

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Third Session — Seventeenth Legislature
27th Day

Friday, March 2, 1973

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

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Mr. Thibault (Melfort-Kinistino): — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce a fine group of students from the Birch Hills High School seated in the Speaker's Gallery. They got up quite early to drive in this morning. They have visited the Steel Mill, the museum, RCMP Barracks and they are going to watch democracy in action for the next half hour or so. They are led here by their teachers Mr. Grant Getz, Mr. Wayne VanZandbergen and Mr. Lyle Cox. The students are 42 in number, they are quite a group. It is a yearly visit by the Birch Hills High School to come and visit the Legislature. I am sure that these trips here are very educational and worthwhile. I also want to wish them a very safe journey home.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cody (Watrous): — Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce to you and to this Assembly today 50 Grade Eight students from the Cudworth School. Cudworth is a farming community in the north end of the Watrous constituency. They have come in today to watch democracy as they see it and as we see it in the Chambers of this Legislature. They are accompanied today by their teachers Sister Marion, Mr. Yuzik, and they are capably brought here today by their bus driver, Johnny Diakiw. I know that all Members here today will want to wish them a very pleasant stay and a safe journey home.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Purchase of Intercontinental Packers

Mr. Steuart (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to direct a question to the Premier. After he made the announcement concerning the government purchase of 45 per cent of Intercontinental Packers I asked for certain information so that we would have an opportunity to appraise the Government's action in agreeing to pay out \$10.2 million for 45 per cent interest in this Saskatchewan business. I wonder if he is prepared now to table this information — I asked for the last five years of statements from Intercontinental Packers, how much money Intercontinental Packers owe SEDCO at the present time and other questions, yesterday. I saw him making notes, I wonder if he is prepared now to tell us if he intends to table those today or when he will be prepared to table them?

Hon. Mr. Blakeney (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, this is the first question we have had since I have been in the House on this matter. The Leader of the Opposition was pretty careful yesterday to indicate, as was the fact, that he was making a speech, and not asking questions. I will take under advisement the question which he now puts concerning the financial statements. I don't know whether they are available and to what extent they are available. No doubt we have seen them, the question of whether or not it is in the best interests of the company of which we are now a member to table them, will, I suppose, need to be considered. That question I will take under advisement. I invite the Hon. Member to put any other questions (if they are detailed in nature) on the Order Paper so that we can either decide that they be dealt with in the Crown Corporations Committee when SEDCO is under consideration or in this House as the case may be. I think that it is rather difficult for us to cull out of what essentially was a fairly long statement the particular information which the Leader of the Opposition says today that he was seeking yesterday.

Mr. Steuart: — A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I did ask several questions yesterday, but the most vital ones were in regard to the operating statements of Intercontinental Packers. I would hope that the Premier has seen it, I hope he looked at it pretty carefully. I would hope that he had someone help him, some consultants, advisors, sit down with him to look at the statements and appraise them. Is he aware that the statement of Intercontinental Packers for at least the last three or probably four years are on file with SEDCO?

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Yes.

Mr. Steuart: — Then its available.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — I thought I indicated that we had the statements and that the question is: Whether or not it is in the public interest to disclose the information?

Unemployment in Saskatchewan

Mr. Lane (Lumsden): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day are we going to get an answer today to my question of the last week?

Hon. Mr. Cowley (Minister of Finance): — Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Member asked the question. I want to tell the Member that we do from time to time make rough projections based on past years' statistics, projecting them forward on our estimates of how the economy is performing at the present time and how it will perform.

As the Member opposite will know, unemployment statistics are based on projections of both the labor force and the participation rate and on projections of how rapid the number of people able to be employed will grow. The conclusions arrived at are highly dependent on the assumptions that one builds in. For example, in calculating the employment rate in Saskatchewan this summer, do we build in Mr. Turner's 300,000 jobs or not? How do we calculate the participation rate in Saskatchewan if

we assume that the population is relatively stable? Should one assume that the participation rate will grow or remain stable in line with the population? In general, my comment would be that given the state of the economy now and the prospects for the summer, I think that employment prospects in Saskatchewan this summer are encouraging.

With respect to government employment programs, these will be announced in due course by the responsible Minister. The Member opposite will have a chance during the Estimates to ask questions about those various programs. I might say that in directing the question to myself, I hope that the Member is not laboring under delusion that the solutions to Saskatchewan's employment problems, if indeed there are problems this summer, are solely in the field of fiscal measures and I certainly hope that Mr. Turner isn't laboring under that delusion as well.

I might say that most of the statistics on the labor force are gathered by the Federal Government, they provide neither us nor the House of Commons with their projections. Indeed when Mr. Turner met with the Minister of Finance at a closed and confidential meeting, he provided us only with projections based on certain assumptions. What he provided us with was a table. He said if the participation rate is this, if the economy performs in this way, this is what you get. He gave us a range that included almost any conceivable situation and almost any conceivable amount of employment. I think that the Member will appreciate that from Ottawa we don't have much word on what they are doing. What projection you have come out depends on what assumption you want to build in. In general, as I said, based on the state of the economy, the prospects for the summer are encouraging.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Never have we been treated more arrogantly by the Government opposite.

Mr. Speaker: — Order.

Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order. I am going to rephrase exactly my question that we discussed with you yesterday. This is exactly what the question was: Does the Government have an estimate at this time as to what the unemployment level in Saskatchewan will be on June 1, 1973? The Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, has stood up in this House and said, "No they don't have one." They don't care about our unemployment, Mr. Speaker, and he still hasn't answered the question. This is utter arrogance on the part of the Government to avoid the issue of unemployment.

Mr. Speaker: — What is the Point of Order?

Mr. Lane: — I have given a question. Does the Government have an estimate at this time as to what the unemployment level in Saskatchewan will be on June 1, 1973?

Mr. Speaker: — The Hon. Member may not be satisfied with the answer. This has nothing to do with the rules of the House, which is not

a Point of Order. The answer may not be satisfactory to the Member, that is a debatable point.

Hon. Mr. Cowley: — Mr. Speaker, I should just like to inform the Member that he asked if we do have estimates. We have estimates, and what the estimates are depends upon what assumptions you build in. We have a range of estimates based on certain assumptions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coupland Wins Prize SGIO Convention

Hon. Mr. Romanow (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day. As all Members know, today is the first day of the Southern Saskatchewan Annual Convention of SGIO agents. We expect a record turnout of SGIO agents and that will be followed by a Northern Saskatchewan Annual Convention in Saskatoon next weekend. We have a draw that is made to honor agents. I should like to advise the House that we have the person in our midst who was the lucky winner of the SGIO agent's draw, the Hon. Member from Meadow Lake, Coupland's Agencies.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — We were pleased to see that the Member from Meadow Lake was present at the Convention to accept his prize. We urge him and thank him very much for a job well done for SGIO, at least there is one on that side who believes in it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Coupland (Meadow Lake): — Mr. Speaker, I brought my prize, but it is in the Member's Lounge, I'll have to bring it in and let everyone see it. It is donated by the radio station from Swift Current, a lovely transistor radio. Nobody was more surprised than I was when they called Hal Coupland from Meadow Lake!

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 6 – Urging the Government of Canada to Amend the National Transportation Act

Mr. Robbins (Saskatoon Nutana Centre) moved, seconded by Mr. Kowalchuk (Melville):

That this Assembly urges the Government of Canada to amend the National Transportation Act so that national transport policy be directed to promote provincial and regional economic development rather than act as a brake on industrial expansion.

Mr. Robbins: — Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks I will be moving the motion related to No. 1 on the Order Paper, Resolution No. 6.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan requires a major revision of the

principle underlining the present archaic federal approach to transportation, an approach which has its roots in a national policy of the 19th century. In any analysis, Mr. Speaker, of early prairie railway construction and the impact on the West and the reaction of westerners to it we should peruse all available historical material in the context of that national policy and the philosophy of the then Federal Government of Canada, headed by John A. MacDonald. The thrust of this policy was directed at tapping the investment frontier of the Canadian Prairies. Railways and protective tariffs were the principal instruments used in effecting this East-West development. Even the railway construction had some significant facets attached thereto. It was abundantly clear that the initial railway construction, Mr. Speaker, occurred well ahead of any reasonable probability that it would generate sufficient operating income, or revenue. The national government of that day offered incentives to this robust free-enterprising group of entrepreneurs. On an originally estimated cost of \$100 million the government supplied some 700 miles of railway already constructed in Manitoba and British Columbia at a cost of some \$34 million to the people of Canada and at no cost to the railway company. In addition, Mr. Speaker, a cash subsidy of \$25 million supplemented by a further \$22 million in loans when construction costs exceeded original estimates and some 25 million acres of land including mineral rights were granted.

Materials to be used in construction of that railway were to be imported free of duty. Tax exemptions for 20 years and a guarantee of a 20-year monopoly were added for good measure. The completed railway, cash and land alone were conservatively estimated at \$140 million. The rip-offs we heard about in the 1972 Federal Election campaign began as far back as 1872. Westerners, despite these subsidies, have been confronted with a perpetually high freight rate structure. Ever since that day the essential ingredient of exploitation has remained in this respect.

In the 1870s a heavily subsidized CPR was used as the vehicle for achieving an integrated national economy. In contrast, Mr. Speaker, the National Transportation Act of 1967 asserts the national interest is best served by developing an economic, efficient and adequate transportation system utilizing all available modes of transportation at the lowest cost. One of the major criticisms, Mr. Speaker, of the current Federal Government's lack of foresight is its apparent interpretation that a restriction to strictly economic efficiency within the transportation system itself is the sole measuring stick. Transportation organizations which are monopolistic providers of transportation service can under this policy proceed to develop their own economic objectives without due regard for other broad economic community and social considerations.

This shows up very clearly, Mr. Speaker, in the practice of setting discriminatory freight rates on commodities deliverable to Western delivery points. The exception, of course, which is grain, is under the Crow's Nest Pass Rates' Structure. As prairie inhabitants we are locked into railway transport on major commodities because of length of haul and the lack of competitive alternatives. Railways are in fact legally free to maximize freight revenues as they see fit. Western Canada is, under the principle, subject to horizontal freight rate increases and a transcontinental rate structure which is highly inequitable. This, Mr. Speaker, creates a most untenable situation for

reasonable secondary industry development in this province.

Transportation, Mr. Speaker, should be recognized as the primary instrument in the development of a reasoned economic base. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, there is real urgency in the need for a significant provincial input in the formulation of Canadian transportation policy. That, Mr. Speaker, is one reason why this province through its Premier expressed concern over the appointment of Edgar Benson, former Federal Liberal Finance Minister as head of the Canadian Transport Commission. The Government of Saskatchewan, naturally enough, had a strong preference for a westerner. Even the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, has expressed some concern, I believe, over Mr. Benson's appointment. It takes a Liberal to know a Liberal.

Mr. Speaker, our concern with national transport policy cannot logically be limited to rail and freight transport. All transportation facilities should be recognized as primary instruments in the development of the West and particularly of this province.

