

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Third Session — Seventeenth Legislature
39th Day

Tuesday, March 20, 1973.

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

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Mr. D. M. McPherson: — (Regina Lakeview) Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce to you and to the Members of this House 50 Grade Eight students from Holy Rosary School. They are here with their teacher, Mr. Hall. I should like to congratulate Mr. Hall for bringing the class here today. I hope they have a very enjoyable day.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. K. R. MacLeod: — (Regina Albert Park) Mr. Speaker, I have great pleasure in welcoming to the House some 62 Grade Five students from W. C. Howe School in Regina. They have had a tour of the building starting at 1:30 p.m. and are now here to observe the proceedings of democracy in action and the dignified proceedings of the House, particularly on this side. They are accompanied by two very fine teachers Mrs. Nancy Hill and Miss Joy Ledingham. I would introduce them to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Members of the House.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Food Prices Enquiry

Mr. T. M. Weatherald: — (Cannington) Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to direct a question to the Minister in charge of Consumer Affairs. It is well known, Mr. Speaker, to all Members here that the House of Commons Committee on Food Prices is recently conducting an enquiry into the rising costs of food in this country. According to press reports, some of the information that they have been attempting to get has not been forthcoming as readily as might well be desired. The question I should like to ask the Minister of Culture and Youth (Consumer Affairs) is: Would the Government of Saskatchewan — as they are a fairly large partner in a meat packing firm and will obviously know the profit margins involved — be willing to provide the information to the House of Commons enquiry on rising food prices?

Hon. E. L. Tchorzewski: — (Minister of Consumer Affairs) Mr. Speaker, in reply to the Member I don't really know to whom he is directing the question, except he said the Minister of Culture and Youth which I know is myself. Whether the Government is willing to provide information on food costs is something I don't know how to answer the Member. Certainly we are willing to provide information that we may be requested to

provide. If we can be of any assistance to the Committee, I as the Minister in my capacity am prepared to be of assistance in any way that I can.

Mr. Weatherald: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. As Minister of Consumer Affairs, I take it then that the Government would be willing to provide information on the operating margins of Intercontinental Packers regarding the rising food prices.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! I don't think that is a supplementary question.

Compulsory Arbitration — Elevator Strike

Mr. G. B. Grant: — (Regina Whitmore Park) I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour. I have been approached by about 10 per cent of the membership in the union, I believe is #102 which the members belong to which repair and install elevators in the province. I also understand the settlement is forthcoming in quite a number of the provinces for this long drawn out strike. Local members are quite concerned that here in Saskatchewan no progress has been made and there doesn't appear to be anything pending. I understand they would welcome compulsory arbitration to settle their troubles. I was wondering if the Minister would care to indicate if he is prepared to take the matter up with the union to see if any reconciliation of this six-month strike can be undertaken.

Hon. G. T. Snyder: — (Minister of Labour) I didn't really gather the first part of the question. I understand the Member has reference to the elevator strike. The deliberations at the present time as you will know are being undertaken in Ontario in light of the fact that this is a national contract. As I indicated in the House some time ago the industrial relations people in Ontario are playing a leading role in the negotiations with the union with the hope that a settlement will be reached that is mutually satisfactory to both management and labor in this particular case. As I indicated also some time ago there was a general move I believe instigated by one or two of the provincial governments which seem to call for a general enquiry into the whole matter. Our people were in touch with the Ontario Department of Labour with the idea of seeing if there was anything that we might add by an intervention of our industrial relations people. The advice that was offered to us at that time was that negotiations were proceeding and they thought any kind of a general move towards an enquiry would be a detriment rather than a help to the ultimate settlement which as I understand is causing some concern in a number of quarters. At the present moment we are keeping in close touch and we are not of the mind to tread on the toes as it were of the people that are directly involved in the negotiations. We are in touch with them on a regular basis and if there is anything we can do to expedite rather than to hinder the matter we will certainly be doing everything possible.

Mr. Grant: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. If the matter gets to the point where it appears compulsory arbitration is

the only course, is the Minister prepared to give it the same backing that he has indicated in a general way; is he prepared to support such a form of settlement, because it appears that is the course it is taking?

Mr. Snyder: — Well I think we'll cross those bridges when we come to them. I don't think I am prepared at this time to offer any firm commitment about what we might propose to do at some time in the future. I think we have to be governed by the actions that are taken elsewhere and the conditions at a particular point in time. I don't think I am in a position where I could possibly give you that kind of an undertaking at the moment.

STATEMENTS

Land Bank Rental Rates

Hon. J. R. Messer: — (Minister of Agriculture) Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to make reference to an article on page 4 of the Leader Post of Monday, March 19, 1973, which had a headline, "Land Bank rent to top 10 per cent for land buildings." Mr. Speaker, this whole article is either a deliberate attempt to mislead by taking items out of context under different situations than for what the regulations were drafted to cover, or incompetent reporting which shows a complete lack of understanding of the subject and of necessary research that is needed in order to prepare such an article.

Mr. Speaker, regardless of what the article says, the Land Bank rent for agricultural land and improvements is set at 5 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Messer: — The lessee will be paying an average annual depreciation for buildings but this isn't part of his rent. He is buying the improvements and thereby building up a lease equity in these improvements. When he has finished buying those improvements through that percentage contribution his rental rates will be discounted downwards.

Section 20 of The Land Bank Act deals with non-farmers leasing farm homes, not required by the agricultural lessee. Their rent is set up by regulation to be 4 per cent above prime; prime is presently 6 per cent. Thus their rent, and only in that case, would be 10 per cent. This covers the cost of borrowed money to purchase the buildings plus the maintenance; 10 per cent plus depreciation is very fair rental rate in relation to equivalent accommodation in towns and cities.

The section of the article dealing with the 5 per cent floor and the 6½ per cent rental ceiling on land rent appears to intentionally convey the possibility of it being set at any level between these two points. The regulation is specific that it is set at 1 per cent below bank prime rate which it was at this time this morning, 6 per cent and still is 6 per cent. Regardless of this, the rate has been struck for leases drawn in 1973 at 5 per cent. This rate is assured by regulation to the 1973 lessees for at least a 10-year period.

The article further refers to the purchase price of land should a lessee exercise his option after five years. The price is set by regulation to be the purchase price or the market value at the time, whichever is greater. The 5 per cent interest rate recognizes the possibility of capital gains in land accruing to the Commission during this period of ownership. Any fair-minded person will agree that you can't have it both ways.

I have been assured that the reference to a statement attributed to Mr. Gib Wesson, Chairman of the Commission, regarding the Commission wishing to turn a profit on the resale of land is completely erroneous. Regulations state that a prospective lessee cannot have a resource base of less than \$30,000 or more than \$150,000. The article infers that this applies only to direct-line descendants. It applies to all lessees; however, in open competition these people are eliminated from competition. In cases of direct-line descent, this situation must be assessed before the land is purchased. Again, Mr. Speaker, I state emphatically that rental rate to agricultural lessees is 5 per cent of land and improvement. The regulations, when read in conjunction with this Act are clear, Mr. Speaker, and only those who wish not to understand it can make it otherwise.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. E. F. Gardner: — (Moosomin) Mr. Speaker, if I could be permitted a word to reply. I think this is a good indication of the Minister not bringing this before the House in time. He waits until it is in the Gazette, statements are made in the Press, he has a good deal of time to clear . . .

Mr. Speaker: — What is the Hon. Member replying to?

Mr. Gardner: — He made a statement . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, the Minister was rising on a Point of Privilege, referring to a press release. Order! I should like to know just how the Member is attempting to reply so that we may stay in order.

Mr. McIsaac: — Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the Hon. Member was speaking as a Point of Privilege. I think it was a statement, a Minister's statement before the Orders of the Day. As such a Member on this side can make a very brief comment.

Mr. Speaker: — He was making a statement in relation to a press release, not as a new statement of government policy.

Mr. MacDonald: — (Milestone) He did not rise on a Point of Privilege. The Press was commenting on something in the Gazette, not what the Minister has said. It was not a Point of Privilege at all, Sir. It was a question, the Minister rose before the Orders of the Day to make a statement. The tradition of this House has been that the Opposition has an opportunity to respond.

Mr. Speaker: — I am not denying that, I am just asking the Hon. Member what he is replying to because he was commenting on a press statement. I am asking just how he is replying, because it is not a debatable item at this time.

Mr. Gardner: — I am just replying to the statement the Minister made. He is apparently giving us some information that he should have provided to us some time ago. If this information had been available perhaps the confusion that the Minister is complaining about today wouldn't exist. This is all the more reason why estimates should have been in, why the Land Bank should have been before us so that we could find these things out. We have mentioned on many occasions that we have been trying to get information about the Land Bank, it has been denied us and it is no wonder that confusion exists such as the Minister referred to today.

It is unfortunate that he is keeping us in the dark about much of this information and we have to find it in the Press and of course it can easily be misinterpreted.

Mr. Messer: — I would recommend to the Member that he look through the Saskatchewan Gazette, they were all gazetted.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, we can't debate these issues.

School Grants

Mr. C. P. MacDonald: — (Milestone) I should like to make a comment on the Minister's statement. I noticed as usual since the beginning of the Session in January the Minister has once again carried on the practice of the Government announcing policy to the Press before any information is released in the House. Therefore I don't have an opportunity to comment on the material laid on the Table. I do want to comment on what was made available to the general public. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, it is with real regret that we the people of Saskatchewan and particularly the property taxpayers in Saskatchewan are not going to get the benefits of \$26.4 million which was definitely allocated by the Federal Minister of Finance for the reduction of property taxes in the secondary school system in the Dominion of Canada. Provinces in Canada have been attempting for many, many years, Mr. Speaker, to get the Federal Government to make a contribution to the education costs in elementary and secondary schools. The NDP has pursued this course themselves in negotiations with Ottawa. Now for the first time, the Federal Government has been willing to make a contribution toward elementary and secondary education in the Dominion of Canada and this Government and the Minister of Education has absolutely refused to pass on that \$26.4 million for the reduction of property grants. This would have made possible, Mr. Speaker, a real reduction in property taxes in the Dominion of Canada and particularly the Province of Saskatchewan. I should also like to say that we as yet have had no opportunity to assess the grants announced on property mill rates . . .

Hon. A. E. Blakeney: — (Premier) Mr. Speaker, may I rise on a Point of Order. It seems

that the Member is making a statement, and is making a statement pursuant to the tabling of a document. The Minister of Education said nothing else. If it is indeed the rule of this House that when a document is tabled the Members on the other side have an opportunity to make a statement, then I would be delighted to be advised of it, because I wasn't aware of it. If, in fact, it is the rule that the Member can reply only when the Minister makes a statement on the Orders of the Day, then I heard no statement. I am confused about the rule of order in which the Member for Milestone is making this statement.

Mr. Speaker: — I think the Point of Order is well taken. I think that the Members are getting a little away from what the rules are intended for. When a document is tabled we should not have a debate on a tabling of a statement.

Mr. MacDonald: — Mr. Speaker, I apologize.

Mr. MacMurchy: — Mr. Speaker, I thought maybe he was asking a question, I was waiting for him to ask.

QUESTIONS

Land Bank Policies

Mr. J. C. McIsaac: — (Wilkie) Mr. Speaker, just one question of the Minister of Agriculture before the Orders of the Day. I wonder if in light of the Press release the Minister spoke of, in light of rumors and the other problems with respect to the Land Bank, will the Minister now reconsider his stand, his refusal to give us details of policies and transactions and give us a promise that during the course of this Session we will have the opportunity to debate this entire question. Surely, Mr. Speaker, when the Press can get confused, it must give credence to the view that the people of the province are equally confused as to where he is going with the Land Bank. He has an opportunity to reconsider and would he not give us a promise that he will put these details and the policies of the Land Bank before this House before we adjourn?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Messer: — Mr. Speaker, I would be more than happy to file the regulations so that not only the Members opposite could better inform themselves in regard to the guidelines of the Land Bank Commission, but also the Press. The answer is "No" in regard to the rest of the question.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 10 — Request Discontinuance of Title, 'The Honourable'

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed Resolution by Mr. G. B. Grant (Regina Whitmore Park):

That this Legislature opposes the improper use of the title “The Honourable” by a former Saskatchewan Cabinet Minister, C. M. Fines, now residing in Florida, and that the Legislature requests him to discontinue the use of this title.

