerable than ever before to a crop disaster. Investment costs and operating costs are several times higher today compared to what they were in the past when crop failures have occurred. Farmers stand to lose more and faster than ever before from a financial standpoint than when lower capital and operating costs were involved. In short, the road to bankruptcy is now much shorter. This situation makes it vitally important that the money, which today's farmer must spend annually in producing his crop, be insured against all of the natural hazards which can bring about crop failure. Crop insurance protection is needed to protect the economic well-being of the families on farms, local government, provincial government and also the national economy. The economic multiplier effects of injecting crop insurance indemnities into an area in a year of crop failure has tremendous beneficial effects in all levels of the economy.

In the face of such a need for a crop insurance program, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this province is developing and expanding the crop insurance program and is a leader for all other provinces in Canada.

Crop insurance was practically non-existent in the southwest and northwest areas of the province. Yield coverage was low, so low that in fact most farmers considered it to be a completely unacceptable program. Not all of the major crops were covered. As an indication of the undesirability of the program, Mr. Speaker, you only have to look at the number of farmers participating in the program in 1971. In 1971 the crop insurance program issued approximately, in fact slightly under 8,000 contracts in the province with over 75,000 farmers, attempting, at least in many areas, to farm.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government is aware of the needs of a crop insurance program. At the present time, the Federal Government provides 25 per cent of the premium cost of operating a program, plus one-half of the administration costs. In effect, the farmer then is only required to pay 75 per cent of the total premium cost. The Federal Government has indicated a desire to increase its contributions to crop insurance programs. In fact, they have indicated that interest because of studies that were instigated by the Province of Saskatchewan. The possibility exists that the Federal cost-sharing may be increased to 50 per cent of the premium cost; yet, in the face of such willingness on the part of the Federal Government to participate in such a program, the Provincial Liberal Government allowed the program to stagnate and many farmers in this province went without these potential benefits. This indicates to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the complete lack of imagination on the part of the Liberal Party in this province and a complete lack of understanding of farm problems. It shows a callous disregard for the welfare of Saskatchewan farmers.

Since 1971, the New Democratic Government has taken many steps to improve and upgrade the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance program. This upgrading is a continuing program which will go on for many years to come. The changes which have been introduced to this date are directed towards providing Saskatchewan farmers with a more complete package that will provide the production protection that is required in today's modern farming operations. I should like briefly to outline some of the major changes that have been made in the program to this date: 1. The availability of crop insurance has been extended to the major portion of the southwest and northwest parts of the province so that all farmers in the Province of Saskatchewan will now have access to crop insurance coverage. 2. Four additional crops have been added for coverage under the program. In 1972 flax and rapeseed were included. In 1973, fall rye and sunflower will also be part of the program. In 1973, the crops included for coverage will be spring wheat, durum wheat, barley, oats, flax, rapeseed and sunflower. 3. Prior to 1972, coverage was available to the extent of 60 per cent of the long-run average yields. In the year 1972 this Government made available the option of 70 per cent coverage on cereal crops. In 1973, a 70 per cent option will be extended to all crops grown in Saskatchewan. 4. Average yield levels have been revised and updated in line with current production capabilities to provide coverage more realistic in terms of today's potential crop yields. 5. The coverage adjustment feature has been added so that the production guarantee is based on the individual's own history of performance on his own farm. This, in effect, means the producer who

uses good farming practices and who is able to produce at a level somewhat higher than his neighbors, will be able to receive coverage on a higher level. 6. The quality guarantee will be included in 1973 insurance programs in addition to the quantity guarantee to provide coverage for losses as a result of deterioration in the quality of the product he produces. 7. Hail losses will be adjusted on an individual field and on a spot loss basis providing greater coverage under the basic crops insurance plan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the proposed changes to the plan will reverse the situation where Saskatchewan lagged behind other provinces, to a position where Saskatchewan will now be a leader in providing comprehensive crop insurance in Canada today.