The development of adequate air service immediately comes to mind. Currently all regulatory control with respect to air services is vested in the Federal Government. This fact militates against the development of North-South air services, as an orientation of major air services on a East-West basis, currently exists. The provinces are, however, in the best position to know their own needs and requirements in relation to air services. There should, therefore, be a provincial voice in the granting of franchises. Personally, Mr. Speaker, I feel we would have been in a better position today to effect some measure of control in this respect if the province had retained its provincial airline, SaskAir. The previous Liberal administration obviously did not agree and disposed of it to private interests. Nevertheless irrespective of where our emphasis or our philosophical differences lie, probably all Members would agree a provincial voice with respect to air services in overall national transportation policy is an achievable and a desirable goal.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government already gives tacit recognition to this aspect by subsidizing air routes in Eastern Canada serviced by QuebecAir and by Eastern Provincial Airways. These subsidies, sanctioned by the Canadian Transport Commission presumably are for purposes of development. No reason or explanation, Mr. Speaker, is given for lack of similar subsidies in Western Canada. This raises the question of the role of a Federal regulatory body in relation to Regional Economic Development. Determining the role of the Canadian Transport Commission in this respect is, in itself, a difficult exercise. Partially perhaps this is due, Mr. Speaker, to the confidentiality related to costs and revenue submissions required under regulations of the National Transportation Act. The Commission's hearing related to the Western Canada Rapeseed Crusher's application is a case in point.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all Members of this House take particular note of the statistics that are going to be provided with respect to this particular item. Rapeseed travels by rail from Saskatoon or Nipawin to the Lakehead at 23½ cents per cwt. The rate is 44 cents per cwt from there, that is the Lakehead, to Toronto or Montreal. However, rapeseed meal, that is a partially processed product, travels to the Lakehead from

Nipawin or Saskatoon for the same price as rapeseed but if it continues on to Toronto or Montreal the freight rate rises from 44 cents per cwt to 79 cents per cwt. If you take the case of rapeseed oil shipped from Nipawin or Saskatoon to the Lakehead at a 23½ cent per cwt rate and ship that same product on from the Lakehead to Toronto or Montreal the rate rises to \$1.41 per cwt. It should be very clear to the Members of this House that that type of transportation policy and freight rate structure militates very strongly against setting up a processing plant in Saskatchewan in relation to the handling of rapeseed and processing it into rapeseed meal and rapeseed oil.

The rapeseed industry supported by Western provinces, is appealing the freight rate differentials between seed and the oil and the meal under a section of The Transportation Act, which states rates may not pose an unreasonable discouragement to development of primary or secondary industries in any region of Canada. The argument is essentially against traditional Canadian policies of development which encourage industries near Eastern centres of population and against a freight rates structure which supports that policy.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the problems I have rather sketchily outlined to this Assembly, the necessary basis for a new national transportation policy must be formulated. To rectify this situation, some bold imaginative political action is required in the prairie region. It is in the interest of all provincial governments in the West to adopt a reasonably uniform approach. In such an approach the West may reasonably expect to loosen the fetters which major transportation interests have forged and in which we are currently enmeshed.

The exploitation of the West, the hinterland to the industrial East, will not end unless it becomes economically feasible to develop a secondary industrial base in the prairie region. Although there are other factors which have a bearing on it, the greatest single factor is related to transportation problems and costs related thereto. Mr. Speaker, it is self-evident that existing Federal efforts toward regional economic expansion are severely circumscribed and will remain so until present inequities are removed or effectively reduced. Mr. Speaker, fully developed provincial economies in the prairie region would provide the most effective springboard to the development of the new frontier to the North.

Strong western representation directed at a fundamental revision of The National Transportation Act and any other statutes related thereto is a requirement. Channels of communication, Mr. Speaker, must be opened between all levels of Government as a necessary first step to rational regional economic development. Transportation is the most basic and must be an integral part of those discussions.

Mr. Speaker, most of our resource commodities are captive to rail because of heavy loading and length of haul. Because the railways are freed by legislation to meet competition and get revenues where they can, western shipments contribute a disproportionate share to rail revenues. Due, Mr. Speaker, to the nature of products shipped, geographic location and lack of alternative transportation facilities, railways inflict high freight rates on prairie commodity movements. Freight rates on the prairies are at levels which recognize there is no competitive alternative transport for the movement of most

commodities. Some examples will illustrate the situation:

1. Iron and steel products in the form of angles or bars shipped from Cooksville, Ontario to Vancouver, a distance of 2,672 miles, carries a \$1.48 per cwt. freight rate. The same product from the same plant shipped to Regina, a distance of 1,564 miles or 1,108 miles less in distance carries a freight rate structure of \$2.21 per cwt. rate.
2. Meat and packing house products fresh or frozen to Vancouver for export and/or domestic consumption shipped from Alberta points such as Lethbridge, Red Deer, Edmonton or Calgary carry a standard \$1.20 per cwt. for both export and domestic markets.

It is asserted that the blanket rate from Alberta to Vancouver is the result of truck competition. However, if you look at the same rate from Saskatoon or the freight structure from Saskatoon for similar products, fresh and frozen meat, it is \$2.18 per cwt. — now remember you have to compare that with \$1.20 from the Alberta points — for export which includes 45 cents per cwt. wharfage and unloading, and \$2.02 per cwt. if it is for the domestic market in British Columbia.

From Winnipeg, the rate is \$2.18 per cwt., exactly the same as from Saskatoon and obviously of some lesser distance. It should be noted that the Winnipeg rate is based on railway absorbing one-half the wharfage cost plus the unloading charge at Vancouver. Winnipeg, for an as yet unexplained reason, gets the same export rate as Saskatoon while Saskatoon has to absorb \$10 per ton export and \$16.40 per ton domestic to compete with Alberta Points.

3. If you use General Foods commodities — canned foods etc: Toronto to Vancouver at a distance of 2,672 miles the cost \$2.21 per cwt. Toronto to Regina, again 1,108 miles less, 1,564 miles in total, at a higher rate of \$2.30 per cwt.

Toronto to Saskatoon, 1,678 miles, a little less than 1,100 miles less than the trip to Vancouver, at a rate of \$2.54 per cwt. or 33 cents higher than the rate from Toronto to Vancouver.

4. Steel angles and bars if they are shipped from: Montreal to Vancouver — 2,946 miles — carry a freight rate structure of \$1.72 per cwt. Montreal to Regina, and you must keep in mind that this shipment goes right through the city of Regina on its way to Vancouver — 1,748 miles — roughly 1,200 miles less in distance, yet a freight rate structure of \$2.32 or some 60 cents above the rate to Vancouver. Montreal to Saskatoon — 1,862 miles — carries a \$2.50 per cwt. freight rate.

5. If, Mr. Speaker, a shipper is shipping Japanese oranges from Vancouver to Winnipeg, it carries a 30 cents per box less freight rate than if those oranges came to the city of Regina. Again the ludicrousness of the situation shows up because the boxes of oranges going to Winnipeg obviously go right through the city of Regina on their way to Winnipeg.

Railways contend the continental freight rate structure is necessary as a means of meeting encroachment of offshore competition. I think perhaps Members of this Assembly will realize that there is some necessity for a transcontinental rate in a country like Canada because of the fact that you could ship

from the American seaboard or the Eastern Canadian seaboard or from overseas by water down through the Panama Canal, and by water right to the Port of Vancouver, so it seems obvious that it is reasonable to expect a transcontinental rate which is a reasonable rate to meet that competition. But, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Members of the Assembly to give serious consideration to why there should be discriminatory rates to intermediate points in between. There seems to be no logic whatsoever in that approach.

In overall national transportation policy, freight rates, air services, passenger rail services, branch line abandonment, grain terminal storage in Vancouver, related to expanding trade probabilities with the Pacific Rim countries, rail construction to remove an existing bottleneck in the grain-handling system in interior B.C., harbor boards, national ports, toll structures on the St. Lawrence Seaway and urgent developmental needs of the Port of Churchill, are all matters which the Prairies and particularly Saskatchewan, have a vital interest.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, I could just go back to that one previous point as I intended to make another point there in comparison with the railway structures in United States. If, for example, you were comparing a steel shipment from Gary, Indiana to Seattle, Washington, which is roughly comparable to a shipment from Hamilton through to Vancouver, you will find a different rate structure in relation to the transcontinental policy applicable in the United States. Their rule is a very simple rule and although there is still a measure of discrimination in it, it would be eminently more favorable to our shippers if we could get a similar subvention in our transportation policy. If, for example, the rate from Gary, Indiana to Seattle was \$1.48 per cwt. in terms of shipment of a product, the railway or the transporter could not charge more than \$1.48 per cwt. to any intermediary point in between. If for example, the produce was being shipped from Gary to Seattle for \$1.48 and the next shipment went from Gary, Indiana to Havre, Montana, then it would carry a similar rate of \$1.48 per cwt. Transporting that back to a Canadian situation, if you had that situation in Canada, a \$1.48 per cwt. rate applicable from Hamilton to Vancouver would mean that the rate from Hamilton to Regina would also be \$1.48. Although, Mr. Speaker, I do not think that would be really a fair rate in comparison to the longer distance to Vancouver, it would be eminently fairer than the \$2.21 per cwt. rate which currently applies from Hamilton to Regina.

I have mentioned the fact that in an overall transportation policy, and I have covered a number of points here, it is very important that the West have a voice. In all the desires for Members of this Assembly, both on the Government side and the Opposition, are anxious that we do develop some kind of a secondary base in terms of industry in this province and no factor looms as large as the need for major revision and participation in a meaningful way in the development of a new national transport policy. Mr. Speaker, I, therefore, would like to move this Resolution.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Owens (Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, transportation in all its phases is a very timely topic and this Resolution to urge the Federal Government

to amend the National Transportation Act should be of considerable interest to all Members of this Legislature and to all residents of our province.

Saskatchewan has suffered the distress of exploitation since the building of the first railroad as has the rest of the Prairie region, but to a greater degree. This great stretch of steel was designed to tie the East and the West with the main thrust of the policy, the development of the large and untapped resources of the Western region and, Mr. Speaker, the tap has been left open ever since the very beginning. Our resources have been drained off for the benefit of commercial and industrial interests in Eastern Canada. The Federal Government has allowed the rail system to deteriorate from a transcontinental transportation system designed to service all Canada into a monopolistic, unregulated, private system restricted to economic efficiency and maximization of returns to the shareholders. The primary purpose of the system has been set aside to the disadvantage of the Western provinces and the disadvantage is aggravated by the discriminatory setting of freight rates. Because of our central location and distances from points of export, Saskatchewan pays the highest freight rates of any province in Canada.

The efficiencies in rail transportation can best be maximized by hauling large volumes of long distances and on that basis it is advantageous to curtail the fine processed products developed in the West and haul the raw produce to Eastern industrial areas for processing, and hauling the finished product back over the same mileage for distribution, with the Western region paying the freight both ways. A typical example of discrimination in Saskatchewan is the almost total refusal by the Federal Government and the railroads to improve and maximize the use of the Hudson Bay route and the Port of Churchill. The extra hauling costs of grain adds up to a phenomenal figure. Instead of this money being saved and made available to Western producers, it is channelled into the coffers of the railroad monopoly. An area of particular concern to Saskatchewan and of more significance to the smaller rural centres is the service provided and the ever-rising costs. Passenger service has long since been forgotten and local freight and express almost completely handled by a trucking service that in many areas has no competition. Too often the customer is completely ignored.

To further aggravate the dissatisfied customer is the removal of the local agent and the closing of the local station which in the main has resulted in a slowdown in service especially if a shipment is mislaid or sometimes lost. A local agent was a part of the community and service to his customer was a prime concern and he did his best to satisfy. Today a telephone connects the already unhappy customer with a voice that records all the details, that leaves the impression of non-concern. The person to person association is lacking or non-existent and sometimes the action is just about the same. Many urgent shipments are not delivered simply because the truck was full and an extra was not put into service to deliver the overload. Too often this is the reason why a farmer's repairs are not delivered and the supplier or dealer takes the rap but the real culprit is the carrier.