Mr. D. W. Michayluk: — (Redberry) Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this resolution introduced by the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park in respect to his concern about the use of the title “Honourable” by an ex-member of this Legislature and a member of the Executive Council for 16 years. The Hon. Member is opposed to the fact that the one time Provincial Treasurer of Saskatchewan was improperly titled as “Honourable” in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he has resided for some 15 years and where he is currently residing.

When I spoke initially, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that I had met Mr. Fines on several occasions during the time he was Provincial Treasurer. Those, Mr. Speaker, were very difficult financial years in Saskatchewan. I understand the Honourable Mr. Fines, the then Treasurer brought in 16 balanced budgets from 1944 to 1960.

Mr. Fines, since 1960 has left his active participation in politics and has moved to warmer climates. Mr. Fines was the Minister responsible for the introduction of the Saskatchewan Government Insurance. He was also connected with the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park (Mr. Grant) in city politics. Well, maybe I am wrong in that respect.

Mr. Grant: — Mr. Speaker, can you get the Hon. Member to address you or the House, he insists on talking to somebody behind him, I can't hear him.

Mr. Michayluk: — I don't want to be directed by the Hon. Member how I am to speak. I am trying to speak as I am able to, I don't require any directions from the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park or for that matter, any Member from the opposite side.

Mr. Guy: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order. I don't think there is anything wrong with the Member for Whitmore Park asking that he speak into the mike. We are as interested in hearing what he says on this side of the House as anyone is on that side and it is only courtesy that if you have anything worthwhile to say, naturally you want as many people to hear it as possible. And that was the only request that he speak into the mike so that we on this side could hear.

Mr. Michayluk: — Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Hon. Minister of Public Health will soon have the hearing aid program in effect. Then if you are unable to hear, you will be able to get a hearing aid at reasonable cost and will hear without difficulty.

Several days following the initial debate on the improper use of the word “Honourable” by the once Cabinet Minister, Mr. Lorne Harasen’s Line had contacted Mr. Fines in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, with specific questions to the period when he was the Provincial Treasurer and as to what he is doing at the present. Mr. Fines gave an explanation to a question asked by Mr. Harasen in respect to the use of the title “Honourable.” Hon. Members may recall that the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park brought in a clipping from a newspaper where the title was attached to Mr. Fines as Honourable C.M. Fines in charge of some . . .

Mr. Kramer: — . . . was the . . .

Mr. Michayluk: — That’s right. The explanation that Mr. Fines gave to Mr. Harasen was that it is customary in the United States for people who were connected with public service and where titles were used preceding their name, like Mr. Fines, he had the title Honourable C.M. Fines, Provincial Treasurer, Province of Saskatchewan, that those titles are used after they retire from public eye. As a matter of fact he gave instances of retired Senators living in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. They are no longer Senators but because as senators at one time, reference is made to them as Senator Brown or Senator Smith, whatever the case may be.

I would ask the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park to forget the past. It is very regrettable that we have to bring this topic in the Legislature, particularly in a resolution of this type.

That this Legislature opposes the improper use of the title “The Honourable” by a former Saskatchewan Cabinet Minister, C.M. Fines, now residing in Florida, and that the Legislature requests him to discontinue the use of the title.

I suggest that as Legislative Members we have no right to forbid members of the Press in the United States using a title now which Mr. Fines formerly had while a Member of this Legislature.

Therefore I will oppose this Resolution, Mr. Speaker, and I trust the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park will forgive the Hon. C.M. Fines for what they had gone through in the years when they were closely associated in the city of Regina instead of encouraging Members of this House to support and prohibit the use of the name “Honourable” even by people over which Mr. Fines has no control.

I will oppose this Resolution, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. F. Meakes: — (Touchwood) Mr. Speaker, I just want to rise for two or three minutes.

Of all the nonsensical resolutions that I have ever seen on an Order Paper, this one takes the cake. The only reason I rise is that I had the privilege and the honor of sitting in this House with the Honourable Clarence Fines. I really don't care whether they call him "Honourable" down there or not. I knew Clarence Fines to be an honorable man.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Meakes: — In fact, I consider he was one of the finest men that ever entered this Legislature and have sat with a lot of them. His ability, his honesty and his integrity while he was in this House was beyond reproach. And I just kind of object to attacks on this man who served his city and this province for close to a quarter of a century. Mr. Speaker, I just had to rise and say that I think this pretty small, in fact, not only pretty small, it is very small.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. A. E. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, may I rise to add a word or two. I knew Mr. Fines very well, I worked for him as a public servant. I had a very high regard for him as a public administrator and as a very, very skilled Provincial Treasurer of this province. I think anyone who looks at the financing record of this province from 1944 to 1960 must see that a very excellent job of financing was done. The only quarrel may be that it was on the conservative side. Fair enough. The circumstances in the 1940s and the 1950s were such that a conservative approach to financing was I think dictated by the circumstances of the day.

I listened with a good deal of interest to the words of the Member for Whitmore Park (Mr. Grant) and I heard nothing which suggested to me that Mr. C.M. Fines was in any way responsible for the improper use of the words "The Honourable". The Resolution clearly states that the improper use of the title is by the Hon. C.M. Fines, not by the Fort Lauderdale newspaper, not by any other newspaper, but by the Hon. C.M. Fines. I heard no evidence of that whatever. I think that unless the Hon. Member has some evidence of it he ought not to put on the Order Paper a resolution which is critical of a former Member and a distinguished former Member of this House. I believe that this particular resolution really doesn't do the Member for Whitmore Park credit. He has a reputation in this House of being a fair-minded person and this does not, as I say, come up to his usual standards of fair-mindedness in this House. And I think that on reflection he will rather regret that he put this on the Order Paper. I, for my part, feel that he has not made a case and that I will certainly be voting against this resolution. I feel it unfortunate that it was placed on the Order Paper. I feel it is even more unfortunate that it was place on the Order Paper by a Member for Regina and a Member for Regina who knew the Hon. C. M. Fines.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. A. R. Guy: — (Athabasca) Mr. Speaker, I think there is one point that should be clarified here. And of course that is the resolution that appeared on the Order Paper in no way at all questions the integrity, the honesty or the performance of the man while he

was Provincial Treasurer or in any other responsible position that he may have held here in the Province of Saskatchewan. If the Members opposite have taken the view that this is the point and the purpose of this motion then I respectfully suggest that they have not got the point of the motion at all. The point of the motion is whether the term "Honourable" which is supposedly being used by Mr. Fines in his present abode in Florida is in fact, a title that he is entitled to use. In fact, it could be almost considered that using a title to which he is not now entitled to is casting a reflection on every Member of this House. Now I am sure that when Members opposite are defeated, if not in the next election, some day along the line Ministers on that side of the House will be defeated the same as Ministers have been on this side in the past and certainly in the present and in the future; I doubt very much that there is any Minister or former Minister in this House today who will, once his time in public life is over, will deliberately go out and use the title "Honourable". I think this is the point and the only point that is being raised in this resolution that: we wonder whether a person who held an honored position in this House and did earn the title and use the title "Honourable" under the circumstances when he was entitled to do so; whether this is a good reflection on the House that he served in the manner which he did; and whether the continued use of it when I think it is quite clear in parliamentary procedure that he is not entitled to the use of that term today, if it does not in fact reflect upon all those who are presently holding that title, who have held it in the past and who will no doubt hold it in the future. And I think that is the only point of this resolution. It raises this point as to whether this is a reflection upon the responsibility and dignity of this Legislature.

Mr. G. Snyder: — (Moose Jaw South) Mr. Speaker, just in passing I think the point has been made and made well that the charge that the former Hon. C. M. Fines was using that designation improperly, has not been established and I would suggest that probably it has not been established any more than it might properly be established in this House that the new Hon. Member for Moose Jaw North (Mr. MacDonald) is somehow using a designation improperly. You will probably find on your desk a Xerox piece of material that is addressed to the Hon. Don MacDonald. I think this is really very small potatoes. I think it is something that could be properly represented as a waste of the time of this House and surely there are things of more consequence that the Legislature could be discussing.

Mr. G. B. Grant: — (Whitmore Park) Mr. Speaker, first of all I wish to take back what I said about the Hon. Member for Redberry (Mr. Michayluk). I would just as soon he did not use the microphone because he has so little to say that I wouldn't have missed any if he had turned right around and faced the back of the room. I regret that he is not here and I hope somebody will convey that message to him, if they don't I will do it myself.

Mr. Speaker, I only brought this to the attention of the House because it was quite apparent, if not to the Members of this House, to many other people, that this just wasn't a 'loose use' of this title by other people. In my remarks I said I had no objection whatsoever to the casual use of these titles. I was the first one to mention that in this House. I still have no objection to it because I realize you can't stop people from

doing this. But this is more than a casual use. There is no doubt in my mind that the interview was given to the young lady because she didn't know the difference between a provincial treasurer and a minister of the treasury, which we didn't have at that time. She didn't know the difference between a deputy Prime Minister and she promoted him to the "Right Honourable" at one stage. But this is just an indication of what was going on down there and Mr. Fines was doing nothing to correct it.

I think it really has more sense to it than the Hon. Member from Touchwood (Mr. Meakes) is prepared to admit and I am disappointed that he made that statement because usually he is pretty well under control but I seem to have got his blood pressure up a bit. But it must have more sense to it, or bearing, than he admits because there were four or five who spoke to it over there. And we on this side of the House until you raised these points had no intention of pushing the matter any further because I feel that we have accomplished what we wanted whether you defeat the motion or not. Because in recent publications in the Fort Lauderdale area the "Honourable" Clarence Fines is now referred to as Mr. Fines. And on a radio program in February he was referred to as Mr. Fines. So I am quite confident and I think Mr. Fines and I are still on speaking terms because I understand while I didn't hear the radio program, he invited me down there and said if I came down he would see to it that I was addressed as "The Honourable". Well I would be very glad to go down. I don't think I will partake of this hospitality and I have no desire to have the title used if I do go down.

Motion negatived.

Resolution No. 6 — Urges the Government of Canada to Amend the National Transportation Act

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed Resolution by Mr. W. A. Robbins (Saskatoon Nutana Centre):

That this Assembly urge 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. J. R. Kowalchuk: — (Melville) Mr. Speaker, I think this Resolution is an excellent resolution. It is timely, it's to the point. And never was there more need to look at this question of policies regarding National transportation than there is right now.

Mr. Speaker, when we speak of national transportation policy we must remember that it is within the total sphere of transportation that we are talking about. We are all too inclined to look at transportation from the viewpoint of the railroad, more recently truck-tractor but included must be air-transport, pipe transport and others.

Each in its own way has a definite bearing on the working of the other. And trucking in particular has had a tremendous bearing on rail line operation.

The whole question of transportation must be looked at in an overall global direction but emphasis on what the policies

will do to Western Canada and in our case what will it do to Saskatchewan.

Now having said this, Mr. Speaker, I still maintain as did the other speakers that the crisis in transportation right now is railroads. And it is rail lines freight policies that must be looked at immediately. Rail lines are still the life blood of prairie agriculture.

Now I will not go into a review of statistics which were so ably presented the other day by the mover of this Resolution, the Hon. Member from Nutana Centre (Mr. Robbins) and also the very excellent and very capable and statistically analyzed information on the CN or the CP by the Member for Assiniboia-Bengough (Mr. Lang).

I would only be repeating the facts, the facts which prove beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the 'corporate rip-off' by these and other companies such as the Hudson's Bay Company, ever since Canada became a nation in 1867, and even before that, especially in the rail line transportation have had very detrimental effects on the growth and the expansion of Western Canada.

We are asking, once again, that this be changed: that Western Canada transportation policies be changed to benefit the West rather than the all powerful central East; that the Federal Government look at the use of Port Churchill in a realistic manner; that, in fact the practice of discrimination based on eastern numerical strength be done way with once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, the greatest single factor that has maintained Western Canadians, as "hewers of wood and drawers of water," for Central Canada has been the national transport policies imposed by the Federal Government, as I said before, ever since the formation of Canada.