However, during the reign of the Liberal Party, crop insurance received such a poor image and was so poorly advertised that this Government must now take steps to inform farmers of the benefits available to them. All-risk crop insurance is relatively complicated compared to other insurance, such as hail insurance. It is necessary to explain to farmers on an individual basis how the plan works.

The present rate structure and the present program make quite an acceptable package. In order to make these benefits be known to all producers so that they will participate in the program, it is necessary to make a concentrated effort to contact each and every producer. For this reason, administrative producers for the program have to be changed and the servicing of the program will be handled on an area basis to provide direct farmer contact and a better service to policy holders.

Under the area office system. Mr. Deputy Speaker, an office is established with a crop insurance representative serving several municipalities. The responsibilities of the area office are to co-ordinate the selling and servicing of contracts in that given area.

Fieldmen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will be employed on a per day basis for selling. Those fieldmen will call on farmers to explain the program and show how it applies to each farmer's particular situation. Fieldmen are appointed from within the local community by the Crop Insurance Board, not by the Government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Generally, and incidentally some of the present members of that Crop Insurance Board were appointed by the former Government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so if they have some criticisms to register, I hope they register them not to myself or to the Government, but to the Crop Insurance Board to which they have the responsibility as well as this Government because they appointed a number of those people. Generally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fieldmen are farmers who are policy holders themselves and who are able to communicate well with other farmers.

Experience in Saskatchewan, as well as in other provinces, and the United States, has shown that there is no substitute for direct contact with farmers in explaining such programs.

Bill 19, to amend The Crop Insurance Act has been introduced as a necessary step in the upgrading of the crop insurance program in our province. It is our contention that the crop insurance program should be under constant review and be updated and changed whenever necessary. It is essential that the crop insurance program be responsive to the needs of farmers. In

order to provide adequate representation on the Crop Insurance Board in the various areas of the province and from varied farming enterprises, it is necessary to increase the number of members on the board. Other sections of the Act will be deleted as they are no longer necessary, now that insurance has been extended to all areas of the province.

With the new features that have been added to this program, together with an expanded and improved promotion and information effort, we are confident that a much greater participation in the program in 1973 will be seen. Budget estimates have been submitted estimating the issuing of 20,000 contracts. Feedback from rural areas would indicate that coverage may be much higher than that and may reach as high as 24,000 contracts. This, Mr. Speaker, represents a three-fold increase from the coverage level in 1971, a level when the Members to your left were in the Treasury Benches, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of a mere 8,000 contracts. This increase in participation, Mr. Deputy Speaker — they had 8,000 contracts in 1971 — after one year of operation under the New Democratic Government we had 14,000 contracts, Mr. Speaker. An increase of some 6,000 contracts and if the Federal Government would have committed themselves to what they said they would, and would not continue the PFA in the southern parts of the province, we would have sold 15,000 or 16,000 contracts in 1972. Because of a change of mind, and I don't criticize the Federal Minister for it, to extend PFA, without payment or contribution being made by farmers, it's only reasonable to assume that it would affect the sale of crop insurance in the Province of Saskatchewan. But in spite of that, we increased in one year 6,000 contract holders in Saskatchewan over those under the Liberal Government of 1964-1971, they lost policy holders, during the seven year period of time. They lost a lot of votes along with it too, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The program in the past was incomplete; this Government has made the necessary changes to improve the program and the farmers of this province will indicate their approval of our action by their increased participation. The New Democratic Government in the area of crop insurance, as well as other areas, continues to act in the interests of the people of this province to build a better Saskatchewan for tomorrow.

Having said those brief words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move second reading of this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Gardner (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the last part of the Minister's statement when he very sanctimoniously quoted the number of contracts that they had and were going to get. We had more contracts at one time in part of the province than they had in '71 with extended coverage. Everybody knows that it goes up and down over the years. He talks about 8,000 in '71, he says the Liberals lost contracts all of these years; you'll note it was up to 12,000, it's been down over those years' up and down depending on what the farmers want to do. You have a very slight increase when the whole province is covered and a very poor record I must say.