Mr. Speaker, all the changes that have taken place and the changes that are currently taking place or being proposed are in the name of efficiency which to most people makes good sense. But, Mr. Speaker, the rates of all types of shipments, whether by

rail, truck or air be they freight, express or parcel post are all increasing. So, who is gaining by the marvellous restructuring of the transportation system? It certainly is not the party that is paying the ever-increasing rates. So it must be the provider of the service.

Mr. Speaker, not only are the residents of Saskatchewan being forced to pay higher and higher freight and express charges but with institution of the trucking system by the railroad company they are also forced to pay for the maintenance of roads and highway system to keep them in condition for the trucking industry with very little input from the rail line monopoly.

People in my community find little logic in the fact that they are paying more and receiving less from a system they have helped to subsidize from the very beginning. A system whose policy was originally directed toward regional development but a system whose policy has been changed to exploitation of the region to the benefit of the shareholders who reap greater benefits from investment in hotels and high-rise apartments.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to learn that the Saskatchewan Government is sponsoring a provincial transportation conference in Saskatoon later this month, with a western economic opportunities conference shortly after. Hopefully these two conferences will formulate policies in transportation as it affects Western Canada that can be presented to Federal authorities as a united voice.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members of this Assembly to support this Resolution so our representatives to these very important conferences on transportation will carry the full support of this Government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Steuart (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, in entering this debate I would first like to congratulate the Member from Nutana Centre, Mr. Robbins for the excellent background material and statistics that he presented to this House and the people of Saskatchewan on the question of freight rates and the inequities suffered by Saskatchewan and I think the Prairie Provinces generally in regard to freight rates.

Let me say this that we certainly will support the spirit of the Resolution. I spoke recently in Toronto to the Empire Club and part of the talk I gave was about the inequities of freight rates ever since the railroads were first built, since before the Prairie Provinces came into Confederation.

I pointed this out to them, along with some of the statistics I didn't have nearly the wealth of material that Mr. Robbins presented to this House but I did have some of that material. It's well known to everyone in Saskatchewan who has ever been involved in shipping at all. I also pointed out the situation with our pulp mill. We can debate our pulp mill in this House all we want, but we still have a pulp mill and the people of this province own 30 per cent of it and it does give employment. And it is typical of other resource based industries

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that we should all like to see in this province. But one of the things that works against us having industry in this province is the unfair freight rate situation. The absolute inequity of it and I think this story illustrates it as well as some of the cases that were put on the record by Mr. Robbins.

When we were negotiating for freight rates for the pulp mill in Prince Albert we looked to two great markets; one in Eastern United States and one in Western United States. So, when we went to negotiate with buyers in the Eastern United States both the CNR and the CPR said fine. You are a western mill and you will be grouped with the western mills (that is the West Coast mills) and you will pay a rate similar to theirs, the same as theirs. I am not talking about the dollars and cents of how much we pay a ton to move the pulp into the market. I am talking about the rate we pay. We said fine. We will now look to the West Coast of the United States, the Los Angeles area which is another very large consumer of pulp products. So we got another freight rate from the railroads. Oh, they said now you are grouped differently. (They have a grouping plan). You are now grouped with the eastern mills. So, as unbelievable as it sounds, we ended up with the worst of both worlds. When we wanted to go west we were an easterner. When we wanted to go east we were a westerner. We were never allowed and they are still not allowed to take any advantage, any advantage we have, for example, our real advantage that we have over the West Coast mills or the mill in Alberta when it came to shipping into the Eastern United States. And when it came to shipping into the Western United States we were not allowed, and still are not allowed to take advantage of our geographical position west of the eastern mills.

So I can join with both Members opposite who spoke, I am sure every Member in this House condemns this situation.

I also pointed out in that speech and I pointed out to the Federal Government then, and I do now, and I have done so on many occasions that while we recognize that there has been some effort on the part of federal governments in the past and the present Federal Government to do something about regional disparities, to try and even up the disadvantages that we have in the Prairies, namely our geographical location. To try and even up the disadvantages they have in the Maritimes with a series of Federal programs, that these don't work. They are like trying to make, in most cases, water run up hill. Too many of the sorts of hothouse industries that end up being located on the Prairies or the Maritimes (as soon as the pump priming is finished) too many of them fail.

I say this that we have programs like DREE and I looked into this recently and I am sure there are programs here that most of us never heard about. A kind of a bureaucratic alphabetical nightmare dreamed up by some top brass in Ottawa to try and do something about regional disparities but in effect, Mr. Speaker, they are a band-aid approach.

There is DREE and there is FRED and there is PEP and there is LIP and there is BEAM and there is even one called DIP. I checked it very closely for I thought it might have been DRIP but it wasn't, it was DIP.

Now I say and I am sure that every Member of this House joins me, that while we have taken advantage of these and we

should take advantage of them whenever we have the opportunity. They are a band-aid approach and they don't work and they won't work. If the Federal Government would institute a fair and equitable policy in regard to freight rates, a national policy in regard to freight rates; and if the railroads have to be subsidized by the Federal Government then they have to be subsidized. We have in the past subsidized both railroads directly and indirectly. Give us fair and equitable freight rates and then let the chips fall where they may.

I say that we in Saskatchewan and we in Western Canada can and will develop the kind of industries based on the wealth, the natural resources that we have here that will give our people employment, give our people opportunities. We don't need pump priming by the Federal Government but we do need a fair and equitable break in freight rates and I might say in tariffs as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think this approach that is envisioned in this Resolution that I am sure we will find full support on both sides of the House, is what is needed. It is long over due. As we approach the meeting that will take place in July between the provincial governments of Western Canada and the Federal Government, I think this is a golden opportunity for the governments of Western Canada, but especially the Prairies, because in this regard our interests are just not parallel with the interests of British Columbia. We have a more serious problem in the prairies. They have the competition of water, shipment by water. They don't have anywhere near the unfairness of the inequities to put up with with regard to freight rates as we have in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

So I hope and I am confident that in spite of some political philosophical differences between the three prairie provinces, the governments of the three prairie provinces, this will be one area in which they can join together and try and strike a blow for real development in Western Canada in attempting and I hope successfully to obtain some major commitment by the Federal Government next July; that at long last a permanent solution will be found to the situation that has plagued the prairie provinces even before we were in Confederation, even before we were a province.

In this regard certainly they will have the support of not just the Members of this side of the House, but of everyone who lives in the Province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are other things I should like to discuss in regard to this Resolution so I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Resolution No. 7 — Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement Increase

Mr. Mostoway (Hanley) moved, seconded by Mr. Rolfes (Saskatoon Nutana South):

That this Assembly urges the Government of Canada to proceed immediately with legislation to implement a program which includes the following:

1. An increase in the Old Age Security pension to \$125 per month.
2. The Guaranteed Income Supplement be increased so that the combined Old Age Security pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement would provide the single pensioner with a guaranteed income of \$225 a month and a married couple of \$375 a month.

Hon. Mr. Mostoway: — Mr. Speaker, the motion I have presented to this Assembly for approval is rather straightforward. Its intent is simply to ask the Trudeau Government to allow senior citizens throughout our great country to live their lives in a reasonable degree of comfort.

As the Members are aware my Resolution asks the Federal Government to increase the Old Age Security pension to \$125 per month. The Resolution also asks that the Guaranteed Income Supplement be increased so that the senior citizens in Canada who need both the Guaranteed Income Supplement and the Old Age Security pension will have an income of \$225 a month if single and \$375 a month if married. The amounts of money are not large and would be just 25 per cent over the poverty level as established by the Economic Council of Canada. No one in this day and age will be able to live 'high on the hog' on those income levels. But the additional money would certainly allow many of our senior citizens to move out of \$30 a month unheated rooms that eventually take their toll. It would allow our senior citizens much needed leeway in purchasing clothes, attending social events, concerts and moving pictures.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the additional income I am suggesting would allow those who have worked long and hard years to lay the foundation for my generation and younger generations a certain amount of independence in their lives — a certain amount of dignity in the years of retirement.

Mr. Speaker, it has been suggested that in future this age in which we live may be studied as one that saw the start of the downgrading of the elderly. Compared to other societies in other parts of the world, I think it is safe to say that we in the Western world have dashed to pieces the glory of old age in an era of computers, frenzied hurry and the desire for things young and new. We have, for the most part, shunted older people and things into the shadows, to be put out of the way, to be almost forgotten so as to not disturb our high style of living. In other words, what we don't see too well, shouldn't bother us too much.

Mr. Speaker, we hear much of the sacredness of the family, and I believe in it as I am sure all Members of this House do. Yet, how often in the mind's eye, are our senior citizens thought of as being a part of that family we envision? Far too often we give lip service to this concept and the sacredness I mentioned really becomes a detached and cold sort of thing.

Mr. Speaker, without belaboring the point, I think it's safe to say that we do not give our senior citizens the open recognition they rightfully deserve. We may throw them a few dollars or build them a few homes, but for the most part, the majority of them suffer in silence.

The Old Age Security Act that was adopted by the Federal Parliament in January of 1952 at the prodding of socially conscious CCF Members of Parliament, provided a federal pension of \$40 per month to all residents of Canada 70 years of age and over. And for this, recognition must be given a certain people-oriented group of politicians who pressed for such a plan for years. With the universality of this plan, the pension was paid as a matter of right and was not subject to any means test.

Needless to say many fossilized politicians from the two ancient line parties foresaw nothing but gloom and doom out of this right. Now the significance of this is that it established that the state had a duty to perform towards our senior citizens. It established that Canadians had a responsibility to them in recognition of years of faithful service to the country.

Over the years, the pension increased and by 1965 had reached \$75 per month. At that time, a further amendment provided that the pension should be adjusted in relation to the rise in the cost of living up to a maximum of 2 per cent a year, starting in 1968. Provision was made in 1972 that from then on the Old Age Security payment would be raised annually from its level of \$80 a month by the full increase in the cost of living.

We can view these steps in the history of Old Age Pensions perhaps as progressive, but we cannot look on them as by any means being generous. They were progressive on a number of counts. First, the coverage was universal — an extremely important point in an equitable arrangement of society. Second, the Act stated that pensions were a right — not something that had to be continually bargained for. Third, the Old Age Pension can be viewed as progressive because the payment did relieve at least some of the financial burden off the tired shoulders of the people who had already spent the preponderance of their lives working to relieve their own financial needs. But, and I particularly want to stress this point, the payments as decided by Parliament through the years were not generous. Compared to the wealth that has been created in Canada by the labor of the ordinary working woman and man, compared with the standard of living that has been established through the use of the wealth, compared with the great debt all Canadians of younger years owe to these pioneers of Canada, the magnificent sum of \$82.88 a month in 1973 is hardly generous, as of this date.

And if there are some who by the accident of being born into wealth or by luck say that it is generous, I say to them, let's look at the stark realities which befall most of our citizens as they enter their twilight years. For a large number of them, it means less and less contact with their loved ones at a time when they have the greatest need for this contact. For a large number it means being taken out of the labor force and at a time when they have proven time and time again that they are responsible, conscientious and extremely reliable. And for a significant number it means less money to spend on health care and again, at a time when they most need it. And for some, it means the start of a mental depression which scars their remaining years.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen such cases and when I do I sometimes wonder just where we went wrong. I wonder, Mr. Speaker,

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if any of us will be able to look back on life in our twilight years and say, "thanks". If we can, then we will be able to look forward to the inevitable and say, "Yes".

Mr. Speaker, how many of our senior citizens of today are saying, thanks? I venture to say not all of them, in fact, very few.

In 1967 the Federal Government introduced a plan to provide a guaranteed income supplement to individuals in receipt of the Old Age Security payments.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Allan Guy getting that?