Now there was a time that a policy favoring Central Canada, Ontario and Quebec, was not considered that important. And if Western Canada hollered a little, they were pacified of course by some goodies from the Federal Government. And today, Mr. Speaker, that is not acceptable. All people, regardless of political beliefs want fair pool and fair play. The people of Western Canada realize that we, here out West, are going to lose altogether no matter what our other differences might be.

Mr. Speaker, what happens in Canadian transportation policy especially as to how it affects western agricultural Canada, will have a greater bearing as to whether Canada stays as one united nation, a greater bearing than the bilingual and bicultural question that confronts us today.

Let me illustrate just two glaring examples of this discrimination. CN and CP rail charges per ton for freighting farm machinery and other steel products to Saskatchewan are over 130 per cent greater than that charged on the same materials being shipped to Vancouver. To ship rapeseed oil it costs more than 100 per cent than the shipping of rapeseed itself, blatantly evident discrimination against western processors and benefiting the eastern plants. The inevitable result of this practice will eventually mean closure of our Saskatchewan rapeseed processing plants and will, Mr. Speaker, eliminate all chances of additional rapeseed plants being set up.

This could be paralleled in many other fields of endeavor in Western Canada. Mr. Speaker, whether it is in the area of shipping goods, grain, rapeseed oil or exporting prairie made farm machinery, or importing the goods that farmers need to operate that great industry, agriculture, transportation policies involving transportation costs determine the final outcome.

Transportation policies will determine whether Western Canada, including Saskatchewan, will diversify its economy, build up, expand and become more viable, or simply stagnate and deteriorate community wise and be allowed to become a back pasture for the eastern interests, simply to be used and exploited when they feel there is a need for them to do so.

Now if we don't put up a concerted strenuous fight, if all Canadians are not made aware of the facts, Mr. Speaker, if the financial greed of Central Canada supersedes what is in the best interests of all of Canada, then indeed the ideal of Canadian unity, Canadian independence, Canadian nationalism will be completely dissipated.

Mr. Speaker, one may be asked: Surely you don't mean to say that the dismal picture that you paint can be totally attributed to the Canadian National Transportation policy? Indeed, Mr. Speaker, a great deal can be attributed to it.

Our record of achievement over the past decade or two has proved that we in the West are capable of expansion and increased production, that indeed we have been able to export many western commodities, but records will also show that the cost of transporting these goods — this has been shown by the Members on this side of the House in other speeches — that the cost of transportation either in raw or in particular finished products, has either forced the producer out of production or forced him to move to closer markets, but most are forced out of the picture altogether. That is where the farmer and his associates are finding themselves today. We are boxed in by many detrimental factors, none being more serious than the transportation policies imposed upon them by the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, to promote provincial and regional development we must have a new national non-discriminatory transportation policy. The Federal Government to date, has shown little or no inclination or interest, or realization of this fact. The composition of the different boards dealing with these important factors indicate that eastern interests are being guarded and protected.

The lack of western members in strength on the Board of Transport Commissioners is deliberate, Mr. Speaker. All this has to change. Western Canadian problems must be recognized as Canadian problems.

Now an excellent summing up, I thought, was contained in an editorial in the Leader-Post entitled, "Freight Rate Discrimination." It says this:

Elected and appointed government officials from the four Western provinces are meeting in Saskatoon later this month with businessmen and other interested groups for a two-day conference on transportation problems faced

by the West. The object is to agree on a common attitude for presentation to the Trudeau Government at the conference on western problems scheduled to take place in Winnipeg in July.

Let's hope one result from the Saskatoon meeting will be a clear, unequivocal demand for an immediate end to discrimination against the Prairies in freight rates. Blatant discrimination is no way to run the railways and allowing it to continue is no way to run a country.

All of us regardless of the many differences of opinion should unite to urge the Federal Government of Canada that the National Transportation Act must be amended so that we in the West are not discriminated against. That indeed if the Western Canadian economy is to become fully alive and vibrant, buoyant and healthy and keep our western communities alive, then now is the time for these changes to take place.

I am certain, Mr. Speaker, that there will be unanimous approval of this Resolution by the Assembly. And because I am sure that a number of other Members on this side of the House and on the other as well will want to participate and say something more to this all important question, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed Resolution by Mr. P. P. Mostoway (Hanley):

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.

Mr. D. Boldt: — (Rosthern) Mr. Speaker, the amount of the old age pension cheque has always been a political football for years. I think that it is a disgrace to use our old people in this manner to win elections and political support.

The argument that the old age pensioner cannot live on \$100 a month, if this is his or her only income, is valid. However, this is far from being the case. Pension plans upon retirement have been in existence for decades and thousands of Canadians, who have retired, have reached the age of 65, are on good pensions and are not in need of additional pensions whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, the other day — and I want to make a reference to the gentleman — the Hon. T. C. Douglas was in this House. He has served in this House for a good number of years and retired

in 1962, I believe, on a pension, on the maximum pension. What the pension was at that time I don't know but today it is \$8,000. He is drawing a good salary as an MP today and if he should retire tomorrow he might be on full pension as a Member of the House of Commons, which could bring his pension to a total of maybe \$15,000 a year. And yet the Member for Hanley wants this gentleman to get an extra \$25.

It is universal, it is not to the needy. I believe that if one were to investigate individuals, we would find it quite common to come across individuals who receive pensions from \$500 to \$1,000 per month. I, as a taxpayer, am absolutely opposed that these people receive additional pensions.

As an MLA, the Member for Hanley, if he is around long enough under present pension conditions, he would receive a pension of \$8,000 per year — and there is talk that this might be increased. Surely the Member is not suggesting that with the present \$100 old age pension plus the Canada Pension income and his MLA pension plan, plus his superannuation cheque as a teacher, and in many instances it could be that the wife is also getting some kind of a pension, that the Canadian taxpayer should be asked to pay, universally across the board another pension plus supplemental allowance to guarantee an income enough to live on without taking into consideration the pensions we are already now receiving.

Mr. Michayluk: — Pensions on a means test.

Mr. Boldt: — Yes, that is what I mean, absolutely on the means test. It is about time that we got our senses together and give those people who need it more than \$125 a month, and those who don't need it, including my mother, she doesn't need even the \$100.

I am absolutely opposed to increased old age pensions universally across the Board. There are thousands of Canadians who need not rob the Federal Treasury and on the other hand there are Canadians who might not get along with the \$125, particularly if they should spend their last days in a nursing home and have no other pension plan to fall back on.

The Federal Government has now increased the basic pension to \$100 per month. I believe this will be effective April 1st. I would hope that no government will ever go beyond this amount except on a means test.

The means test today is a very simple matter. Those people who pay income tax should not be entitled to more old age pensions. The computers do this work for the government. There is no argument that inspectors are necessary and that this would become a cumbersome thing.

However, the Member for Hanley, when speaking on this matter, argued that no one could live on \$100 per month and left the impression that all our senior citizens of Canada have to no other income. Surely this is not the case with the Saskatchewan civil servants. There are many, many people in the service that will retire. Some have retired on I would say between \$5,000 to \$10,000 pension. If he is of that opinion then I suggest to him — and I am glad the Premier is in — I would suggest to the Premier and to this Government that if you want to be so generous, then let the Provincial Government, I would call upon

Them to foot the extra cost. I will therefore move, seconded by the Member for Regina Lakeview (Mr. McPherson).

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

recommend to the consideration of the Government of Saskatchewan to proceed immediately with legislation to implement a program which includes the following:

1. A \$25 per month pension to all Saskatchewan old age security recipients.
2. A Provincial Guaranteed Income Supplement to be added on to the Federal Supplement to guarantee a single pensioner with an income of \$225 a month and a married couple of \$375 a month.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The debate continued on the motion and the amendment.

Mr. H. H. P. Baker: — (Regina Wascana) Mr. Speaker, after listening to the Member across the way, I was looking for an amendment that he was going to ask to cut the old age pension, this was indicated in his first remarks. I see the amendment, if I get it correctly, recommends \$15 over and above the supplement. Is that your amendment? I haven't got a copy yet, but it was certainly an about face, from the way he spoke at the start. I thought for sure that he was going to say let's take the pensions away from the old people.

I want to say to him that at no time do I support the Means Tests. While we have them today, those on Old Age Security are under a means test and of course those on the supplement of \$170 are also under a means test. I don't agree with these proceedings and I never did. However, we must go along with them. They are regulations today under the Dominion Statutes. I would have hoped that he would have written to Ottawa before Mr. Turner brought in his Budget, to ask him to add another \$25 a month to it. I don't think that he should have brought that amendment here.

However, I am very pleased that he has a change of heart. It has taken him a long time to have him move and follow the policy of humanity first, in asking for another \$25. It is surprising that he is now supporting and believing in democratic socialism.

Mr. Cody: — He didn't really mean it!

Mr. Baker: — He didn't really mean it, one Member says here. I am very pleased that he has moved it and to find that there is a change of heart on that side. But I totally disagree with him on the Means Tests.

Mr. McPherson: — I am responsible . . .

Mr. Baker: — Mr. McPherson said that he is responsible for pushing him to move it. Well, I know that the Member for Lakeview would become a socialist before the Member for Rosthern or Whitmore Park, that is for sure. I will say that much for him.

I am very pleased to take part in this debate, Mr. Speaker. The amendment, after thinking on it for awhile, certainly needs some refining, but most important of all, it lacks real sincerity. I don't mind amendments being made if the people moving them do so in a sincere way and bring them here with real thought.

Mr. Speaker, I am very anxious to speak to this motion in the affirmative in respect to increased pensions for senior citizens. On the one hand I am proud to have the opportunity to add my voice to those who call for further provision for our pioneers. On the other hand I am deeply ashamed that this motion or amendment and our many speeches are even necessary. I cannot possibly express to you the dismay I feel when I consider how the years have been allowed to drift by while governments have remained inactive and senior citizens in our country have been forced to live in poverty, or near poverty, most of the time.

All across this vast country of ours today, people are enjoying the fruits of labor of another generation. The quality of life that is offered to the natives, a quality made possible through the efforts of our senior citizens is envied by the inhabitants of many other countries. We, in Saskatchewan should be especially aware of the contribution made by our senior citizens. This province, and indeed this country has a relatively short history. We can survey that history and can see very easily the trials and the heartbreaks that faced the men and the women who settled here, and who through strength of body and undying inner courage produced the Saskatchewan we know today. The Saskatchewan of which we are so proud. One would expect that we should be overcome with a sense of gratitude and that we should feel inspired to look to our senior citizens with sincere respect and admiration. One would think that we should be doing everything in our power to repay even in small measure, the debt we owe them. After all, Canada is one of the few countries whose pioneers are still alive. We should be honored to have the opportunity of knowing these individuals.

But as it is, just what exactly is our relationship to our senior citizens? The standard of living which we grant our pioneers certainly would not suggest appreciation for a job well done. Let's face it! We all know many people spend as much on entertainment and luxury in any given month, as the average senior citizen is provided to live on. Why the great discrepancy? Why can no financial arrangement be made whereby an aging generation, to whom we owe so much, to whom we owe everything we have and are today, can not be raised to even minimum standards of living. I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that there is no reason. We know there is plenty of wealth in Canada. Even Canada's Finance Minister said so and a good portion of this must be shared with our senior citizens. I can see no excuse, fellow Members, for the fiddling around we have done year after year in this area. Is it any wonder that so many of the older people are discouraged at the inaction of our governments today. I have to say the worst offender over the years has been our senior government, which has practically complete power and responsibility. I'm not pointing at any political party, this has been the case all along. I believe that through continued application from the various levels of government, more and more recognition will eventually be given to our senior citizens and to their plight.

It is without doubt our duty as a Provincial Legislature to continue to press the Federal Government for more action.

March 20, 1973

The New Democrats in Ottawa have made the battle of the senior citizens their battle, resulting in the modest changes in the basic pension to \$100 a month and to \$170 per month to those requiring the supplement.

The basic pension of \$100 seems to be a shortsighted policy and it does not meet the increasing living costs in this country. I say the basic pension should be at least \$150 per month, or say \$125 a month this year and \$150 per month beginning in 1974. Those needing the supplement, rather than the \$170 per month should receive at least \$200 or \$225 per month. For man and wife the allowance would be \$375.

Seeing Ottawa did not have the foresight to raise pensions for those on supplement, it is now incumbent upon us to raise it at least another \$30 per month, bringing it up to \$200, as the minimum guaranteed income. I say we have to do it now, and during this Session.