Mr. Speaker, I might say also, or Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when one looks at this Bill, I was surprised at the Minister's statement, I got the impression that the reason he brought in the Bill was so he could make a speech on crop insurance. He

spoke for half an hour and I realize this is his privilege and I am sure that he will let us have the same privilege, and he never did get around to mentioning the amendments in the Bill. The Minister made it quite clear that he is in favor of a crop insurance program and I would like to assure him that we are too. We expanded the program over the years — a relatively new program, and we hope they will do the same. There has been a gradual extension of this plan over the years and I hope that it continues to be that way and we are pleased with the Federal contribution. We hope that somehow this is increased. Any money they can get to subsidize the premiums we would be in favor of and we also have no objection to the plan that he mentioned today. We must emphasize that the final decision on the crop insurance plan has to be in the hands of the farmers. These are the people who are going to make the decisions and it doesn't do any good to quote these figures as the Minister did right now. It will take a year or two to see how this is accepted and I hope it is accepted by a growing number of the people in the province. But the only way we are going to find out is to wait and see.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I was a bit disappointed to notice that in the Bill and in the Minister's speech, he didn't make any mention of the compensation to the many crop insurance agents who were fired by the NDP Government last fall. Now there were 73 of these agents scattered throughout Saskatchewan. I have a list of their names and addresses here and I must thank the department for supplying me with these.

I think we should take a look at the development of the crop insurance business from the time it was started in their regime to ours and up to the moment. It started, of course, with only part of the province designated and incidentally expanded to cover more crops and more area. The rural agents in Saskatchewan must be given the credit for the establishment of the crops insurance plan in this province. No Government can take credit, it's the rural agents who did the spade work. They worked to pioneer the program. They built up the crop insurance business. They went out in the evenings and they spent many hours explaining the program to the farmers. They did this by personal contact and this is the only way the plan got started in the first place. The money they received for this service was pitifully small throughout the entire time but they worked hard anyway. They wanted the plan to be a success and more than this they wanted to build up a business and a group of clients which would be valuable to them in the future. Some of these people purchased their agency from others and they paid cash money for the files and the clients that they built up, and they bought this from a former agent. This is, of course, not unusual in the insurance business because your assets are your lists of clients and goodwill you have built up over the years. Last fall the NDP Government, through the Minister of Agriculture, cancelled out these agents and seized their business. Their files and their clients were taken over by the Government and to my knowledge no compensation was paid to any of these persons who had their business seized.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Gardner: — If anybody knows anything different I should like to hear about it. I have heard from numerous agents, they had their files taken from them, they were cancelled out, absolutely

no compensation. This to me is an infringement, an outright infringement of the human rights of these people and a very substantial group of people. Perhaps this would be a good case for the Human Rights Commission. These people were told in the letter that they could apply as fieldmen and of course anybody can apply as a field man. There is no priority given to these agents that we know of and they have the same chance of getting a job, they take their chances along with anybody else. Registered letters, Mr. Deputy Speaker, were sent to the agents cancelling their contracts and by some strange coincidence these letters were dated within a day or two after the Federal election last fall. We saw a number of these letters and right after the election they sent these registered letters to all the agents.

The agents worked on a commission basis and of course in this way their costs were predictable and their costs were controlled but not so with the hired staff. The Minister is going to replace all of these people and hire people on a daily basis. The cost of providing the crop insurance for the farmers will be undoubtedly much higher under the new system. Apparently a number of agents were not fired in the purge of last November, about 34 were retained. Now the Minister in his lengthy speech on crop insurance didn't tell us why some were fired and why some were retained — 73 were fired and 34 were retained. We have no explanation of why this has happened. Were they large agents or small ones? Well, we could look this up in the report and see how many customers they had but there doesn't seem to be that much rhyme or reason to it. We don't know whether they would be considered the good agents or the bad agents; whether they were in good areas or bad areas. We just haven't been told and the Minister has not given us any information. We do know . . .

Mr. Cody (Watrous): — . . . sold two contracts . . .