Hon. Mr. Mostoway: — He should be. Initially this plan provided a minimum monthly income of \$105 subject to the cost of living escalation at a maximum rate of two per cent a year. In the 1972 Federal budget, this guarantee was raised to \$150 for a single person and \$285 for a married couple. According to present legislation, beginning April 1, 1973 this ceiling was to have been increased with the full amount of the rise in the cost of living.

Present rate ranges for single pensioners are from 12 cents a month for individuals with additional incomes of \$134 to \$136 monthly, to \$67.12 a month for individuals with no additional income to \$2 additional income a month. For married pensioners, rates range from 62 cents per month for combined incomes of \$236 or \$240 a month, to \$59.92 a month for those who had additional incomes up to \$4 a month. Generally speaking the rates decrease by \$1 and \$2 per month for every additional \$2 and \$4 increase in additional income for single and married pensioners respectively.

Calculations of need for the Guaranteed Annual Income supplement do not include Old Age Security payments, assistance payments and certain other public pensions and benefits, private disability and insurance payments, support from relatives and any other income not taxable. Mr. Speaker, I should point out that while GIS payments are not considered taxable, all persons receiving Old Age Security payments are required to declare those payments as taxable personal income. The Guaranteed Annual Income Supplement is a temporary program and is to be phased out as the Canada Pension Plan matures in 1976. Mr. Speaker, you can well imagine my reaction when a short while ago the Federal Government announced an increase in the Old Age Pension to \$100 a month starting April 1st. You can well imagine my reaction to knowing that the pension and guaranteed income supplement as of that date will be \$170.14. Now I think it is time to give credit where credit is due, to that small but bold and courageous group of NDP Members of Parliament in Ottawa — that group of men who forced the Trudeau Government to give our senior citizens some pieces of bread instead of the crumbs they have been so used to giving. Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that minority government is good government, especially if it has as its leader a chastened Prime Minister, prodded by men of true social conscience.

And out of this comes the news that married couples may now be able to receive \$324.60 a month if they receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement. Now I know it falls short of the \$125 I suggest for single pensioners without the supplement,

and it falls short of the \$225 I suggest for single persons on the G.I.S. and it falls short of the \$375 suggested as a suitable amount for married couples on the G.I.S., but it is an improvement over what was and what was scheduled. And it is an admission by the Trudeau Government that in the past senior citizens have been short-changed. And it is proof that even the mighty and all powerful can listen to a people's party which now holds the balance of power in Ottawa. And if the Trudeau Government can be made to realize the error of its ways in the past, maybe it can be made to see that its proposed increase is good, but not enough, according to Canadians of all walks of life to whom I have talked the past few days.

Mr. Speaker, I should now like to turn from the Federal to the provincial field for a moment or two. When the New Democratic Party was swept into office in 1972, one of the first steps we took was to remove the burden of medical costs from our senior citizens.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mostoway: — We removed the tax on the sick, the wretched deterrent fees. No one in Saskatchewan over 65 years of age now is responsible for the \$36 per year for a single person or \$72 a year for a family which are the payments for hospitalization and medical care. We have also taken a number of steps to beef up social services to the older members of the Saskatchewan community — community services which were sorely neglected by the previous Liberal regime — financial support to homemakers services, the meals on wheels program and similar services that allow our senior citizens to remain in the community until special care home services are necessary. We have recently taken steps to ease the financial burden on guests of Level II and III special care homes through a revision of the grant structure. In addition, we will provide grants to many of our senior citizens who wish to renovate their homes.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mostoway: — Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to imply that the Federal Government has not initiated programs for our senior citizens. They have, and I will be the first to admit it, but in the main, their programs have been aimed at groups of senior citizens and not at the individual level. And that is why I ask for the proposed increase in my resolution. It is aimed at benefiting the individual, to be spent by the individual as he or she sees fit.

As for participation in the affairs of our senior citizens at the municipal level, I think recognition should be given our municipal councils. Many have done an excellent job in this regard.

But here I should mention the commission recently set up by this Government to deal with the needs of senior citizens. No doubt the Members opposite will, once again, go into hysterics because it implies people participation for people. I urge Members opposite to not use Stalinistic purging practices on this body as I am sure they gleefully anticipate doing.

Now, I offer no specific direction to this new committee, save one — could it consider an interdepartmental committee to concern itself with the affairs of our senior citizens, much like the one set up by an NDP Government by Order-in-Council shortly before the plague of Liberal Government hit us a number of years back. And I ask Members opposite, why their government issued an Order-in-Council to scuttle, to dash to smithereens such a committee? Were they afraid of it? Or did they have other priorities over our senior citizens? Gentlemen, I don't have to tell you what the answer was. You know it, I know it, and so do our senior citizens.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mostoway: — However, Mr. Speaker, I do offer some direction to both federal and provincial governments in regard to some specific services to our senior citizens on which I will now elaborate.

Senior citizens, in fact, citizens of all ages are patiently waiting for a comprehensive plan whereby such things as hearing aids, dentures and wheelchairs will be able to be purchased at greatly reduced prices. For example, I ask why profits of four and five hundred per cent over the original value should be made in dealings with our elderly in these things? Who of us here has not run across cases where these citizens were taken advantage of for no reason other than they were elderly and too tired to fight back?

Mr. Speaker, I should like to press for a prescription drug program based on a drug formulary and central purchasing to give senior citizens and, in fact, all citizens of this province the opportunity to buy life saving drugs at humane prices. When pills that cost a few cents to manufacture end up costing 20 to 50 times that amount to our citizens, it is time to rearrange our priorities for the benefit of people and not insensitive drug monopolies as is now usually the case.

In this regard, I urge both senior governments and especially the Federal Government, to really attack the problem without the proverbial kid gloves. If price control is necessary to save or prolong lives, then let them not hesitate to consider this line of action. And if the Federal Government deems price control to be odious in this area, then I urge this Provincial Government to take up the challenge and provide these drugs at greatly reduced prices to our people.

Mr. Speaker, I have another area of concern on which I should like to say a few words. It is the means or needs test to which the Federal Government subjects all senior citizens who would wish to apply for the Guaranteed Income Supplement to keep body and soul together. I maintain that it would be desirable for the Federal Government to take a good long look at this test. I say this because there are glaring injustices in this field.

For example, the Economic Council of Canada considers \$180 monthly for a single pensioner as absolutely necessary just to stay on the poverty level. Although the recently announced increases are welcome, the truth of the matter is that single persons on the pension and the supplement will still be \$9 a month below the poverty line, as opposed to married couples,

both over 65 years of age who will be right on the line.

And what about the married couple where only one is over 65 years of age and receiving the pension and supplement? Gentlemen, the horror of this situation is that no account is taken of the under 65 partner. The situation then develops where the couple is forced to live on benefits which have been given for one only. Now I ask if the Federal Government thinks the wife, in this case, should trot down to the unemployment office and apply for a job to supplement properly their income?

Mr. Speaker, how can the Trudeau Government ignore facts such as these which force our elderly to survive at a subsistence level, or seek jobs which you and I know they will never get?

Under the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan, Mr. Speaker, over 5,000 persons over 60 years of age had their incomes supplemented in the first quarter of the 1972 to 1973 fiscal year. This represents close to 16 per cent of payments under the plan. Some of this money went to supplementing costs of special care homes; some of this money went to senior citizens whose pensions and other supplements were not enough to meet the cost of such things as housing, rental or taxes.

Mr. Speaker, in asking the Federal Government to raise the living standards of our senior citizens, may I be permitted to refer to a model — a model senior citizens' home. Its location is far from here, almost too far. It is filled with plush carpets and top grade furniture and the best of everything. And it is quiet, oh, is it quiet! Why there is hardly ever any noise or talking there. And the residents of that home can come and go as they please. And do you know what? They even get some spending money. Oh, it is not much all told; it only amounts to about \$40,000 a year each.

But now I suppose you'll want to know how you can get into this \$6-million-a-year special care home. Do you get in by toiling on a farm for 45 years? Do you get in by working in a mine or a shop all your life? Do you get in by slaving over a hot stove for years and years? Well, if you think so, you're wrong. You see, to get into this special home you have to know the 'Great One' and belong to his club and you have to say the right things and do the right things. In fact, to be eligible for this home you have to be financially ineligible.

Well, Mr. Speaker, by now you know the name of that special care home, that place of mystery and serenity and at times almost unbearable silence and inactivity. Mr. Speaker, if you don't know the name, I shall tell you, it's called the Senate, and it is located in that far eastern city of Ottawa, so far, far away that one could almost go to sleep just thinking about it.

Mr. Speaker, our Government has moved consistently forward in its efforts to ease the lives of the pioneers of Saskatchewan. Our Premier has recently announced the establishment of a senior citizens' commission to further study the problems and difficulties facing the aged. But it does not take a commission report for me to know that the increases I propose in the federal assistance plans to senior citizens would be a major step toward bettering the lives of these people.

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Financial independence is an important value in the society in which we live. In fact, without financial independence, there can be no real other independence. There can be no real independence if one is denied the basic needs as many of our senior citizens are. Who deserves more than those who are now retired to have that independence?

I call on all Members from both sides of this Assembly to speak together on this issue. Let's not bicker when it comes to helping our senior citizens. Let's pass this resolution unanimously and quickly and send it on to Ottawa for quick action, action that I for one hope will be prompt.

Mr. Speaker, I move this Resolution.

Mr. Rolfes (Saskatoon Nutana South): — Mr. Speaker, the Member from Hanley (Mr. Mostoway) has very ably expressed the sentiments of the Members on this side of the House regarding our senior citizens. Indeed, it is a pleasure for me to be able to second this Motion, although the Member from Hanley has done a very capable job and no one else really need say more. But, just so that I will be able to tell the people that I agree with what the Member has said and also add a few more words, I would beg indulgence of this House to listen for a few minutes.

Mr. Speaker, as the Member has already said this is a very simple and straightforward resolution. However, I firmly believe that we cannot consider this particular resolution in isolation. It must be considered also with other things that senior citizens want, such things as their social condition, such things as health services, housing, recreation and other services that may be available in the community.

Mr. Speaker, the Senate Report on Aging (1966), recognizing that the lack of income was the greatest single problem of the elderly, found that money payments in themselves were not a full and sufficient answer to the needs of the people. Actually, the bulk of their Report, if you read it, Mr. Speaker, and the majority of its recommendations were concerned with areas of non-income needs. Similarly, I recommend to those of you who have not read 'The Real Poverty Report' that you should read it. The Real Poverty Report recommended a basic change in the present economic structure and I should like to underline that, Mr. Speaker, 'economic structure', a structure that allows one-fifth of Canada's population "to live and die in a cycle of unrelieved misery."

Mr. Speaker, since The Real Poverty Report was issued and also since Senator Croll issued his report on poverty in Canada, although there is a real difference in the two reports, the Government in Ottawa has done very little to implement many of the very good recommendations that you will find in these reports.

In my addresses today, Mr. Speaker, I will attempt to demonstrate that a much broader concern must be shown when we discuss the standard of living of our senior citizens.

The Member from Hanley has already indicated that pensions for senior citizens in 1952 were \$40 per month. Today, 21 years

later, the basic pension is a meagre \$82.88, which will become an insufficient \$100 as of April 1st, 1973. Although this increase will be welcomed by senior citizens, there is no question about the fact that it simply isn't enough to meet the escalating costs of food, housing and the general cost of living.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Certainly, Mr. Speaker, senior citizens have justice on their side. They have justice on their side when they read that top civil servants, already earning \$40,000 annually receive increases of \$2,500, whereas senior citizens receive a miserable \$198.44 per year more. Now, Mr. Speaker, I should like at this time, to draw to the attention of the House a clipping from the Leader-Post, "Top Salaries Rise \$2,500 a year." I should like to read from that clipping:

Top salaries rise \$2,500 and maximum wages for office equipment operators, on the other hand, rose by only \$341 last year.