As a Provincial Government, we the New Democrats, have made real progress for our senior citizens. We have managed to help make their declining years a bit more bearable in some areas. The immediate elimination of deterrent fees came as a welcome relief to the many who find frequent visits to the doctor and hospitals a necessity. Following this, we removed the medical care premium for people of 65 years and over; a move for which we were lauded by the pensioners. The agreement on the inclusion of chiropractic treatment as an insured health service has widened the range of medical attention possible for all people in Saskatchewan. It means that our senior citizens have one more service included in that free package we gave them not so long ago and this is good, Mr. Speaker.

I know that Mr. Taylor, the Minister of Social Services, under whose particular jurisdiction the needs and desires of our senior citizens fall, has the welfare of these people at heart. The \$3 million allocated for our homes for the aged is certainly an humanitarian gesture. The total of \$639,815 to be paid out by the department in grants to assist with the cost of construction of housing for senior citizens is creditable. Similarly I am pleased to see that a substantial amount of money has been provided to improve community services for the aged — \$61,000 to be precise. I know that such services as Meals-on-Wheels in various centres throughout our province have been greatly appreciated by our senior citizens. The research assistance provided through the Community Grants and Standards Division of the Department of Social Services has helped communities to establish and maintain programs and services for their elderly residents. It is hoped that the existence of this division will help make other communities aware of their responsibility to the aged.

I am glad to see, Mr. Speaker, that throughout our province several communities are in the process of construction housing facilities through cost-sharing with the Federal Government and Provincial Government. They have been able to provide pleasant surroundings where the older residents of the locality can live and still retain that degree of independence which is so important to them.

In 1972, Mr. Wood was able to announce the construction of such units at Moose Jaw, Biggar, Humboldt, Yorkton, Weyburn, Rocanville, Saskatoon and Regina. We need to hear more announcements like this.

Many people in public life would like to take credit for the initiation and development and construction of senior citizens' accommodations in the city of Regina. The recent opening of the "Heritage" was an exciting event in this city. It is located in my constituency. I believe in most cases where such occasions take place it was customary that the MLA was informed of the opening and I would think should be part of the program, regardless of on which side of the House he may sit. I must say, while I was not permitted to take part in the program, I didn't even get an invitation. I had to invite myself. Perhaps I wouldn't have been slighted if I didn't have a hand in the development. After convincing my city council to approve it, it took me two years to get this project under way. Arrangements were all completed when I left office. I won't tell you the treatment I got from the former Premier and Mr. Estey in trying to get it through. I will say, Cy MacDonald, who later became Minister, supported me on some projects and I will give him credit for that; Mr. Boldt did support me on the first pioneer village development.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker: — But the man who really stuck with me to get it approved, that is the Heritage and the extended pioneer village, was Mr. Andras in Ottawa, as CMHC wanted to make this their first pilot project — a high-rise for the elderly. They requested that they design it as the first one of its kind in Canada. I agreed to this. However, they were to associate themselves with a local architect. It is now completed — 127 living quarters for our pioneers. I'm not one to look for praise, but I do resent that some people like to take credit when they were actually a hindrance rather than of assistance, and to me to not even be asked to be a participant in an event like this, is a gross insult. I say, without fear of contradiction from anyone, that if I hadn't initiated this and carried the ball through those trying years, it would not be a reality today. I think it is most despicable and a most despicable ploy on the part of those guilty of such disrespect.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker: — I could tell a similar story on the development of the \$2.3 million new addition to Pioneer Village Nursing Home which I had initiated simultaneously. This project, now completed, houses close to another 300 people for nursing care, which has recently been filled too. This was in addition to a \$2.5 million project built in the early 1960s in Pioneer Village. I shall be looking forward to that opening as well.

Many other low rental housing projects were built in 1959 and the 1960s which also provided senior citizens' quarters; 109 units were built in Regent Court, leaving some 30 units for pensioners; 141 units were built in Greer Court, which also accommodated some senior citizens; 60 single family units were built which took in some of our aged. Many church groups in the 1960s built homes for senior citizens.

I believe I should list them. First of all I would like to say that Pioneer Village today, in its complete complex can now accommodate 824 people. Wascana Hospital which was built

March 20, 1973

under a CCF Government, formerly known as the Geriatric Centre, was a great boon to this city before the 1960s. During the 1960s the Santa Maria Home was built; Hewitt Place; Mutchmor Lodge; The Lutheran Home; Salvation Army Eventide Home; Qu'Appelle House. Private homes also included Parkside Nursing Home; Extendicare; Collette Home and Central Park Lodge. Well over \$18 million was spent in Regina from 1959 up to the present for our senior citizens. I hope that we, in the future, will keep abreast with needed and changing conditions for the elderly.

The implementation of a new program to provide hearing aids at a reduced cost will come as very welcome news to many elderly residents in Saskatchewan. I think that we all agree that the cost of hearing aids, over the years had not been within the reach of our pensioners. I am pleased the New Democratic Government was able to take this important action.

This year in Saskatchewan senior citizens will be able to make much needed improvements to their home through the grants from \$200 to \$500 being made available to senior citizens for this purpose. Admittedly no major renovations would be possible on such a sum, but at least we are going in the right direction.

The \$285,000 budgeted for community services to elderly people who are living at home, should greatly increase the potential in that area.

The new system of payment to be inaugurated in respect to special care homes should ensure better care for the many senior citizens housed in that type of institution.

The Property Improvement Grant raised from \$78 to \$144 will be of great assistance to many of our pensioners in this city and throughout the province. In many instances this will actually cover half of their tax bill. In my opinion it really is a tax cut on property, which in essence is our basic policy to remove the tax load from property, particularly our homes.

All this, Mr. Speaker, shows that provincially we are concerned about our senior citizens. Every year we are making more progress. But as valuable as our efforts may seem to us the fact still remains that the pension paid to senior citizens by the Federal Government is inadequate.

I noted with interest in a study done in the city of Saskatoon not long ago, that the great majority of the senior citizens felt that an increase in income of \$40 per month would improve living conditions to their satisfaction. Not a grasping lot are they? But I say that pensions should be raised to at least \$200 per month, for those on supplement. I also say, Mr. Speaker, that the Canada Pension Plan should be revised to pay pensions at 60 years of age for men and 58 years of age for women. Actually the overall pension payment program and the Canada Pension Plan should have been put together at the outset of the Canada Pension scheme.

The New Democrats in British Columbia supplemented the pension. The New Democrats in Manitoba, I understand, are about to do the same thing. It is our responsibility to get into a cash-sharing arrangement with Ottawa as soon as possible so that payment can be made to those in need of at least \$200 to \$225 per month.

I am sure that the Members on Both sides of this House are agreed upon the importance of the motion that is before us. I know that I supporter wholeheartedly all efforts to improve the lot of our senior citizens. I do believe that the time is long overdue and the Federal Government should wake up to the gravity of the situation. I hope that the united support in our Legislature could evoke some positive response from the Federal Government on behalf of our senior citizens. However, it appears that Ottawa will not act on this further at this time, so I make a strong recommendation to our own Provincial Government and to the Finance Minister, Mr. Cowley, to bring in a Bill to provide \$30 per month for our pensioners, making to \$200 per month, as a guaranteed income per month, a basic income to our senior citizens on supplement. I suggest that this provision be made now and to be made effective July 1st of this year. Had Ottawa included this amount in their Budget it wouldn't be necessary for us to have to add funds to compensate these people on supplement — the \$125 old age security would have been much better than the \$100 — I wouldn't have to make this speech and request more today.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that while the NDP have done a fine job in Ottawa, I would have hoped that Mr. Lewis would have put a price tag in giving support to the present government today and I think that price tag should have been higher for old age pensioners and I would have suggested that as of this year \$125 per month for those on old age security, \$150 per month as of January 1, 1974, and \$200 per month, now at least, for those on supplement as a guaranteed income and that \$225 could have come later. So I say that I would have hoped that our Government there would have done this and my NDP colleagues actually should have asked for fixed amounts before they gave support to the government of the day. Otherwise, this will be done for many years and I think that our pensioners need it now. I congratulate the Government on bringing it part of the way. I don't condemn them for it. I congratulate them, but it didn't go far enough. I would have hoped the minority group in Ottawa, the power that our Party wields there as 31 Members, that this would have been the opportune time to put price tags on needs for our senior citizens, and also a price tag on things for the western farmer so that he would have some form of guaranteed income too.

I think we missed the boat, Mr. Speaker, on this and I would still urge the Federal Government, if we are going to be continually supporting them there, that they do more in supplementing the income of the western people, pensioners and farmers as well. The price tag that I would have put on for the farmers is similar to the remarks I made in my speech on the Throne Speech, to have so much paid for a number of bushels of wheat on the first grain sold; and you all know what that figure was, 2,500 bushels at \$3.00 per bushel and it be paid to every farmer in the West. This would give them a measure of a guaranteed income.

I hope that we may still do more there and ask the Federal Government to reconsider their positions and do something for the West. This is our opportunity while we have a minority government and you and I on both sides of this House should support them. Then they will deserve our support if they come in with such a response. They didn't go far enough, Mr. Speaker, and I would hope that our good NDP friends and colleagues in Ottawa will request more over the next month or two.

Mr. Speaker, I support this motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. W. A. Robbins: — (Saskatoon Nutana Centre) Mr. Speaker, I hate to burden the House with the old cliché that I hadn't intended to enter the debate, and really I hadn't until the Member for Rosthern (Mr. Boldt) rose and I think left some incorrect impressions with relation to pensions. He made some comments about the Member from Hanley (Mr. Mostoway) getting a pension of \$8,000 a year when he leaves this House and if he is successful in staying here for a while. He would have to be here a mighty long time. In fact, few, if any, Members of this House will ever draw \$8,000 a year pension in terms of the MLAs' pension fund. The individual would have to have at least 25 or 26 sessions and that's pretty difficult to accomplish. I should like to point out that I was here from 1964 to 1967, I left involuntarily, I might say, and came back in 1971 and 36 of the 59 Members who were here in 1967 when I left had departed. Two of us did return, Mr. Larson from Pelly and myself. I might just use an example to illustrate the point. A Member who had been a Member of the Federal House for a period of time and was in this House for a period of time and even sat as a Cabinet Minister (Sandy Nicholson from Saskatoon) does not draw any pension from this Legislature. He did not qualify in terms of the regulations related to the number of sessions he sat in this House. Frankly, I think that is one of the basic things wrong with our pensions. Individuals should get pensions for their period of service. When we get worried about the fact that some individual may end up with too large a pension we should realize the income tax system taxes a goodly portion of those funds. I can cite many cases of individuals who have sat in this House who are in pretty severe financial circumstances due to the fact that the pension fund really is not accomplishing what it set out to do.

I should like to say that Mr. Boldt, in my opinion, had one point in his favor in terms of his remarks when he mentioned that flat rate increases had some serious defects. They do. It is quite obvious if Members think about the situation that there are some clear defects in a flat rate pension increase. Obviously this is true because the man living in Corner Brook, Newfoundland can live much more cheaply than the man living in Toronto or Montreal. In fact when the Canada Pension Plan was initiated, and incidentally that was a plan expounded by the former leader of the CCF, Mr. M. J. Coldwell, back as far as 1945, and if you want to check the record you will find 11 out of the 12 sections of the program he presented at that time later became law in the Canada Pension Plan. The purpose of the Plan was to have an earnings related plan which would eventually prevent the necessity of giving increases related to the Old Age Security on a flat rate basis. Also I think Members should clearly keep in mind that the Old Age Pension Security Fund has a tax base and it receives payments from income tax and sales tax at the federal level and the pension must therefore bear some relationship to the payments that are made into that fund.

I noticed that one of the Members speaking recently made some comment with respect to retirement at an earlier age. I certainly agree with that, but I must also point out that there are costs involved here that we should be aware of. I think it

was mentioned that males should be retired at 60 under the Canada Pension Plan and females at 58. I hope women's groups won't be against me in terms of this remark but that is not realistic because in actual fact women are not the weaker sex. They are tougher and they last longer and the costs are greater in terms of retiring women than they are in terms of retiring men. The only thing that women can do about it is to die off earlier and that is not a very bright prospect.