Mr. Gardner: — Oh, no, there are many who had over 100 contracts who were cancelled out, Mr. Member from Watrous. You can look these up in the annual report and you can see the number of contracts that these people had. What we do know and it was quite obvious was that 73 of these small businessmen in the field of crop insurance lost their business last November due to seizure by the NDP Government. Mr. Speaker, we feel and we ask the Minister if he would consider setting up some kind of an independent committee to consider the situation whereby these agents were discharged without compensation because we consider this a very serious matter.

Mr. Speaker, as far as the amendments are concerned in this Bill, we have no particular objections to them. They have increased the number of people on the board by two and with the extended area we find no fault with this. They deleted a few sections which have to do with the establishment of an area. I feel I must mention these because the Minister in his lengthy speech didn't really tell us what the amendments did. They deleted several sections that had to do with establishment of areas and of course, if they are already established these aren't necessary. There was a provision in the original Bill that a person must give them notification by June 15th of his intentions. This has been deleted and this will now be done by regulation and we have no particular objection to this.

My main objection and I repeat again is the fact that many of these people were dismissed last fall, last November, with no compensation. We still feel that they have something owing to

them for the loss of their business and I am sure that more of the Members on our side of the House will have something to say about this particular aspect.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Oliver (Shaunavon): — Just a few words, Mr. Speaker, as I don't have too much experience in this line because crop insurance was just expanded into our southwest area last year. However you only have to look at the increase in the people who subscribe to this and look back on the salesmen and if, as the Member for Moosomin says, "A careful selection of crop insurance salesmen made the plan work," then it would seem obvious that our selection of crop insurance agents was of that calibre that they wanted to see the plan work and not scuttle the plan. Indeed it is obvious that more representation on the Board is needed if it is covering the complete province. It is also interesting to note that there was no progress from 1964 to 1971, as the Minister says.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Oliver: — I believe this really points up the concern of the Members opposite. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I make no apology for those poor, poor hail insurance companies who have gouged the farmers for years and years and it is about time somebody throttled them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Oliver: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to point out too that this is production insurance or production protection and it is guaranteeing the farmer that his grain enterprise is insured in direct proportion to the productivity of his farm. I should like to commend the Minister also for the new changes. The first is spot-loss hail. I think this will really help the palatability of the plan in the southwest. Also for including both the per acre and the price per bushel in calculating the adjustment.

The second point would be the quality guarantee. This again will increase its palatability. Crop insurance coverage extended to eight crops now, and the price options of wheat increasing up to \$1.50, of barley to 90 cents, of flax for \$2.50, as well as the efficiency reduction on premiums for those who are more efficient farmers, will attract more contracts.

There are some further changes I should like to see. I think there could be a further revision in the classifying of the soil zone in the risk areas in relation to the productivity. I think in some cases this is unrealistic. I should also like to see spot-loss adjustments to include insect damage as well as hail.

I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the need for crop insurance is pointed up in the southwest this year if you go by some of the old timers in the district who are predicting what is going to happen. This time round they are predicting a drought because they say it occurs in a 12-year cycle. If you look back to 1961 it was very dry in the southwest, as it was in 1949 and in 1937. Then if you look at the studies of the Saskatchewan Research Council, the 26th annual report on ground water

hydrology studies, they show the ground water levels are far below average in the southwest part of Saskatchewan. I strongly urge farmers to consider crop insurance for this crop year.

These amendments to the Crop Insurance Act demonstrates our concern for the preservation of the family farm. I support the amendments.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Weatherald (Cannington): — Mr. Deputy Speaker, my colleagues demonstrated some of the objections that we have that we would like to voice at this particular time. I must say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by some sort of logic the Government Members seem to be attempting to demonstrate to us that it is a great sign of prosperity when you can sell everybody a big pile of insurance. Now it always seem to me that the person who needs insurance the most is the person who is probably in the least secure financial position. It would seem to me that the correlation between a lot of insurance and prosperity doesn't quite exist in the manner that they are suggesting to us.