Mr. Speaker, where is the justice? Why should a civil servant who already is making \$40,000 a year, receive an additional \$2,500 a year and our poor senior citizens receive only a \$14 increase?

A few quick calculations will clearly show how pitifully small the increases for senior citizens have been since 1952. If you used a basic pension of \$82.88, we find a yearly increase of only \$2.04, or 17 cents a month, for the past 21 years. If you used \$100 basic pension as of April 1st, 1973, you will find that senior citizens will only have received \$2.88 or a miserable 23 cents a month. Let us use the \$125, as advocated by our resolution and you will find that senior citizens will still only have received \$4.05 a year or 34 cents a month. Surely no one in this House would say that giving senior citizens a basic \$125 a month would be too much of an increase.

An Hon. Member: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — However, in order that I shall not be accused of misleading this House, let us include the guaranteed income supplement. If we include it, Mr. Speaker, you will find that at \$150, senior citizens still only have received \$5.24 a year or 44 cents a month. As of April 1st, 1973, including the guaranteed income supplement, the senior citizens will have received \$6.20 a year or 52 cents a month. And if we adopt the resolution and if the Federal Government acts on our resolution senior citizens will receive \$10.71 year or 89 cents a month. Surely, that is not too much.

Now I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, and the Members of this House, compare the \$10.71 a year to the \$2,500 increase that senior civil servants received from the Federal Government. Now I'm not saying that these injustices pertain only to the Federal Government, because it seems, Mr. Speaker, that in this society those people who make lots of money receive also the greatest increases. It is about time that we in Saskatchewan, and in Canada, recognize the fact that once you set a differential or once someone gets \$10,000 for a particular job and someone gets \$5,000 a year for another job, that you do not work the increases

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on a percentage basis. Once you establish the differences, from then on I think we must come through with a flat increase and I would hope that this Government will move in that direction in increases that it contemplates in the future.

Mr. Speaker, as I have stated earlier, we cannot consider the economic status of senior citizens in isolation. We must relate these to the social, educational, recreational and housing facilities in the communities. All of us are aware of the lack of facilities and opportunities available to senior citizens in many of our small or rural towns. In many of these centres there is not a single building where older people can gather for organized social and recreational activity. There are few opportunities for senior citizens to contribute productively and make good use of their leisure time. In too many instances, Mr. Speaker, they are forced to move away from their friends, their neighbors, and their own children and familiar surroundings because of the inadequacy of social and recreational facilities, housing accommodations and health services.

Governments both Federal and Provincial, are attempting to implement programs which will benefit senior citizens, but in most cases they are simply inadequate. I should like to refer to the "New Horizons" program. I think it was a step in the right direction. However, Mr. Speaker, it simply is inadequate. We shall find that it does not go far enough really to benefit those people who really need it. The program assumes that all communities have physical facilities for senior citizens. If they do, then they can qualify for grants. This kind of policy, in my opinion, penalizes the older people who live in many of our smaller rural communities where no such facilities exist. The program will benefit more the people residing in larger centres who may already enjoy many of the benefits so lacking in smaller communities.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the Federal Government recognizes the shortcomings of this program, which I want to say is a step in the right direction. I know of two or three small communities already which will not qualify under this program because they do not have the physical plant wherein they can carry on these activities.

This Government, Mr. Speaker, has shown its concern for senior citizens since 1971. As the Member for Hanley has already mentioned, we relieved the financial burden for people 65 and over by removing deterrent and hospitalization fees. This Government has removed Medicare premiums, it increased property improvement grants. The Budget presented in this Session provides financial assistance for hearing aids; it pays the nursing component of Level III care; it will establish a Housing Corporation; it provides for the expansion of community services for such activities as 'Meals on Wheels' and 'Homemakers'. In addition to these benefits, a committee has been established to investigate the needs of senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, many of the senior citizens have told me, and I have many in my constituency, that they are better off in this province because of what this Government has done than they would be if they were in some of the other provinces in Canada. However, Mr. Speaker, it's not enough.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it's fair to say that this Government has not forgotten its senior citizens and it recognizes that their plight is serious and that more help is

required so that our senior citizens will be able to retire in dignity in the community of their own choosing.

If the proposed Community Colleges are set up in consultation with senior citizens and if the programs are organized around the specific needs of the community, this could be another benefit for our senior citizens in many of our small communities. The programs, I believe, Mr. Speaker, could provide many hours of useful activities in such areas as current events, cookery, hobbies, etc.

Governments, Mr. Speaker, should expand and increase the emphasis for senior citizens in smaller centres. Most senior citizens, in my opinion, want to live in, or close to their own communities, near their families, their friends and familiar surroundings. Organized day care, which helps with dressings, getting meals, shopping, etc., could assist our old people to stay longer in independent living quarters in our small communities. More low rental accommodations for senior citizens in small centres would certainly help meet these needs.

Mr. Speaker, it is my contention and I believe the contention of many people, that the economic system which presently exists in North America has failed miserably in providing sufficient jobs, not only for the high school, the technical and university graduates, but also for many of the women who want to return to work and certainly for our senior citizens. I believe it is reasonable to assume that for the foreseeable future the shortage of jobs will continue and that people will be forced to retire at a much earlier age.

Since governments support the economic system (which is responsible for the lack of jobs) they also have a responsibility to assist people who are forced to retire early. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that governments devise a system of locked-in pensions and furthermore that anyone who has devoted thirty years of his life to an occupation, that he qualifies for full pension benefits. This, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, would alleviate to some extent the severe financial difficulty of people forced to retire early, but do not qualify for Federal Old Age Pension.

Mr. Speaker, at this particular time I should like to deviate just slightly from the resolution, and speak for a few moments on those people who are of the age of 55 to 64, who no longer can find jobs in our society, who do not qualify for pensions and really the only thing that is left for them, unless they are financially independent, is to go on welfare or to live off their children. In the recent past, Mr. Speaker, I have had a fairly good number of these people come to me and say, look, what is there for us? Really, I think we can offer them very little. Maybe, Mr. Speaker, this resolution should not have been for those people 65 and over. Maybe really we should have a resolution on the Order Paper for people 55 to 64, who are forced to retire. Companies no longer want to hire them, governments don't want to hire them and yet we provide absolutely nothing for them. However, Mr. Speaker, I can see for the foreseeable future that governments will not adopt locked-in pensions; that governments will not accept that 30 years is sufficient for any person to qualify for full pension. However, I should like to go on record as asking this Government to move in that direction.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that there is no single solution. There is no magic formula which will solve the problems affecting the whole population. Progress will be made only by continuous, consistent effort to understand what the needs are and to develop the community programs for meeting them. It is a problem affecting our whole population because of the inadequacies that presently exist in our society. Inequalities, Mr. Speaker, that were caused and are sustained by the economic system that prevails. This economic system in a rapidly increasing technological age has not kept pace in producing enough jobs to create full employment. Consequently people are forced to retirement earlier and have much more leisure time at a time in their life when they still want to contribute productively. Our senior citizens will need economic security and that is why I am pleased to support this motion. We must provide them the opportunity for self expression, intellectual stimulation, service to others and the enjoyment of living. We must accept and value their advice, which they so readily will give, and which in many instances comes from long years of experience. Too often older people are cast aside to make way for progress and their valuable advice and voice of experience goes unheard. Let us, Mr. Speaker, remember that we, too, will one day reach the golden years.

Mr. Speaker, with these words I am very pleased to second the motion.

Mr. MacDonald (Milestone): — Mr. Speaker, to speak on this Motion regarding pensions for senior citizens, I want to say that everybody in this House, and I suppose everyone in the Dominion of Canada, supports the concept of a pension of \$125 and a guaranteed income supplement of \$375.

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order. I am given to understand that there are dress regulations in this House and one of them is that you must wear a coat and tie.

Mr. MacDonald: — You know, Mr. Speaker, that is just about as cheap as the speech he made. Mr. Speaker, if ever I have seen any crocodile and hypocritical statements by the two Members who just sat down. Mr. Speaker, they used words like miserable, callous. You know, it is rather interesting and I want to tell the Members of all the political parties in the history of Saskatchewan or in the Dominion of Canada that has done less for senior citizens in relation to pensions it is the NDP.

The Member for Hanley talks about a means test. Does he know that his political party put in the most vicious means test on a supplement for old age pensions in Saskatchewan? They put in a pension of anywhere up to \$20 and over 50 per cent received \$2.50.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — Go and ask the Minister of Social Services, Mr. Taylor. You know the Member for Nutana South stands up and he talks about a civil servant getting an increase in salary of \$2,500 and one year ago he and all the Members of this House voted a

\$4,500 increase for themselves and didn't give one cent to the senior citizens. Not one single penny did they vote for the senior citizens.

Hon. Mr. Messer: — Did you vote for it?

Mr. MacDonald: — Well, sure I voted for it. I am not the Government. Why didn't you also vote something for the senior citizens?

He talks about community services. Why, he says, we put in the community services. It wasn't the NDP that put in community services or "Meals on Wheels". Go and ask your Minister of Social Services.

I will give you another example. In this House we passed a resolution one year ago, to set up a commission to investigate the needs and the problems of senior citizens. It was moved by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart) and you know the NDP even refused to activate that commission until Joe Phelps, an old senior citizen, an old Member of the NDP Cabinet, made a public demand and forced them to do it. That is how much interest they have.

Let's take a look at what has happened in pensions in Canada and let's also have a look at what the NDP have done. The Liberal Opposition is going to give you an opportunity, a good opportunity, to do something for the senior citizens in the Dominion of Canada and particularly in the Province of Saskatchewan. Let's look at the record at what has happened to senior citizens in Canada.

In 1962 there was a pension of \$65 for any senior citizen over the age of 70. In October 1963, under a Liberal Government, it was increased to \$75. Then in April, under the same government, the age factor was reduced from 70 to age 65. Then in April, 1970 the Old Age Security was raised to \$80. In March 1973 it was raised to \$100 at age 65. Then came the Guaranteed Income Supplement of \$30 per month for an individual. In 1970 it was raised to \$55; 1972 to \$65; 1973 to \$70. The single pensioner with the Guaranteed Income Supplement today in 1973, can receive a total of \$2,042 per year; \$170 per month. Ten years ago it was \$65 per month, now it is \$170 per month, done entirely by the Liberal Government. Coupled with the Guaranteed Income Supplement a married couple can receive \$3,895 — \$325 a month. This pension happens to be three times what it was in the United Kingdom where the socialists, under a Labour Government, have been the government almost 50 per cent or 60 per cent of the time in the last 20 years, it is twice as high as it is in the United States.

Everybody, Mr. Speaker, supports the principle of increasing pensions as rapidly as possible. Canada has the best pension scheme, publicly supported, of any nation in the world, and that isn't good enough.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — Mr. Speaker, this has all been done by the Federal Government. What have the socialists done? What has the NDP done? In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government has just now increased that pension from \$82 approximately to \$100 per

month.

I think that most of us will agree that the Old Age Security should go up as quickly and as rapidly as possible. On top of that the Federal Liberal Government has just passed on to you \$26.4 million. Now what we are going to suggest is what your colleagues in British Columbia have done by putting in a supplement to the old age security and they have now raised it to \$200 per month. They have recognized their responsibilities. I wonder why the NDP in the Province of Saskatchewan have never done a single thing for the old age pensioners in the Province of Saskatchewan.