Insofar as the Resolution itself is concerned, although I feel it has defects and I have mentioned this in terms of my comments, I would support it in a general way because of the necessity of attempting to keep up with the very heavy inflationary trend that we have in our country. Obviously there are people who are caught very severely in terms of this sort of thing. The Member from Rosthern (Mr. Boldt) has mentioned the fact that some people will get fairly substantial pensions but that can be and is taxed back through the income tax rate. In a general way, of course, I support the Resolution but I ask Members realistically to face up to the facts in relation to pensions and I point out once again, that unless we get to the stage where we actually pay a pension for the period of service with the money set aside for that pension on a vested basis owned by the employee and locked in for that purpose payable at pensionable age, we will not solve pension problems.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D. M. McPherson: — (Regina Lakeview) Mr. Speaker, there will be more said about this and there are several Members on this side who want to speak on the amendment and on the Resolution. I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed Resolution by Mr. E. F. Gardner (Moosomin):

That this Assembly urge the Federal Government to:

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

And the proposed amendment thereto by the Hon. Mr. Romanow (Attorney General):

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

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, British Columbia 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.

Mr. E. F. Gardner: — (Moosomin) Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate on this job when you lose your voice but after the Attorney General spoke on this Resolution the other day I feel that I should say a few words. I should like to re-emphasize our position and make it clear on this particular resolution. We are not suggesting that this is the answer to all our present and future grain moving problems.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I think the Hon. Member rose before I got this motion straightened out. He was the original mover of the motion and now the Hon. Member is closing the debate, so if any Member wishes to speak before the Hon. Member they would have to do so now. I don't know whether I proposed that question.

Mr. Gardner: — Well, I was a little disappointed I though perhaps some of them would speak, Mr. Speaker. We are not suggesting that this particular resolution is the answer to all our present and future grain-handling problems. We feel that this is one of quite a number of proposals that deserve very close scrutiny, one of a very large number. We realize that some problems could be involved and we didn't dwell on these in the debate but certainly there would be a few problems that would have to be worked out. The Crows Nest Pass rates may not apply to the B. C. Railroad and this would have to be done by negotiation. There are some problems perhaps with conservationists who object to ships moving up Howe Sound so close to Vancouver. But we had hoped that this motion could be passed and supported by all Members.

We are disappointed that the Government Members and especially the Attorney General (Mr. Romanow) felt that it was necessary to play political games with this particular resolution.. We were amused by the Attorney General's speech and if you will recall the other day, Mr. Speaker, he got up in this House and off the cuff made quite a speech on this particular motion. We were amused but we were enlightened. We were amused when he stood there with the Debates and Proceedings in his hand and talked about the terrible things that the Member from Moosomin and the Member from Cannington (Mr. Weatherald) had said in the debate last year. Then he proceeded to quote a bit from the Member from Milestone (Mr. MacDonald), something that he had said. Then he pointed to the Member from Moosomin and the Member from Cannington and called us the gold dust twins and again re-emphasized the terrible things we had said last year in this particular debate. Then again he quoted the Member from Lumsden (Mr. Lane) and told what he said in the debate. But he neglected to quote what I said in the debate and, of course, for a very good reason. He had the record of the debate in his hand and he knew, Mr. Speaker, that I had not spoken in this debate at all. He must have known because he was waving the Debates and Proceedings around. I should like to ask you, Mr. Speaker, what does this do for the credibility of the Attorney General? Now we could have got up and objected because both the Member for

Cannington and myself knew that we hadn't said a word in this debate. But really in doing this he was making our case. He was proving that his credibility was low, he was proving that his mention of this railroad last year just wasn't believable. He was proving that if official sources were seriously going to look at this proposal then the suggestion would have to come from someone with some credibility, not someone who would get up and wave the Debates and Proceedings and talk about the terrible things that we had said, when he knew very well we hadn't spoken in the debate.

Of course, this is why we introduced the Resolution in the first place. We wanted to lend some credibility to this particular suggestion. We have made our point, the records of the House will show our position on this particular resolution. We are, of course, not going to vote for the childish amendment introduced by the Attorney General. We regret that this proposal is going to be denied unanimous approval because of the meaningless, political tampering of the Attorney General. The NDP have destroyed a good resolution for political reasons and it shows perhaps that they really don't care about the grain movement or the problems at the West Coast. This Resolution certainly deserved better treatment than it was given by the Attorney General in this debate and I am sure that all the people in Saskatchewan will agree with this. However, as I have stated, we have made our position clear, we have given credibility to a very worthwhile project. This is what we intended to do and I believe we have succeeded.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed Resolution by Mr. G. B. Grant (Regina Whitmore Park):

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 position 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.

Hon. W. E. Smishek: — (Minister of Health) Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park pleaded with us that he wanted the debate on this Resolution to be non-political. Let me quote him:

March 20, 1973

I am going to do my level best to keep this on a non-political plane. I feel that the matter is of such importance I do not feel it should be kicked around in the Press by me.

He went on to say that, "We need an investigation, let's have an impartial one."

Does he really believe that a legislative committee could or would be impartial or would be non-political, Mr. Speaker? I doubt that he as the mover of the Resolution can possibly be convinced that such a committee could be impartial or non-political. I doubt whether it could be possible, Mr. Speaker, to constitute any more highly partisan and political committee than what he has proposed.

Mr. Speaker, listening to part of his address and reading the whole text of the speech he made on Friday, March 2nd, I really doubt very much whether he is convinced about getting up such a committee. In fact I doubt whether the Resolution is really his idea. Mr. Speaker, I have a feeling that the Hon. Member is somewhat embarrassed about this Resolution.

Members will have observed that shortly after this Session opened the Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart) advised this House that the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park (Mr. Grant) had made a trip to North Battleford and was making another trip for further investigations at the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. It is instructive to observe that he did not report on his investigation. That in itself tells the story perhaps better than I can describe. I note, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Member made two trips to North Battleford, the second trip was on February 14th. He arrived at the North Battleford Hospital at about 3:45 in the afternoon unaccompanied and left 25 minutes later. I wonder how one can possibly make an investigation of such a large institution as the North Battleford Hospital and be able to become informed within a period of 25 minutes, Mr. Speaker. I know that from my own experience, I have been there on three separate occasions and have spent several hours on every visit and there is still a lot that I have to learn about the particular hospital. Apparently, the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park arrived and within 25 minutes became fully knowledgeable.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Hon. Member was there on two occasions, he made that confession. It is interesting that during his two investigations he did not find any scandals, he did not find any political interference, no staff purges, no dismissals, Mr. Speaker. He found a well run institution. He found a hospital with provisional accreditation, with a much improved staff to patient ratio. I believe the Hon. Member would like to see the debate conducted on a non-political plane. The Hon. Member in his remarks said if I may quote him again:

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.

I agree. But he must also agree that we did not raise this particular issue, it was the Leader of the Opposition who first of all raised the particular question. Mr. Grant went on to say:

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.

I concede that he did push for improvements in the physical plant which did help to obtain provisional accreditation. I am also aware of the difficulties he had in obtaining funds for improving facilities. The people of Saskatchewan know very well that improving health services for the people had a low priority among his colleagues when he was in the Cabinet. Therefore, he does deserve perhaps special thanks for his efforts and I do commend him.

Mr. Speaker, I want to draw to the attention of the House that in the current Estimates in the Department of Government Services we are providing \$1.8 million in the current budget for the improvement of facilities that are provincially run institutions. This is for the physical plant improvements including improvements at the North Battleford Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know which Liberal Member of the Opposition I should listen to and from whom I should take advice. I do not know which one of them enunciates Liberal policies. The Hon. Member for Moose Jaw North (Mr. MacDonald) the Liberal health critic is opposed to legislative committees. In fact last July, if you recall, he said that the legislative and intersessional committees were a waste of his time and a waste of public funds. He said that he would refuse to sit on intersessional committees. This is the Liberal health critic. But on the other hand the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park, the former Minister of Health, is saying let's have more of such committees. Whom are we to listen to and what is the Liberal policy really all about?

Mr. Speaker, I should like to be as non-political as possible in this debate, this I shall attempt to do. While I agree that during his remarks the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park was not very provocative, his leader on the other hand did not follow that same kind of role when he talked about the North Battleford hospital or our mental health programs. Some of his remarks over the last few months have been highly political, his speeches inside and outside the Legislature and his statements to the Press have in many cases been misleading and damaging to the psychiatric programs in the province. I feel that I do have a responsibility to set the record straight. Mr. Speaker, I am also compelled to speak in defence of my department and the institution at North Battleford and the staff at North Battleford.

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member made reference to an article that appeared in the North Battleford News Optimist on February 9th. In any organization, it is normal to have problems, especially an organization as large as the Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford. With over 500 staff, one is constantly striving to improve services. There have been many channels of communications established so that every staff member can bring his suggestions forward for action.

It is odd that if things are so bad as reported by Mr. Bowers that these complaints were not brought to the attention of the executive director, or through other regular nursing channels,

or through the union officers, as grievances, or through the suggestion box that is there for the employees to use. The only way that Mr. Bowers chose to bring his ideas is through the Press. It is also interesting to note that while Mr. Bowers thinks things are so bad he has failed to communicate his complaints to anyone. He knows full well that he can write and communicate with the Minister, I have never received any communications from Mr. Bowers. Apparently some people prefer to have publicity to practical approaches to problems.

Mr. Grant's friend claims credit for all the great changes at the hospital which have been taken by management. This is nonsense, Mr. Speaker. All staff are involved in successful changes. Credit must certainly be given to all staff involved in changes over the last year, which led to the hospital being awarded provisional accreditation.

The patients whom we serve do not particularly care about who claims credit for the reforms. Patients are just pleased to see that there are reforms. They are pleased today to be able to wear their own clothes instead of the institutional issues. They can now smoke without having to ask staff members for matches. They can now read and write personal letters without having them censored by the staff. They can now eat in a modern cafeteria.

However, very few psychiatric nurses are as naïve as Mr. Bowers, who implies that all the great changes at the hospital would have taken place sooner than they did, if psychiatric nurses had been given, as he says, the right to think and function. Mr. Speaker, I am sure no one has denied any of the psychiatric nurses the right of thought and the right to function in delivering good service to the patients.

Such changes have been and must be a team effort to be a success among the nurses, the doctors, seamstresses, the occupational therapists, the electricians and, in fact, all classifications have contributed and are contributing toward improved services at North Battleford.

Mr. Steuart knows perfectly well that some of the many great reforms would have been long delayed had it not been for the leadership of such men as the late Dr. Lawson, just to name one of them.

Psychiatric nurses in Saskatchewan are probably the best trained in Canada. They have helped make the Saskatchewan psychiatric services emulated throughout the world. They are, for the most part unlike Mr. Bowers, who works to tear down what has taken a lot of staff to build up over many years.

In fact it is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that with all the problems we have with our psychiatric services, and I concede that there are problems, it is interesting that people from all over North America and people from all over Canada still come to Saskatchewan to look at the Saskatchewan Psychiatric Services Plan and concede and praise it as still being a leader in Canada and in North America.

Now the Hon. Leader of the Opposition claims that resignations at North Battleford were too high. In fact, during the 1972 period resignations ran about 9 per cent which is not excessive when compared to previous years. For example, in 1969

the rate was 11 per cent. In fact, when you compare the resignations and staff changes, in most cases a normal turnover, it doesn't compare that badly with the entire public service and I am sure not badly with private industry in this province and in other places.

Mr. Bowers in his article claims that morale amongst the hospital staff is at an all-time low. He does not tell us how he assessed morale — it was probably through some inaccurate method of 'sniffing the air'. As inaccurate as some of his statements.

We have more accurate methods of testing the morale of the staff. A scientific survey was carried out by Dr. Neufelt, Director of Operations Research in November 1971 and October of 1972. The survey showed that there was no significant overall change in the morale during the past year. One group, the student nurses, declined somewhat, but this is understandable in view of the transfer of the student nurses from the Department of Public Health and Psychiatric Services to the Department of Education. There were some concerns about this transfer and perhaps it had some effect on the morale of the student nurses.

In contrast, staff in the business department showed a significant improvement in overall morale. I am told that the survey indicated that the morale at the North Battleford Hospital as a whole in the institution had improved considerably during the past year, based on the scientific studies that were conducted.