It seems, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Government has been very haphazard in their dealings with many of the agents. The Member for Watrous (Mr. Cody) hasn't yet entered the debate but he seems to want to make some remarks about people who were insurance agents not selling much insurance. Well, I suggest or would presume that he hasn't read the report yet but I would recommend him reading the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Board Report, 1972, and he would notice a particular agent here who sold 104 contracts to the extent of \$271,800 last year and his right is now cancelled. Another one sold 78 contracts to the extent of \$252,800. These were two of the more sizeable contracts entered into by agents of any type or description, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I would suggest that the idea that people were being cancelled because they weren't selling contracts doesn't really fit with the records that are being produced by the Department of Agriculture themselves.

I have with me a letter written to an agent which shows the manner in which they were treated. I might suggest that many of the agents did do a lot of work in this regard and they, themselves, say that often they have worked at it for three or four years to develop the business, and they didn't make any profit at it. They hoped to make some profit out of the business by renewals in their insurance business but this did not materialize when they were unceremoniously told that they were cancelled out. The letter they received said:

The Crop Insurance Board wishes to point out that changing in our area office system requires that this be done in a block. No individual agent was singled out, an area office will take the place of several agencies. This means a number of agencies will have to be terminated.

The person receiving this letter had his agency terminated.

It does seem, in my opinion, the Government has opted for a system of selling crop insurance that will be much more expensive than what they had previously. I am, to say the least, very sceptical about the addition of more and more people on the Government payroll to sell crop insurance. Apparently they are going to be paid on a daily basis, apparently they are going to

be paid through an office which presumably they will operate from. I think that the cost will be much more easily indicated after a year of operation in this manner. It is certainly going to be a much more expensive system than previously was being used by individual agents who ran their operations from their own offices. They lived in the local community, they had little travelling cost, few expenses for hotel rooms etc. Certainly the new system the Government is bringing in of selling crop insurance is going to increase the cost in servicing these contracts out in the field. I think next year there will be better evidence as to how much the increase in cost is. I would predict at this time that it would be very, very substantial.

In the interests of efficiency I think that we will find it really has not improved the method of selling crop insurance. Essentially I think it is pretty safe to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that crop insurance is looked at by individual farmers as an investment for better or for worse. It is looked at as a business management tool and that is, in my opinion, the way it should be looked at. It is not just a case of sending out a high pressure salesman to try and sell something as you would sell a man a shirt. It is certainly in a much different category and it is up to the individual to determine whether it is a good financial move or not. It is not the type of thing that should be sold in a high pressure manner because obviously not every farmer should have crop insurance. There are some who should, there are others who do not require it as it was clearly demonstrated at our hearings. Some farmers feel they have enough financial resources to carry on for another year and so for a series of years they don't require any insurance and therefore, they don't consider it a good or necessary management tool. It is obvious that these individuals, as they demonstrated at our hearings, would not be going into the program under any circumstances.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I simply want to sum up by saying that I have very serious objections to the manner in which many of the agents who worked hard for the plan have been treated. I have serious reservations also about the Government adopting fully paid individual people such as the Minister has outlined here today.

I think also that there are two other areas in which the Government has failed to deal with crop insurance in an adequate manner. I think that they should seriously consider a change in the hail insurance provisions because as yet hail insurance is not satisfactory under the present plan to many farmers and they have to buy hail insurance outside of the crop insurance plan which they do not find acceptable. Other provinces have provided for a hail insurance rider and the Government here has not yet seen fit to do so.

I might say, in concluding, that in this past year the Crop Insurance Board had a very substantial profit where the Government was taking in more in premium money and they weren't paying out as much in claims. I don't blame them for that, I think we are all happy that claims were not having to be paid simply because it meant that farmers were harvesting their crops. I think it should be brought to their attention that the plan now has an over \$5 million surplus in its coffers. Last year it went up to \$4.1 million and in 1971 to \$5.2 million, which was a gain of about \$1.1 million in the reserve fund. So the plan itself is

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in a pretty good financial condition to offer more and better terms to farmers for the coming year. Mr. Speaker, I think the Government is in a very good position with the fund having this much money in it to offer the farmers a little better deal in the coming year as far as crop insurance is concerned.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:23 o'clock p.m.