Why haven't you done something yourselves? It is typical of the NDP every time they stand up in the House they look to the great East. They bow three times and ask for more money. It is about time that you accepted some of the responsibility yourself and did something to help the old age pensioner in the Province of Saskatchewan. We are going to give you that opportunity.

My colleague, the Member for Lakeview (Mr. MacPherson) is going to move an amendment and it is going to be very interesting to see how the Member for Hanley (Mr. Mostoway) votes and to see how the Member for Nutana South (Mr. Rolfes) votes, because we are going to give you the opportunity to see that the old age pensioner in the Province of Saskatchewan gets that \$125. We are going to give you the opportunity to see that the Guaranteed Income Supplement is raised to \$375 per month. We are going to give you that opportunity fellows, to stand up on your feet and to vote for the senior citizens in the Province of Saskatchewan, to increase their pensions in the Province of Saskatchewan and put your money where your mouth is.

To turn around and claim that the NDP have always been the great prodder for the pension increase, that the NDP have done so much, when in reality they haven't done a single thing since they have been the Government in this province in 1944 in relation to these pensions in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — They haven't done one single thing. They haven't contributed one five-cent piece to put in the supplement that was required. They put in the most vicious means test in Canada., and now, Mr. Speaker, we are going to give you that opportunity to stand on your feet and vote for \$25 for the pensioners, to vote for \$375 for a Guaranteed Income Supplement. Show the people of Saskatchewan your real concern. Show them that you appreciate that the Federal Government has just increased the pension from \$82 to \$100. Show them how much you appreciate the \$26.4 million that they have just given you as a gift, that you haven't spent yet.

You all talk about how important the senior citizens are, how important pensions are. The Member for Hanley says it is a miserable \$100, a miserable \$175. The Member for Nutana South says it is callous. Oh, it is so callous, to give them \$100 and \$170, so now we are going to give you an opportunity to show just how callous you are. We are going to give you an opportunity and say, we will let the Federal Government do everything they can. We will encourage them but we are going

to show some leadership. We are going to take on some of that responsibility ourselves. We are going to put some of our own money in it, money that they have just given us. We are going to show them that our priority is sincerely on behalf of the senior citizens and the pensioners in Saskatchewan.

We are going to give you an opportunity Members of the Government to stand on your feet — and I am going to tell you that every Member on this side of the House will vote for you to spend that money on the pensioners in the Province of Saskatchewan. Everyone of us will stand on our feet and we will show you how sympathetic we are to the senior citizens of the province. So we will give you that opportunity also. I just hope that you are not callous. I hope that you recognize how miserable that \$100 is.

So gentlemen, my colleague the Member from Regina Lakeview is going to stand up the next day this motion comes before us, move an amendment and we are going to expect every Member of the NDP to stand on their feet and cheer loud and long and vote for giving the senior citizens a pension of \$125 a month and \$375 Guaranteed Income Supplement and we will be proud of you. We will tell everybody in Saskatchewan that you did it. We will give you the credit. You just stand up and make those changes.

Mr. Speaker, I have some more things to say on this and I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Mr. MacDonald: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order, I have just received a note that somebody is taking a collection to buy me a tie. I don't need the tie as I have one at home. If they give that to the senior citizens.

Resolution No. 8 — Construction of 40 Miles of Rail Line

Mr. Gardner (Moosomin) moved, seconded by Mr. MacLeod (Regina Albert Park):

That this Assembly urge the Federal Government to:

1. Immediately construct the 40 miles of rail line to connect Ashcroft, B.C. on the main line of the CNR and the CPR with Clinton, B.C. on the B.C. railway.
2. Develop the required grain storage and loading facilities at Port of Squamish in order to provide an alternative for the movement of grain from the prairies to west coast terminals.

Mr. Gardner: — Mr. Speaker, I am sure that everyone is aware that grain exports from the West Coast have increased dramatically in recent years. And indications are that countries on the Pacific Rim will continue to increase their purchase of Canadian grain.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, there are other sources of grain available to these people besides Canada's. The only way that we can maintain and expand these markets is to provide service to all customers. We must be willing and able to have grain

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available at the West Coast at the quantity and quality demanded by our customers and at the time that they are there to load it.

They are asking for better service, and rightly so. To be competitive we must be prepared to offer this better service. We do not propose that we should be over critical of the present facilities or of the people who are operating these facilities. I want to make this very clear, but let's look at the problem we face.

The grain in Canada is mostly grown from 700 to 1,200 miles from the British Columbia ports. One of the world's greatest mountain barriers separates the grain growing area from the seaports on the West Coast. Our Canadian winters are noted for their severity and we get very high snowfall in the province.

While we have had improvements in equipment the basic facility of storage has stayed much the same over the years. Our sales of grain are increasing at a rapid rate. Each of these conditions is of major importance by itself. When you put them altogether they present a massive obstacle to the smooth movement of grain to the West Coast.

With these conditions in mind. I do not feel that we are justified in being critical of the people who are handling the grain at present. Under the circumstances they should be, perhaps, commended. The problems we face in servicing our grain customers in the West, are so complex that no single solution is available. Anyone who suggests an instant solution will be foolish indeed.

I want to make it very clear that the proposal I am making here is only one of a large number that well could have merit.

If you look at a map of British Columbia you will find that just west of Kamloops, the CPR and the CNR main line turn rather sharply south and follow each other closely down through the Fraser Canyon. Those of you who have been through the Fraser Canyon know that it is narrow and rugged. Most of the grain going to the West Coast must pass through this treacherous bottleneck. If we encounter a situation where there are extensive snowslides in the Fraser Canyon, or if we have train derailments or other disasters, then we are going to have delays in the movement of grain to Vancouver.

This will happen in spite of heroic efforts by railroad people and others to get the tracks cleared. If there was no other outlet to British Columbia ports, then we might have to live with this problem. But there is a very logical alternative west of Kamloops, just before the CN and the CP mainline hits south through the Fraser Canyon, they are within 45 miles of the British Columbia railroad. The BC railroad heads in a south westerly direction to the Port of Squamish. A rail line could readily be built from Ashcroft in a northerly direction to Clinton on the BC rail line. This 45 mile line would not be through rugged mountain country, but would traverse a mountain valley through hills. There are no mountainous canyons encountered.

A highway is already situated along this route and connects the two towns that I have mentioned above. In the winter of 1971-72 the time loss by snowslides in the Fraser Canyon was

approximately four weeks. The time loss during the same winter on the BC rail line was only 12 hours. This fact, only, should be ample justification for looking at the proposal I have outlined above, but there are other advantages as well.

Other products such as Saskatchewan potash could also benefit from such additional railroad facilities. The diversion of grain to Squamish could also advance the service to our customers in periods of congestion at the Vancouver terminals. Products coming to the Prairies from British Columbia such as lumber, could well benefit from this added rail service.

Mr. Speaker, it is possible that this project may have become popular at an earlier date. However, I understand that about a year ago a couple of Saskatchewan NDP Cabinet Ministers went up to British Columbia and took a look at some of these projects. This, of course, made everyone immediately suspicious of the project. If the NDP favored the project there must be something wrong with it in the minds of many people concerned. However, in spite of this NDP cloud hanging over this project, I hope that we can take a fresh look at it and take a look at the feasibility of this rail loop.

The Port of Squamish is at the top end of Howe Sound about 40 miles northwest of Vancouver. It is a deep seaport and could readily be adapted to handling the largest vessels, larger than could be handled by the port in Vancouver. There is about 45 feet of water at the berth in Squamish. About 90 feet of water 100 yards out and about 900 feet of water a quarter of a mile out in the Sound.

With very little expense it could readily be used and would be ideal for a clean grain bulk-loading operation.

There appears to be plenty of space available for any storage or loading facilities that would be needed in the foreseeable future. There are about 900 acres available for development on this delta. Already about 30 acres of prepared dock site have been dredged, levelled and is ready for use. This suggested rail loop, of course, is not an original idea. It has been discussed for years and has recently come to the attention of the public partly through the activities of the Palliser Wheat Growers Association. I should like to give them credit for looking at this proposal.

It was not as urgent a requirement 10 years ago, five years ago or even one year ago. It is clear now that our grain sales and exports through the West Coast are going to be maintained and expanded due to greater markets on the Pacific Rim and in the countries in the East.

These greater exports are due largely to the efforts of the Canadian Wheat Board and the direction given the Wheat Board by the Honourable Otto Lang.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move this Resolution.

Hon. Mr. Romanow (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to say a few words with respect to this Resolution. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I think the Resolution must be amended and I will be proposing an amendment later on at the end of my remarks to reflect the true facts of the situation and express

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the appreciation of the Members of the House with respect to the Provincial Government taking action on this matter about a year ago, a little over a year ago, when the crisis was most evident.

Members will recall that last year in early February, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Messer) and myself went to Vancouver with respect to two issues. One had to do with continuing developments on Pacific Transportation Advisory Council which is not really the subject of this matter directly, although it is indirectly involved. And secondly, the very serious situation that existed in the Vancouver grain terminals at the harbor.

To recapitulate the situation, Mr. Speaker; about a year ago, as all Members know, there was something in excess of 17 ships and I think it went up as high as almost 30 in various sections of the Vancouver port lying in harbour waiting, waiting for the grain to get across from the Rockies from Western Canada. In effect for about two weeks, the Canadian National Railway lines, the Canadian Pacific Railway lines were blocked because of the heavy snows and the resulting snowslides. The situation was, quite obviously, for the Western Canadian farmer a very serious one. There were demurrage charges with respect to the ships. In addition to this, there was the direct threat of loss of markets, grain markets for Canadian farmers.

I have in my file, as I was looking over the file in preparation for my remarks this afternoon, some clippings of the day which indicated the gravity of the situation. One clipping indicates the gravity as expressed by the Minister-in-Charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Lang, who on February 23, 1972, described the situation so serious that, he described it as being crucial and he said:

We are rapidly reaching the point where we are going to be deciding whether or not to make sales that we might not be able to deliver because of unpredicted systems breakdown or cutback on our present sales efforts.

Although there really was no sort of factual evidence to back it up, I have every reason to believe that the situation was so critical that there was a loss of markets to the Western Canadian farmer with respect to this matter. That was the situation about one year ago, the critical nature of the tracks being blocked by the snow, the need for action. We went to Vancouver to take a look at the situation and to discuss it together with the Pacific Transportation Advisory Council.

I recall at the time there was an emergency debate in this House, Mr. Speaker, about the situation. In that emergency debate, Members on this side of the House, the Premier (Mr. Blakeney) the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Messer) argued that there was a need for alternate trackage for more efficiency into the transportation system.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart) while supporting us in the Resolution, I think it is also fair to say, described the Resolution sarcastically as a so-called emergency debate. My memory of that debate was that it was reasonably certain that the Leader of the Opposition and the Liberal

Party opposite didn't really feel that the situation was an emergency. There was criticism about the trip that was being made. I recall even in addition to criticism, serious skepticism about the question of the 40 miles. I recall the Member from Cannington (Mr. Weatherald) and the Member for Moosomin (Mr. Gardner) who now moves this Resolution, who described the suggestion of a third rail route linking up the Pacific Great Eastern as being a hoax, as being statements made by myself and by the Minister of Agriculture, by persons who were ill-informed. It was described variously in a number of ways. And the suggestion of alternate trackage was described in an interesting way.