The Hon. Member for Whitmore Park has also raised the question of staff morale. I would suggest to both him and the Leader of the Opposition that the most discouraging thing to the staff over the last few weeks has been the total negative and unjustified attacks made by the Leader of the Opposition against the hospital staff at North Battleford.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at some of the other criticisms that have been made. The Leader of the Opposition says that the care of patients in the institution has declined. I say that this is a lot of nonsense and balderdash. The evidence points entirely the other way. Surely one of the first pieces of evidence on this score is the provisional accreditation of the Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford. It became the first mental hospital west of Manitoba to be provisionally accredited following an inspection in October 1972. I want to lay some stress on this because accreditation comes about only as a result of an objective inspection by outside surveyors who have absolutely no reason to be other than completely fair and completely objective.

The surveyors, Dr. Murray and Dr. Cahn, generally commented very favorably on the hospital. Their first recommendation was that the Provincial Government, administration and medical and nursing staff are to be commended for the remarkable change in the program of patient care, which has enabled such an amazing reduction in patient numbers. They went on to commend the very well organized nursing service and the good dietary services that are provided to the patients. They thought that the renovation of the physical plant had upgraded the older buildings to a very good standard. The high order of housekeeping was noted and the quality of professional and technical personnel in the treatment was praised by the assessors. Naturally there were some criticisms, but they were not of a major order or accreditation would not have been granted.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and the Member from Whitmore Park have suggested that I somehow did the wrong thing in sending my Deputy Minister and the Director of Psychiatric Services to North Battleford to look into complaints at the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford last year. Shortly after taking office, we began to receive some complaints from the staff at the hospital. In order to ascertain the veracity of those complaints, I sent senior officials to North Battleford to talk directly to members of the staff.

Two days were spent listening to problems raised by the staff. Their complaints generally concerned such items as: Uncertainty over the transfer of the Psychogeriatric Centre from the Department of Public Health to Department of Social Services. Some staff were anxious as to what the transfer would mean to them personally. Mr. Speaker, that was one of the significant complaints because some 75 staff members were to be transferred — they wanted to know about their security, about their salary, about their collective bargaining agent, their union.

Another problem was the housing question. The Hon. Member from Whitmore Park will know a number of the staff occupy the housing that is around the hospital. There is also the apartment. The housing is becoming somewhat run down, it needs repair, the same thing applies in case of the apartment. We have had representations and I am sure that he has had representations from the North Battleford community that people who are working at the hospital at North Battleford and the Weyburn hospital should no longer be provided for by the Government and that the people be moved into the community so that they can mingle more with the people in these cities and make their overall contribution by way of taxes and participate more in the life of the community. I know he had that kind of representation and I have had them.

The fourth problem that was raised was the car take-home privileges for persons on stand-by duty.

The fifth question was that of staff uniforms. At one time uniforms were provided but because of changes many of the staff have been encouraged to wear the clothes they normally wear, their street clothes, in the institutions so as to create more of a homey atmosphere rather than an institutional atmosphere.

The sixth question was one which the former Government deliberately created by their own action, was that of the salary increment policy. Salary increments were denied as you may recall in 1970-71 to a lot of the staff. In fact, there was a deliberate policy of denying 25 per cent of the staff increments, three people received increment increases while the fourth one was told that he couldn't have the increase.

I later held a meeting with both union and management officials to discuss all these questions and items that have been raised. First, we met separately with the union and management, then we had a joint meeting. Our discussions were frank and open. I think this whole process helped to pinpoint the real problem areas and gave us some guidance for a better relationship in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition charges that a number of persons were appointed to the hospital because of political consideration. The Leader of the Opposition submitted the names of four people and implied that they somehow came by their appointment through influence of Members of the Legislature. Mr. Speaker, I regret that the Leader of the Opposition isn't here. And I would ask the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park to take particular note of this because I think it is important that the Leader of the Opposition get a full report on these particular appointments. I think that it is unfortunate that he raised names of people but now that he has raised them I want to clear their names and point out the way these people were appointed.

He raised the name of Jack Degenstine — this man was appointed on a temporary basis to the position of kitchen assistant on November 2, 1972, due to the immediate need for additional help in the kitchen. Why was he so appointed? Because he had seemed to be a satisfactory employee while on a temporary basis working in the kitchen during the period — and I want the Hon. Member to take note — during the period April 1, 1970 to April 30, 1971. He was first hired for a full year on a temporary basis by the former administration, a period when the Member opposite was the Minister in charge. Mr. Degenstine again served on a temporary basis from May 15 to June 30, 1972. Mr. Degenstine was interviewed initially by Miss Dodds, Dietitian, and Mr. Simpson, Supervisor of Personnel.

The name of Mr. Andre Duvelle has also been raised. This man was appointed on a probationary basis on September 1, 1972 and his services were terminated on February 16, 1973. He was a probationary employee, he did not fulfill his probationary period satisfactorily and in keeping with the collective bargaining agreement his services were terminated.

The classification was general duty personnel and Mr. Duvelle was one of nine persons certified for the position out of a total of 47 applicants responding to an advertisement in the local paper. He was interviewed by a panel consisting of Mrs. Thompson, Executive Housekeeper, Mr. F. Simpson, the Supervisor of Personnel, this same man was there prior to my taking office. The same thing is true of Mrs. Thompson. Mr. R. Wallin, a union representative was present in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement. As a general duty personnel he was assigned housekeeping duties. His qualifications were Grade X education and he did work for a period of about two weeks in the kitchen in the summer of 1972, prior to his full time appointment in September.

The name of Miss Evelyn Ruso was another name raised by the Leader of the Opposition. She was appointed as a probationary Nurses Aide II. Her classification came about as result of advertising. Miss Ruso was interviewed on July 27, 1972, by a panel consisting of Mrs. Keogh, Assistant Director of Nursing, Mr. Simpson and Mr. Stade, a union representative was present. In this case a total of 54 applications were received and 18 people were hired as a result of this advertisement. She was one of many people that were hired during that period. Her qualifications include Grade Twelve which is certainly adequate for a nurses aide position.

Mr. Speaker, reference was also made to a pending promotion of Mr. Warren Sprecker. Mr. Sprecker became a student in the

March 20, 1973

psychiatric nurses training programs on October 30, 1953. He graduated as a psychiatric nurse on January 1, 1957, and from 1957 to 1973 has been a psychiatric nurse. He is being assigned to floating duties in shift rotation because of his years of seniority, as are five other nursing staff members.

The selection was made in accordance with seniority provision of the union agreement. This reassignment of duty doesn't involve any changes in reclassification or any change in pay. The only thing that happened is that he will now be on rotation, rather than on permanent shift. Yet somehow the Leader of the Opposition dragged in this man's name and implied that he was a political appointee. This man has been with the North Battleford Hospital since 1953, a period of 20 years, Mr. Speaker.

Let's look at these appointments. A temporary kitchen assistant, a probationary general duty clerk and a nurse's aide. In all cases, posting took place at the hospital and at other locals of C. U. P. E. simultaneously with the advertisement as is required in the collective bargaining agreement. Appointments were processed following the Public Service regulations and procedures.

Do these appointments suggest influence? Indeed not, Mr. Speaker! The facts prove that the accusations are entirely without foundations.

By contrast, Mr. Speaker, let us look for a moment at some examples of Liberal hiring procedures in the institutions being run by the Provincial Government. I give you an example of what the Liberals were doing.

Well, here is an appointment that was made on June 24, 1971 — June 24, a day after the election, a day after the Liberals were defeated.

Here is one Maxwell Joseph Jerome appointed by Order-in-Council to the position of electrician at the Saskatchewan Training School at Prince Albert. I have a copy of that Order-in-Council in my hand. The Order-in-Council notes that the salary is to be paid from May 18, 1971. That was just shortly before the election was called. There was no competition, there was no interviewing panel, the position was not advertised — a fairly typical Liberal way of appointing people.

That may seem like a strange way to appoint staff, Mr. Speaker, but then we all know that the Hon. Member for Prince Albert made many special appointments. In fact, in the case of the Prince Albert Training School the Hon. Leader of the Opposition always assisted the management in hiring staff. In fact, I am told that at the Prince Albert Training School no one could possibly be hired by the management without first being screened by the Provincial Treasurer of that day.

Mr. Speaker, here is another appointment that is very interesting that was made of a personnel director at the former hospital in Weyburn. His name was Mr. Griffen. What were his qualifications? Well, he was a mink rancher. He was about 62 or 63 years of age. He had never had any personnel experience, but he had one important experience, he was the president of the Liberal Party in that constituency for many years, and for many years was the organizer and key person in the Liberal organization. He was appointed by Order-in-Council in April of

1971. He had two important things to do and that was to assist the Liberal Party in their campaign and particularly among the hospital employees and the next thing he was doing was sitting at his desk and smoking cigars.

You know the Liberals have had lots to say during this Session and the previous session about defeated candidates being given jobs. I want to remind the Opposition that when an engineer was required at Moose Jaw at the Training School, they hired a painter. His main qualifications were that he was a defeated Liberal candidate.

May I cite another example. They say that we have appointed some people who were candidates for the NDP. The man whom I have made reference to from Moose Jaw is still being employed by the Moose Jaw Training School. Another person who is in my department who was a Liberal candidate is an Education Director of the Alcoholism Commission, and was a defeated candidate, in fact ran against the Premier at one time.

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park (Mr. Grant) in his resolution has also raised the question of staff changes since July of 1971. There have, of course, been some changes in staff just as there were in 1969 and 1970 as a result of resignations and terminations. I have already said that in 1969 there was the highest turnover that was ever recorded in that hospital. But I challenge the Opposition to show any case where political motivation entered the appointments.

Now the major staff change that was made was the appointment of Dr. John Gray as Executive Director following the resignation of Dr. Poulakakis. I hardly think that we can be accused of political bias on the part of John Gray. After all he was hired in 1966, during the former administration. He has been with the department since that time. It was my feeling that we should have a non-medical director and I gather that the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park agrees that we should be hiring professional administrative people rather than medical people. This is what we also did in case of Weyburn, in the Souris Valley Hospital. We did hire a non-medical person, a person who was in the government service since 1966. This was because I felt that we should free the chief psychiatrist of the hospital in order to carry out the active practice of psychiatry, rather than being worried by such administrative problems as sewage lagoons and operating a laundry and other non-medical matters.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I can advise this House that it was early last March when I met with Dr. Poulakakis. We discussed the hospital and it was his idea that he would serve the institution better by practicing psychiatry, devoting his time to the medical and psychiatric practice rather than be the administrator.

So the change was made with full discussion, with full consultation in this case. The qualifications of Dr. Gray who was a non-medical doctor are excellent. He has a degree in philosophy from the University of London. He has broad experience in administration. He also has other courses, including psychology, which I think will be helpful in his work.

In terms of staff changes since July 1971, I can tell you that there were only 450 resignations or terminations for the whole of 1971, this out of a total staff of 585 is a ratio of 6.8 per cent. For 1972, I have already given the figures.

March 20, 1973

On the matter of the ratio of staff to patients, may I point out that in the period 1958-69 we had an average daily census of 828 patients and a total staff of 629. This gave us a ratio of one staff member to 1.32 patients. As of December 1972, the average daily census was 373 and a total staff establishment of 551. This gives a ratio of one person to only .68 patients. Surely this is a tremendous change and this is an indication of our desire to provide better services to the patients.

Mr. Speaker, let us turn for a moment to some of the other unfounded charges that the Leader of the Opposition has made. I also want to deal with the first part of the Resolution that the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park has proposed.

The first part of the Resolution deals with program changes in the Saskatchewan Hospital since we took office. I do not feel there were many sudden changes that he really pointed out nor were there any sudden changes that have been made. Certainly the open door policy, which has been criticized by the Opposition, was a gradual development over many years. This idea is very often misunderstood. The whole idea is to give patients more freedom and responsibility, but the policy is not, and never has been a selective opening of doors in areas where this was felt to be in the best interest of the patients.

A great deal has been made of the tragic cases of a very few persons who wanted out of the hospital and subsequently died. But it must be remembered that this kind of tragic event has never been avoidable no matter what precautions are taken. The incidents that have taken place, in the last year cannot be counted as if it is the only time that they have taken place.