I recall on March 28, 1972, this House was debating the question of the additional trackage. I had just finished making a statement with respect to this matter and the Member for Milestone (Mr. MacDonald) took part in the debate on March 28. I recall the Member from Qu'Appelle-Wolseley (Mr. Hanson) took part in the debate describing the urgency of the situation. The Member from Prince Albert East Cumberland (Mr. Feschuk) took part and we outlined this idea of the extra trackage. Here is what the Liberal Party said then about the additional trackage. I quote now directly from Hansard, Page 1,272, Member for Milestone (Mr. MacDonald) this is in direct reference to the question of additional trackage which today the Liberals say they support. But I want to remind the Member from Milestone exactly what the Member for Milestone had to say with respect to this debate. I am sorry he is not in his seat. He says this. Mr. Speaker:

They are trying to deliver wheat on a crisis basis when 5 or 10 or 15 or 20 ships come into port instead of a systematic hauling to a regular system with a big storage capacity. And if they could turn around and deliver carloads of wheat every day of the year and they had storage capacity at the West Coast there wouldn't be the problem that exists today because of the snow storms in the Fraser Valley, Mr. Speaker.

All well said, but then he goes on to say this referring to the trackage. And I quote, Mr. Speaker:

Never, never since I have been in this House has there been a bigger insult to the Western Canadian farmer than to say that the top priority is to build a diversion of the railway to look after a ten day snow storm.

This is referring to the diversion now that the Member for Moosomin is urging this House to adopt and the Federal Government.

He says, and I am continuing on from the quote:

It is time for the Minister of Agriculture to stop talking nonsense. Mr. Speaker, I have not had time, as I say I wasn't going to enter this debate, but I hope every Member in this House will urge the Federal Government to give priority where priority is required instead of (referring to the Resolution we are talking about) instead of talking gobble-de-gook and nonsense.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — What the situation was, in effect, was that the Member from Milestone was saying in that debate, a year ago, that it wasn't a top priority. All of a sudden his seatmate right across the side there from Moosomin says it is a sufficiently enough top priority to have this before this House and to take up the time of the taxpayers to debate the matter. Nothing wrong with that. I should like to know precisely from the Liberals whether or not they believe the 40 mile route, is in fact a top priority of the Federal Government? I say that the Liberal Party says it is not a top priority with respect to the rail routes. I say that the Liberal Party opposite, the Member for Moosomin and Cannington, they didn't even know what 40 miles we were talking about when we were talking about the Resolution.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — I recall the Member for Moosomin and the Member for Cannington when they were talking about this said that we were 'all wet'. There was no such trackage with respect to the 40 miles. The Member for Cannington is nodding his head in agreement because he is fair about it. He said we went out to Vancouver and we had examined the situation and we didn't even know what we were examining because of the mileage. It wasn't until the Member from Qu'Appelle-Wolseley (Mr. Hanson) came in and brought a map. In fact, he sent it over to the two Members over there, the two gold dust twins, and showed them the 40 miles and they began to believe in it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — But the Member for Milestone at that time was indicative of the entire Liberal opposition with respect to this 40 miles.

Oh, I recall, it was to be changed, this third rail route was to be changed in name from Pacific Great Eastern to the British Columbia Railroad. And then they were going to change it, the Liberals were joking about the 'RRR'. You remember. We are going to build a special railroad. It was some sort of a concoction of the NDP Government.

The Leader of the Opposition asked us to table some correspondence with the Minister of Transport at the time, which we did. Because he didn't believe that we were serious about this matter.

The point that I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that the Liberals, on this particular issue, was caught a mile off base, two miles off base. The Liberal Party now, a year later comes back to this House and to the people of Saskatchewan and say, a year later all of a sudden we found that mysterious magical 40 miles that was drifting around somewhere. We think it is a good idea. A year ago they heaped scorn on that.

I remember the Member from Lumsden (Mr. Lane) who took part in that debate also described it alternatively as gobble-de-gook, nonsense and then he went on to berate myself because I referred to the rail trackage as PGE. He said, "Why, they are going out to British Columbia and they don't know they should be talking to the BC railways. That's a change of name. It is

not PGE any more it is BC Railways. How can we support a resolution of this nonsense? That was the Member for Lumsden.

Now, the Leader of the Opposition was a little cuter, a little cuter about the situation. The Leader of the Opposition of course said that it was a so-called emergency. He was very doubtful about it being an emergency. But, at least, he didn't put himself on record as being opposed officially to this 40 miles. He is clever enough a politician to realize that if you don't check the map you shouldn't say that there isn't such a thing as 40 miles to build. He is clever enough a politician to know that if you are not prepared, don't make a speech. And I commend that advice to the Members from Cannington and Moosomin, to prepare before they make a speech.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — I am not surprised about the Liberal Party being opposed to this third rail route. That is why I think this Resolution is really not a sincere motion on the part of the Liberals opposite.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — I believe that the Liberals opposite, I recall one of the comments made I believe by the Member for Lumsden at the time, who said that the trackage was not good enough on this PGE route. All sorts of reasons were advanced against it.

Then last winter we proposed this matter to which I have now recorded the Liberal opposition, there was some opposition as well from the Federal Government. Those were in the days though when they were in a majority position. Today however, the Federal Government is in a somewhat less secure position and now they are a little more receptive to the idea of a third route to the West Coast. I am advised that there has been going on for quite some time a feasibility study by the PGE, or now the BCR and the CPR with respect to this additional trackage and the CNR as well is looking at this to cost it out and to take a look at all the implications that are involved in this. In fact, on November 29, 1972, I wrote to the Hon. Minister of Transport, Mr. Marchand, and I think I would like to place that letter on record if I might, Mr. Speaker, on this matter. The first paragraph I won't quote because it offers congratulations on his new appointment to Minister of Transport. And then it goes on to say this:

This is an immediate problem which the Government of Saskatchewan is rather concerned. It is the proposed rail link between CNR and CPR main lines at Ashcroft, British Columbia and Clinton on the BC Railway some 40 miles distant. In February last when bad weather blocked the CN, CP lines for weeks on end, the BC Railway was closed for only 24 hours. We suggested at the time that the Minister of Transport should look into the proposal of linking the three railways together, thus improving the access to Vancouver. In early July of this year Mr. Jamieson was quoted in the Vancouver press as having the matter in hand and we

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are so informed by the Minister's office in September. It has since been drawn to our attention that this might not be the case. We would appreciate very much if your office would ascertain what progress is being made. The disastrous slides last winter cost the nation dearly in terms of lost sales. Inability to meet export deadlines, demurrage on vessels and poor utilization of scarce rail equipment. For these and many other reasons, we believe the 40 mile link should be constructed thus enabling the CPR and CNR to circumvent in part the slide-prone Thomson and Fraser Canyons.

The response from the Minister of Transport dated December 21, 1972 says this:

In you letter to me of November 29 you mentioned the suggested rail by-pass of problem areas of the Fraser and Thomson Canyons and asked about our position in this following Mr. Jamieson's statement last July on the West Coast.

As you will recall that Mr. Jamieson indicated at that time that this was a matter which the Federal Government felt ought to be pursued. And subsequently we have asked that the Canadian National to begin for us an initial study of this link as a matter of national interest. CNR has since been carrying forward route surveys and investigation of the related factors which are involved. And in addition, as you will understand, this topic is under active consideration between ourselves and the government of British Columbia. We expect to progress these talks and also are making more detailed assessments of the particular connection possibilities which exist. I am most appreciative of your continuing interest in this proposal and can assure you of the priority consideration which we are giving it as well. Signed Jean Marchand, Minister of Transport.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, that notwithstanding the opposition of the Liberals opposite, thanks to the actions of this Government something is now being done at least to study the possibility of achieving what this resolution says. The Liberal Party fought this idea tooth and nail last year. That is on the record. The Liberal Party dragged its heels. That is on the record. This resolution, I say is a resolution that belies the true feelings of the Liberal Party opposite. Since it is not a true expression of the opinion of this House, I should like to move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Messer) that Resolution No. 8 be amended thereto:

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

commends the Government of Saskatchewan for bringing to the attention of the Federal Government last year the need to construct 40 miles of rail line to connect Ashcroft, B.C. on the main line of the CNR and CPR with Clinton, B.C. on the B.C. Railway and, further, urges the Federal Government to: (a) immediately undertake construction of the said 40 miles and (b) develop grain storage and loading facilities at Squamish and Prince Rupert for the better movement of grain from the Prairies.

I hope the Liberals will support it.

Mr. Steuart: — I wonder on a point of privilege. Would the Minister, when he quoted from Hansard, give me the page number.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Yes, the page that was quoted was from MacDonald's speech — March 28, page 1272, 1972 debates. You may have them if you want.

The debate continues on the motion and the amendment.

Mr. Weatherald (Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General in his usual fashion has attempted to muddy up the waters. I think that if he checks the record that he will find that neither the Member for Moosomin — I say 'think' because I haven't got the record in front of me, I should like to check it before I say for sure — I think that he will find if he checks, that neither the Member for Cannington, nor for Moosomin spoke in this particular debate that he is referring to. I think he already knows that. As usual, he would like to try and mislead the House as to what other Members have said. This is his usual practice and this is what he is attempting to do today. I am quite certain, Mr. Speaker, on perusal of the record that he will find neither the Member for Cannington or Moosomin spoke in the debate he refers to. In other words he has already attempted on this point to mislead the House.

Mr. Speaker, what we did make clear last year was that it wasn't necessary with all the fanfare and at public expense to send the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Messer) and the Attorney General (Mr. Romanow) out to British Columbia to look into — that is the time that they announced on a Friday that they were going out to solve the grain handling prices. They took a flying trip out there, held a couple of parties, come back on Monday and said that we should build another 40 miles of railroad to fix up all the troubles we are having this winter.

What we said at that particular time was, and as everyone knows the problems in the grain handling system were closely involved with snowslides, closely involved with cold weather, which was limiting the size of trains in that particular area because once extremely cold weather comes the railroads cannot transport nearly as many cars as they can when it is warmer. Mr. Speaker, the solution then for an acute problem at that particular time, the solution that was needed or an attempt that was needed to help farmers to solve the grain problems of Agriculture and the Attorney General came back with was that we should build another 40 miles of railroad. That, Mr. Speaker, as anybody can tell was certainly not going to happen within the space of a month or by spring of last year.

Mr. McIsaac: — Some solution!

Mr. Weatherald: — Some solution, as the Member for Wilkie says. Certainly we expected that when these two people went out there they would come back with something concrete that could be done within a matter of a week or two. Not building another railroad that would take two or three years. You would hardly

involve somebody to go to the West Coast at public expense, to come back and tell us that within three or four years if we built another railroad we could solve that particular problem. That was our particular complaint at that time, Mr. Speaker.

We were looking for a long-term solution. The type of solution that has been put forward by the Member for Moosomin (Mr. Gardiner) does have some merit. It has merit, Mr. Speaker, because over the longer term we believe that this would be a help to the grain handling problems which farmers are confronted with. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition last year in the fall went to Ottawa and took up with Mr. Marchand this matter of developing the Port. I think if the Attorney General was fair that he already knows that the Leader of the Opposition brought this up with the Minister of Transport. As my colleague says, Mr. Speaker, that is likely why he got such a good hearing when he wrote later on. I think it is pretty obvious, Mr. Speaker, to even the blindest of the Members in the Government that the communication is somewhat better by the Leader of the Opposition with Ottawa than it is with the Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — I wouldn't count on that right now!

Mr. Weatherald: — Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General in his usual manner has tried to imply that the Opposition was not consistent in what they have suggested in this resolution. Mr. Speaker, what we said at that time was that it was a waste of taxpayers money sending these two gentlemen to Vancouver. They came back with a solution that — my colleague from Moosomin didn't move outside of this building in order to put forward a very good program as to how to improve the grain handling system. In fact, Mr. Speaker, he made a few telephone calls, wrote a few letters, got the information, talked to some people who were well aware of the problem and it cost very little to put forward a very good case for what he is proposing today.