I look to the example of July 1965, a man escaped from the North Battleford Hospital and his body was not found by the hunters until November 11, 1966, a year and some months later.

To give another example, a lady escaped on June 10, 1967, and her body was not found until November 10, 1967. These kinds of incidents then and now are continuing to be problems. People escape from even the most closely guarded institutions. People escape from jails, from prison, and they escaped from war camps and concentration camps.

I think it is shameful of the Opposition to use such incidents, tragic as they are, to smear the very excellent overall program of the hospital. As the Opposition well knows, we could bring up a number of names which made the headlines during the years they were in government, names which strike terror into the hearts of people of this province. I have no wish, Mr. Speaker, to resort to that kind of gutter politics as the Leader of the Opposition has already resorted to.

It is sufficient to point out that the number of deaths at the hospital has steadily declined each year. As an example, in 1969 there were 95 deaths at the hospital. Last year there were 31 — less than one-third the number of deaths just four years previously. Admittedly there are fewer patients. The hospital staff has done an excellent job of reducing the death toll. They deserve better than Liberal mud-slinging for their efforts, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, I should now like to turn to the Liberal record between 1964 and 1971, in the case of psychiatric services.

Now the Leader of the Opposition several weeks ago said

We ran into the same problems and the same criticism when you people were on this side of the House. We then hired a man called Dr. Frazier. We commissioned him to carry out the report and he did it. We brought into effect most of his recommendations. That report was not a favorable report. It did cast some aspersions on what we were doing.

Well, the Leader of the Opposition put it rather mildly. The report did, indeed, cast aspersions on what they were doing. I would remind you that it was not the only report that came out during the Liberal regime.

In 1966 they set up an Ad Hoc Committee on the resettlement of the mentally ill. This Committee came up with severe criticism of the program. Next year following the massacre of nine people by a patient discharged a few days prior from the North Battleford Hospital, they called in Dr. Frazier and he wrote a very critical report about the program.

The next year, 1968, Mr. Prefontaine was brought in and produced a third report which contained many criticisms. You say you implemented many of the recommendations of the Frazier Report. In fact, there were 47 recommendations — 22 of those recommendations were completely ignored. Others were partially implemented. You adopted only a little better than half of the recommendations of the Frazier Report.

I say you conveniently forgot about some of them. What happened to the Research and Training Centre to accommodate the mentally ill criminals? Nothing but a series of long drawn out and fruitless negotiations with Ottawa. What happened to Dr. Frazier's recommendations about the pension plan, the incentive pay and the possibility of contract employment? What became of the Commission for psychiatric services with the commissioner as a qualified psychiatrist reporting directly to the Minister of Public Health?

These are only a few of the recommendations which were ignored. I will admit that following the Frazier Report significant improvements in the community program were made, but it took a great deal of public criticism to bring those about. I suggest to you that some of these tragic incidents might have been avoided had the response to the community pressures come faster and earlier.

The Leader of the Opposition boasts of what was done following the Frazier Report. Now, Mr. Speaker, the official records show a different side of the story and cast really more doubt on what the Leader was trying to tell us the other day.

A fine example of what the Liberal Government actually did is contained in the Treasury Board Minute of July 17, 1969 — Treasury Minute 5299. I want to read paragraph five to you from the Minute. I quote:

It was agreed that for 1969-70 a sum of a half a million dollars should appear specifically in the printed Estimates as an amount to be allocated for the implementation of the Frazier Commission Report. It would be understood, however, that of this amount only \$250,000 should be spent in 1969-70.

Mr. Speaker, you will note in the Estimates they showed \$500,000 but they had already previously decided what would be spent was only half of that amount. Mr. Speaker, the other half would be frozen. The record shows that really the only amount that was spent was \$250,000 yet they led this Legislature and the people of Saskatchewan to believe that they were going to be spending \$500,000 for implementing the Frazier Report. I can cite more of such examples, Mr. Speaker.

In concluding, Mr. Speaker, in a period of 20 months we have done certain things to improve the psychiatric services program:

1. We have successfully brought about provisional accreditation of the Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford.
2. We converted a part of the Saskatchewan Hospital at Weyburn into the Souris Valley Extended Care Hospital and proceeded with planning to build a new psychiatric centre in Weyburn.
3. We took a portion of the old Saskatchewan Hospital, North Battleford, and converted it into a modern nursing home.
4. The number of mental hospital deaths has declined in the last year.
5. We increased staff-patient ratios at the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford.
6. We strengthened community programs.
7. At the present time we are working things through with the officials in this city of developing a new psychiatric centre in the city of Regina.

You have seen the report of Dr. Clarkson recommending a 60-bed unit. Hopefully the General Hospital Board, the city council and the South Saskatchewan Hospital Board now have had a chance to study this report. I am anxious to see that we do move as rapidly as we can in trying to develop a new psychiatric centre in Regina, because the Monroe Wing is completely out of date and it is no longer a suitable facility for treating mentally ill patients.

8. We have improved the staffing at the Moose Jaw Training School for the retarded and intend to further strengthen that particular institution.

I need hardly remind the Members of the transfer of the Prince Albert and the Moose Jaw Training Schools to Core Services, whereby we'll have an input from the Department of Social Services, Department of Education and the Department of Public Health to provide better services for the mentally retarded.

9. We have improved the psychiatric nurses training program. We have substantially improved the salaries of psychiatrists. I have already indicated that the salary level ranges from \$22,000 to \$39,000 for psychiatrists in this province, which I believe is a reasonably good wage.

You know in the years from 1958 to 1967 only 41.3 per cent of all the students enrolled in the three nursing programs graduated; whereas at the present time with us developing the new approach to psychiatric nurses training, we have an indication that between 77 to 80 per cent of those will continue with their courses and be able to complete them and thus relieve the pressure for badly needed psychiatric nursing staff from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the total expenditures for psychiatric services in the last year of the Liberal administration it totalled \$16.9 million spent on programs for the mentally ill and the mentally retarded. In order to make a direct comparison with today we have to take into account the budget of the Souris Valley Extended Care Hospital, the Riverside Home at North Battleford, as well as the training schools and we will find that this year in the Budget, the expenditure will be over \$20.5 million, or within a period of less than two years, we have increased the expenditure for the mentally retarded and the mental health program by 21.5 per cent. I think that in itself shows that we are prepared to spend money to improve programs for the mentally sick.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I also acknowledge that there are problems in our psychiatric program. One of our biggest problems is to be able to get a sufficient number of Canadian certified psychiatrists. This is a problem that has not only been here for the last twenty months. I'm sure the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park (Mr. Grant) will concede that during the seven years that they were in office, they faced the same kind of a problem and that problem was there prior to them taking office.

First of all, we, in Canada, are not training enough psychiatrists for our needs. Psychiatry is somewhat a new field of medicine. There is more demand to provide services, it is a field of medicine that is expanding. Our universities are not graduating enough psychiatrists in this country. Most of our psychiatrists come from countries other than our own; they come from nations whose cultures are different than ours. This too creates a problem for them, for the patients and for the families of the patients.

I already have had discussions, on several occasions, with the College of Medicine. This is an area where our universities, our College of Medicine has a major responsibility since we are spending in the order of \$6 million a year on medical education. I think it is fair for the Government to insist that the university start producing the kind of people that we need so that we can deliver a better health service for our people. In the case of psychiatrists there is a shortage to which there is no easy solution. We are trying to recruit, we are particularly trying to recruit Canadian certified psychiatrists.

Mr. Speaker, I want to return to the subject matter of this Resolution. The history of psychiatric care is full of investigation committees over the years. In looking at the records

I find that the first investigation committee that was set up was somewhere about 1918 to investigate the psychiatric program in our mental hospitals which were established in the province at that time.

I cannot but feel concern, however, when I know that these committees seem to be called into action after a particular crisis. I do not intend to continue the Liberal tradition of making changes, setting up committees, on a crisis to crisis basis. Rather, we feel that problems should be anticipated in advance and steps taken to meet them before they do occur. I believe that there is not the slightest need for an investigation committee, particularly the kind of a committee that is suggested by the Hon. Member to look into the North Battleford Hospital. More than that, I feel that the resolution itself, casts an unwelcome slur on the very fine efforts that have been made by the staff of that hospital needs to be investigated. I have given you the facts, which I believe refute the allegations of the Members of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore move an amendment to Resolution No. 11.

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

the staff and management of the Saskatchewan Hospital, North Battleford, be commended for their efforts in bringing about positive changes in the hospital which have led to its recognition by the Canadian Council on Hospital Accreditation as the first mental hospital west of the Province of Manitoba to receive provisional accreditation.

Hon. E. Kramer: — (Minister of Highways) Mr. Speaker, I have very little left to say after that statement of the Minister of Health (Mr. Smishek). I certainly hope after those facts have been placed before the House, those well-chosen words of the Minister of Health, that those people across the floor and especially the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart) would stop trying to trade in tragedy.

This is exactly what they chose to do when those unfortunate incidents occurred last summer.

Liberals seem to have difficulty in understanding any situation, Mr. Speaker. They seek revenge for criticism that I levelled at them when they were in office. Then the situation, Mr. Speaker, was vastly different. Let me point out to the former Minister of Health and they can pass it on to the Leader of the Opposition who is out stumping the country now with some more falsifications of facts.

Let me tell them that when I criticized them for their program, or their lack of one, it wasn't a case of people walking away or escaping, it was a case of people who were known psychopaths being pushed out by that administration and completely ignoring the danger to the public.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Kramer: — That is where they stand accused and it is a vastly different situation today. I told the Minster (the Leader of the Opposition), the former Minister of Health, the former Provincial Treasurer, early in this Session that if he didn't produce some facts that I would be forced to brake the rules of this House and call him a liar. In fact, the facts that were given regarding appointments, which he said I was making, those alleged facts have now been brought forward indicating, Mr. Speaker, that I should be breaking the rules of this House. In fact, I don't know, but I would say that it would be unparliamentary for me to call him a liar, but he was not telling the truth and it ads up to the same thing. He knew he was not telling the truth when he made those statements at North Battleford. I'm not concerned with what he says at North Battleford, because he is the laughing stock of North Battleford, because people know, even Liberal appointments there are laughing at the statements made by Mr. Steuart. They are laughing because they've never been interfered with, they know they are political appointments and they still have their jobs.

Mr. Romanow: — What!

Mr. Kramer: — Oh yes, oh yes! Unfortunately! Frankly, I think for all the use that some of them are they ought to be fired. If we did fire them we would have to keep them on social aid anyway because they are not fit to work at anything useful.

Mr. Weatherald: — What about . . .

Mr. Kramer: — That's true of some of you appointments — that's the value of some of your appointments.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, and I want to say this, that if these people would just stop talking for a while and start listening, they are always talking when they ought to be listening. They should know the difference between an honest mistake on the part of the staff and that was an honest mistake when our poor friend walked out in below zero weather. I criticized that too, I think they should be watched closer, but as the Minister of Health has said they do escape. But I hope this Minister of Health or any Minister of Health of this Government will not be guilty at any time of forcing people out. I know of one poor old man who is in that institution, who begged not to be put out because he didn't trust himself, and tragedy did occur. His family will never, never, get over, nor he, because he just had that particular bent and that particular psychopathic tendency. He begged to be allowed to remain, but he was pushed out. That's the difference, Mr. Speaker. There will be other tragedies, there's no doubt in the world that there will be people who will escape from prison, there will be people who were former patients who will probably commit crimes — I recommend this to the Minster of Health and I have said this to him before — that we must take care and seclude the known psychopath. It's bad enough to have people at large who are potentially dangerous and anybody could be potentially dangerous but once they have proven their irresponsibility and those dangerous tendencies, I believe that society must keep them as kindly and as safely as possible away from those areas that they are hell-bent to move into. I say hell-bent because that's the only way you can describe these psychopaths.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to say too that I'm not entirely happy with the present program and I don't mind repeating that again. I'm not happy with the Saskatchewan Plan. I'm not happy with the system of boarding out these patients. I know that there are a lot of good homes, but I know that there are still and there were homes in 1970, '71, '72, and 1973 that are taking advantage of boarding patients; where they are collected the board money and working them as well. There is just no way you can police this. I recommend very, very careful surveillance by the Minister of Health in these cases.