Last year we said that it was a grandstand play by the Government and we maintain equally as much today and the people of Saskatchewan got extremely little for the money that was invested by sending the two Cabinet Ministers out to the West Coast.

Because of the importance of this resolution, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

**Resolution No. 11 – To Investigate and Report on Program Changes at
Saskatchewan Hospital, North Battleford**

Mr. Grant (Regina Whitmore Park) moved, seconded by Mr. Steuart (Leader of the Opposition):

That this Legislative Assembly recommend to the Government of Saskatchewan that a Legislative Committee be established to investigate and report on:

(1) Program changes at Saskatchewan Hospital – North Battleford since July 1, 1971.

(2) Staff changes since July 1, 1971, including an examination of new positions created and qualifications of persons appointed.

(3) Staff morale.

(4) Deaths from accidental or unnatural causes since July 1, 1971.

(5) Any other matters affecting the quality of care or efficiency of operation.

Mr. Grant: — I trust that this resolution will be more peaceful and more controllable than the last one. I wouldn't want people to think I am a pessimist, I am an optimist. In this particular case I am not too sure of my optimism because I hope to keep this matter on a non-political plane.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Would the Minister of Agriculture wait until his time to speak and refrain from interrupting.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Grant: — Mr. Speaker, I am going to do my level best to keep this on a non-political plane. I'll remind the House that up to the present I have not appeared in the Press on this subject and this was not by accident, it was by intention. I feel that the matter is of such importance I did not feel it should be kicked around in the Press by me. I am going to confine my remarks to quotations from the Press with no comment by myself.

I will start with one dated December 15, 1972, headed:

“Locked Doors Dictated by Climate — Kramer”

In spite of arguments on the open door policy at the Saskatchewan Hospital, Highways Minister Eiling Kramer MLA of The Battlefords says there are some things dictated by climate rather than new approaches and science, commenting on the recent death of a patient at the institution. Mr. Kramer suggested locking doors doesn't necessarily mean we are taking a backward step. He said it would make good sense in the winter months from November to April.

About the same time, December 8th, Mrs. Irene Watson, the matron at the hospital, or Director of Nursing was quoted in an article in the News Optimist:

“Open Door Policy”.

She observed:

Mental institutions are placed in somewhat of a quandary and are subjected to contradictory demands from progressive elements in the mental health community and the mass media. Requested to eliminate the appearance of a prison without abandoning the primary function of the prison, namely confinement and restraint.

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She also said:

The few we place on special observation means one or more staff are assigned full time to literally guard one or more patients.

She said that:

The patient must take the responsibility for his own behavior.

An earlier one, September 8th, the News Optimist:

“Patient Dies of Exposure — Second Death in Three Months”.

It refers to Mrs. Dora Connally who wandered away from the hospital and was found dead. The article mentioned that this summer another patient died after wandering away from the Geriatric Centre.

December 5, 1972, “Saskatchewan Hospital patient wanders away, dies.” News Optimist.

This is a 55 year old patient. He died when he wandered away on a Sunday night when the temperature dropped to 20 degrees below. The RCMP was called in and found him one quarter of a mile from the hospital. He was lightly dressed and had been missing for some 11 hours.

This one I am sorry is not dated, but:

“Death Prompts Hospital Look At”.

It is quoting Dr. John Gray, the Director and it is in reference to the last death, of Steve Totchek.

Sunday evening Steve Totchek walked out of his ward at the Saskatchewan Hospital into the sub-zero night. His frozen body was found next morning after an all night search and this week the hospital administration is looking at its program of ‘Open Door Policy’ in particular.

Since it was inaugurated three patients have wandered away and died of exposure. Two wards in the hospital the forensic patients who are admitted by the courts and the geriatric wards are always locked. Following Sunday’s tragedy two more wards on the 13 were locked.

It will be noted that it said that ‘the geriatric wards are always locked’.

An article in February, News Optimist:

“Patient Planned Departure.”

A patient missing since Monday afternoon from the Saskatchewan Hospital appeared to have planned his departure said Dr. John Gray, Executive Director of the Psychiatric Hospital.

In a prepared statement last night, Dr. Gray said, “Robert Alvin Bird, 30 of no fixed address was reported

missing from the hospital where he was a voluntary patient, on January 29th at approximately 4:00 p.m. Mr. Bird was admitted to the Saskatchewan Hospital on January 25. He was adequately clothed and reported in good physical health. The RCMP were notified that Mr. Bird was missing after a search by hospital staff of the immediate surrounding vicinity.

Voluntary patients are required to give at least 24 hours notice of their intentions to leave the facility, said Dr. Gray.

I believe either this patient or the previous patient had been brought in by the RCMP.

An article in the News Optimist of December 19th, headed:

“Health Minister Replies to Opposition Charges”.

He says that Opposition charges are false and untrue and he was referring to comments made by Mr. Steuart on or about that time. In this article he makes reference to the recent accreditation of the hospital which is an indication of the high quality of care that the institution is delivering.

Since coming to power we have tried to do everything possible to ensure that the program could develop more effectively and bring about a high standard of care in those mentally ill persons requiring it.

He said:

Surely the recent recognition by the Canadian Council on hospital accreditation is evidence that we have had a considerable degree of success in achieving our aim.

Mr. Speaker, there is a question on the Order Paper about this accreditation on which we have not as yet received information, but I would point out that when accrediting the hospital this question of people wandering away from the institution and meeting with death is not one that is taken into serious consideration. Not that it shouldn't be, but I understand that during the inspection period that this was not brought up, nor were there any contacts with outside agencies.

Mr. Speaker, one other comment and I am looking now at the NDP booklet during the June 23rd election. On the back cover, “In The Battlefords, re-elect Eiling Kramer.” One of his platforms is that he would hope to stop the practice of releasing dangerous psychopaths from mental institutions.

I don't think that anyone can argue too much with those statements and I am not going to comment on them. I just want to put them on the record of this House.

Recently there was a letter that came to my attention and this refers to another phase of the psychiatric program. The lady writing says that it is perturbing to hear from people who have had experience with foster homes. These homes are forlorn and bleak with no social or any other incentives to get these patients back to healthful thinking, useful living. What a waste! Even dumb animals are better taken care of. Then there is the case of sending them home to the parents who have no

training or emotional ability to cope with this traumatic situation which is bad for all. Besides all this the community is very cruel. Even ministers and doctors have little ability to help. Also the cost of medication is tremendous for the parents who are obliged to pay for it. She would suggest hostels or half-way houses to handle this.

Mr. Speaker, I believe one of the serious historical misfortunes in this province has been the political atmosphere which far too often has enveloped some of our mental institutions and in particular Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, this political smog has not been restricted to any one party, but I am convinced that the end result has been detrimental to staff morale, patient care and efficiency of operation. I will not make political accusations on this subject and I would hope that Members on both sides of this House would co-operate for the long-term benefit of this vital institution in this province.

The problem in North Battleford is a difficult one to pinpoint, diagnose and prescribe for. I think a recent letter by a psychiatric nurse of 20 years experience in the hospital addressed to the Battleford News Optimist sets forth the problem as he sees it, in blunt language and I should like to quote from that. The article is headed up:

“Psych. Nurse Considers Hospital Problems.”

I would first like to say that I am a psychiatric nurse and I have worked in the Saskatchewan Hospital for 20 years. I have seen all the great changes that politicians and doctors, administrators and other classifications of management like to take credit for when all that was needed was to give the board staff the right to think and function as psychiatric nurses. The changes would have been promoted without anybody claiming credit for them. The situation at the Saskatchewan Hospital is a mess. The morale of the staff is at an all time low. Staff resignations are too high. Constant friction between members and the staff makes for poor continuity of nursing programs. The Minister of Health knows this, he has been told this by his own investigating commission two years ago. He has been told by the constituency executive of the NDP and by influential people within the NDP. He has been told by our MLA, Mr. Kramer. He has been told by the union, local 600 of CUPE and now he is being told by the Liberal Opposition. However, the truth of the whole matter is that the Liberal Government started this whole damned mess. There has been only one change in management from the Minister of Health to the local management since the election of the NDP Government and that change is just recent. The NDP has had two years to do something about this mess and all they have done is to defend themselves by claiming that they have fired no one. Now the mess has broken into warfare with nurses and the patient-care program and patients becoming goats.

I don't think the rest of it is of any consequence at this point. He speaks of an investigation,

“We need an investigation, let's have an impartial one”.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Bowers, the author of that letter, says the Liberals started the mess and the NDP are continuing it. So in the opinion of this one man both parties are guilty and I doubt if much benefit will come to the hospital if Members of this House get into a long, drawn-out debate of charges and counter charges as to degree of responsibility. As the Minister of Health, I felt, and I took a special interest in the mentally ill, and I certainly pushed for improvements in the physical plant which I am sure contributed to the provisional accreditation which the hospital now has. There are still a few areas requiring updating and I am sure the present Minister will follow through on these improvements. I understand the present Minister made an effort to study the problem in 1971 and this is the investigation referred to by Mr. Bowers, but it appears he sent the wrong people. It is disclosed that staff members are naturally reluctant to tell their tales to two top officials of the Health Department and you can't blame them because they were going to talk about other staff members and this is not always a pleasant thing to do to your employer.

While I pushed for physical changes, Health Ministers before me encouraged major program changes some of which had become known as the Saskatchewan plan. Other jurisdictions have or are adopting similar programs so it would appear that the Saskatchewan plan has some considerable approval. The introduction of major new programs in business or government presents major adjustments insofar as people are concerned. I feel, Mr. Speaker, that the staff at Battleford have not fully adjusted to program changes. I am not saying whether the shortfalls are staff oriented or program oriented. Likewise the general public is still at sixes and sevens in respect to certain aspects of the program, the open door policy, the approved homes, etc.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that there are many pluses in Saskatchewan's approach to dealing with the mentally ill but I am concerned that we have some minuses that are doing an injustice not only to the plan but to the patient. This is why I urge the Members of this House to support the Resolution which I moved. I feel that a properly constituted legislative committee could do much to overcome the difficulty cited by Mr. Bowers. Personnel for the Committee should be selected with extreme care. My only suggestion in this regard is that the present and former Health Ministers and the local MLA should not be members of this committee. These gentlemen might be asked for their views but the assessment should be done by others.

My only other suggestion is that a serious look be taken of appointing a highly qualified business administrator after the pattern of our larger general hospitals and I refer to what is commonly known as a layman. He is not really a layman, he is a professional hospital administrator. We have some very capable ones in Saskatchewan in our larger hospitals and I think in most cases they are working out very successfully. We have one in the University Hospital in Saskatoon and the South Saskatchewan Hospital Centre and many others. I think there is merit in considering the advantages of putting this hospital under a board or commission and thus remove it one step from the direct control of the Department of Public Health. This type of administration is working successfully elsewhere and can be easily assessed.

The Hon. Member from Weyburn (Mr. Pepper) says nothing can be gained by playing politics when dealing with people. I

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couldn't agree more. The Saskatchewan Hospital is people so what he says applies in this case.

Mr. Speaker, I solicit the support of everyone to try to come up with a lasting solution to a problem involving low staff morale and too large a staff turnover, resulting in lack of program continuity and effectiveness. A sound solution would be welcomed by the patients, the staff and the public and, I honestly believe, by the politicians. Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in moving this Resolution.

Debate adjourned on the Motion of Hon. R. Romanow.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:13 o'clock p.m.