I believe that in retrospect we probably had better care and safer care when we had the farm and the livestock and an atmosphere where those people at the Saskatchewan Hospital were kept occupied and kept happy. They were far happier, Mr. Speaker, than some of the people who are boarding out and sitting around in cellars and attics today and yesterday and since the so-called Saskatchewan Plan became completely bent on getting people out at all costs; it became a fetish when these people opposite were in power. I am not blaming — and I want to make this very clear — I am not entirely blaming the former Minister of Health (Mr. Grant) who is sitting opposite, and I think this is a warning to the Minister of Health, some of the same people that advise him are still around advising the present Minister of Health. I believe that we have got to take some second looks. Sometimes it may not be so much of a tragedy that we don't find as many of these professionals available to give us advice. I think we have to take a careful look at some of the advice we get from the high-paid help in any area because we had better remember that whether it be in psychiatry or medicine or even highways sometimes they forget to relate to common sense and people. We have to remember that it is the people out there, the taxpayers, wherever they may be, those ordinary Joes all around Saskatchewan to make the final judgment. If those advisors don't measure up or if the Minister takes the wrong advice from them, he is going to get the blame not the man behind him. The Minister is on the firing line.

I don't think, Mr. Speaker, that an investigation is necessary at this time. I believe that things are improving and I believe that the accreditation that was granted, on the same page that the criticism was printed incidentally and I raised that before, I think is some commendation. We are a long way from being out of the woods yet in psychiatric care and I certainly am not going to stand in this House and say, 'God's in his heaven and all is well with the world,' as far as psychiatric care is concerned in this province. I think we have to proceed in some of these things with the utmost caution but I wish, as I said at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that these people opposite would not try to trade on tragedy, would try to talk sense and would not come into this House with a lot of innuendo.

Mr. MacDonald: — Like you did?

Mr. Kramer: — I beg your pardon! I think the Member for Milestone says I did. The only reason and the only time I raised this issue in the House, Mr. Speaker, and the Member for Milestone knows it and the Member for Whitmore Park knows it, was after I had done everything I could, speaking to the now Leader of the Opposition trying to get him to do something about this and not to proceed post haste with Saskatchewan Plan recommendations and they went ahead anyway and laughed at me, so I had to raise it. It is a vastly different situation than somebody who escapes. These

People did not escape and the scars of those mistakes remain on many families in this province today. Those people who were forced out of that hospital left a trail of rape, murder and arson, Mr. Member for Milestone, and there is some responsibility if not all responsibility rests on those Members opposite. But I said they did it and I know they did it on advice of others and the indications are and I say again, be careful of the advice, Mr. Minister of Health. I will not support this motion.

Amendment agreed to.

The debate continues on the motion as amended.

Mr. Grant: — (Regina Whitmore Park) Mr. Speaker, I don't think I have ever listened to a debate in the House — and I hope the Hon. Member from The Battlefords doesn't leave because I want to say a few nice things about him and I wouldn't want him to miss it — I haven't heard a debate for sometime where the Members have had to resort to so many diversionary moves in order to make their point. There was very, very little said, Mr. Speaker, about the Resolution the Minister of Health made reference to briefly. Instead of that it sounded more like a Throne Speech he was making about the Health Department or speaking to his constituents about the good work he was doing. They both admitted shortcomings and for a while I almost thought the Member from The Battlefords was going to support the motion. He, and rightly so I think, expressed concern about several phases of the psychiatric program and particularly the Saskatchewan Plan which is really the psychiatric program, and the boarding out process which is a very vital part of that program. I remind him that I made reference to these two areas in my remarks and indicated that there were quite a number of reservations and this to me is an area that will not be corrected by the department or by the advisors the Minister has, or anyone outside of this House.

I was very careful initially to endorse what Mr. Bowers had said that both parties had been guilty of creating a smog or fog around Battleford, sometimes I dare say it has been a result of intentional smog and other times unintentional. But I don't think any party can be completely clear of responsibility as far as the North Battleford Hospital is concerned.

I think one of the concerns of the Ministers of Health in the past was money and I presume it is the same concern now because I am sure the present Minister isn't getting all the money he would like to give North Battleford or his psychiatric program. An increase of 21 per cent isn't that earth shattering over a two-budget period. But there does seem to be a bit of an apathy on the part of the MLAs and the public at large as to the care of our mentally ill. I think it is largely because people are unable to cope with it themselves and so the unfortunate person ends up in an institution and as the old saying goes, 'out of sight out of mind'. I feel that the present administration is continuing to bury its head if it does not support the motion because I think only by an inquiry of this House are we going to satisfy ourselves that the Saskatchewan Plan is the right plan, that the boarding-out program is being properly carried out. The Hon. Member for The Battlefords (Mr. Kramer) certainly doesn't think so and I don't think I do. I don't think the lady from Indian Head, whose letter I read, thinks so and I am sure the Minister doesn't think so because I

am positive he gets some complaints about this program. Now I would expect that if there were an inquiry that it would include this type of thing because the boarding out program certainly has an effect on the morale of the staff up on Battleford. It's part of the program. The open-door policy would certainly be examined and I believe before I came back to the Chambers the Minister made reference to the fact that I had only spent 25 minutes in the hospital. I think that is approximately right and I hesitated to go there at all but I felt that in all fairness to Dr. Gray I should, to let him know what I was up to. I did not go any place that he did not invite me to. Twenty minutes of that 25 was taken up looking around the institution at improvements that have been made and are being made.

I will tell you one thing that happened that day and it was below zero the day I was there, when Dr. Gray and I came to the door there was a poor male patient outside in his shirt sleeves and had been out there for some considerable time as I found out later. Between Dr. Gray and myself we got him back into the institution but why that individual did not wander away I don't know. I don't know the man's thinking but I learned afterwards that he was outside on the front steps during the entire period of my visit with Dr. Gray. Now for this man to get out of that building it required him to go by the reception desk, by Dr. Gary's office, by all the secretaries' offices and out through the front door. Now the Minister said that the open-door policy didn't mean that all the doors were open, there were selected doors. I wouldn't expect the front door of the building to be required to be locked but it seems strange that a patient of the I. Q. of this particular individual could wander by all those out for 20 or 25 minutes on a day that was below zero. I did not make mention of that previously but I feel that it is worthy in view of the discussion that has come up.

I don't think that there are very many points that the Minister brought up that are directly related to the situation in North Battleford and the problems that exist there. He knows as well as I do the problems. I indicated that they are not easy to pinpoint, they are not easy of solution and I know he is trying, I know the people of this department are trying. I really believe, as the Hon. Member from The Battlefords says, that as long as the Minister is getting the same type of advice that there is not going to be any major change in the psychiatric program in North Battleford or elsewhere.

It is all well and good for him to tell what a wonderful job the Government has done in Weyburn and in Moose Jaw and in North Battleford and these other places, and let's not kid ourselves a good many of those things were started when I was Minister. Likewise I inherited some of Mr. Steuart's activities Mr. Steuart inherited some of Mr. Blakeney's. This is natural and life goes on and none of us can take full credit of all the changes that take place. I think also that there is some considerable merit in the approach that Saskatchewan has taken over the years. Merely to say that the North Battleford Hospital has been accredited is an adoration of what is being done up there, don't satisfy me by any means, because the accreditation committee spends a relatively short time in that institution. I would say compared to the 25 minutes I spent, the time they spent on their inspection is relatively shorter. Now I am not saying they spent less than 25 minutes but they went there for a specific reason and a specific job.

I don't believe the Minister has answered the question I have on the Order Paper as to what the reservations are in the provisional accreditation which is granted the hospital. I haven't heard of that yet. I also realize that when the accreditation committee was in North Battleford they spent little or no time, and I think I am correct when I say no time, in the community and I think they spent little time on the subject of deaths as a result of people wandering away from the institution. So the accreditation program really doesn't have that much bearing on the situation that exists there.

I strongly feel that there should be a non-medical person at the head of this institution and while the Minister can classify Dr. Gray as a non-medical person, I guess he is, he is a psychologist, but I still don't think the day to day administration of that hospital should be left to a psychologist, a psychiatrist or a medical doctor, but should be the responsibility of a professional administrator which is recognized across Canada in other acute hospitals. I see no reason why mental hospitals should not be treated the same.

The other suggestion which I made at the time and I think it is worthy of the consideration of this House and by the department, is that a portion of the psychiatric program in Saskatchewan should be divorced from the Department of Public Health. I made this suggestion that a Board of Governors be set up for the North Battleford Hospital; I am not really that concerned about where it is set up but it might be a good place to start it, and get the operation of the hospital somewhat removed from the direct supervision of the psychiatric branch of the Department of Public Health. For some strange reason, and I have been as guilty as other Ministers, possibly because of advice, we feel that only the Department of Health can run a psychiatric program. I know the private psychiatrists certainly don't feel this way. I know the concern of the department officials, they say the Department of Health will end up handling all the miserable, mean cases and the private psychiatrists will only handle the easy ones. I don't think it is as simple as that. I think the psychiatrists are responsible and I believe there was some reservation made in the newspaper the other day by a local psychiatrist commenting on the psychiatric centre here in Regina.

The Minister went back to 1965 and 1967 and made reference to two escapees who were found dead some months later and classified them in the same category as those who escaped from jails. Well the only reason people escape from custody is lack of supervision and lack of care and I think it is partially due in today's society to the fact that we are certainly living in a permissive society and we are more tolerant of the movements of these people than we used to be.

I don't think it's shameful to bring up these cases. He said they could bring up cases themselves that happened when we were the Government. I seem to recall that they didn't hesitate to bring them up when they were on this side of the House. I was the brunt of quite a few of their remarks and I think this is all right partially because of those remarks and partially because of our own reaction, Dr. Frazier was selected and we didn't have to wait until the Opposition demanded the appointment of Dr. Frazier. I brought in that appointment within a few days of that sad event up there. But let's not be sanctimonious and say that they have not been guilty of bringing up these things but I really can't see much point in doing so.

The Minister cited that the number of deaths had declined. This is certainly true. I have stood up in this House and have said the same thing and it is partially the result of the lowering of the number of patients but also it is probably more directly a result of the better medical care resulting from the health plans here in Saskatchewan. He did not comment that there was any lowering of unnatural deaths and this was the point that I was making in my motion, that there has been an abnormal number of unnatural deaths in the past year.

Mr. Speaker, I don't intend to drag out this debate any longer. It is quite evident that the Members opposite wish to continue with their heads buried in the sand as far as North Battleford is concerned. They are not prepared to recognize the news stories that are emanating from there and the Member from The Battlefords may say that the Liberals are the laughing stock or their leaders are the laughing stock in North Battleford. I can tell you what, if you don't support this motion, you fellows are going to be the laughing stock of a good number of the staff members there. There is a low staff morale; there is an abnormal turnover of staff; there is unhappiness with the allocation of duties up there; there is unhappiness with the direction that is being given, not only by the head of the hospital and I am not downgrading Dr. Gray one iota; there is concern because of the direction that is coming from the Minister's office and from the Psychiatric Branch.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge the Members to support this motion, because we are not trading in tragedy as the Member from The Battlefords said. He held his temper very well until the Member for Milestone came in and he got a little hot-tongued. I want to commend him for restraining himself to the extent that he did. I think he is improving, age is mellowing him quite a bit and I am pleased to see that he stayed in the House.

I am indeed sorry everyone present did not support the motion, because I think in the long run it would be to the benefit of the North Battleford institution; not only the staff but the patients and for the welfare of the Saskatchewan Plan as a whole.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Motion as amended agreed to on the following recorded division:

Yeas — 40
Messieurs

Blakeney	Dyck	Meakes
Wood	Smishek	Romanow
Snyder	Bowerman	Kramer
Thibault	Larson	Kowalchuk
Baker	MacMurchy	Pepper
Michayluk	Byers	Thorson
Whelan	Kwasnica	Carlson
Engel	Owens	Robbins
Tchorzewski	Cowley	Matsalla
Richards	Faris	Cody
Gross	Feduniak	Mostoway
Comer	Lange	Hanson
Oliver	Feschuk	Kaeding
Flasch		

Nays — 14
Messieurs

Coupland
Grant
McIsaac
MacLeod
Macdonald (Moose Jaw N.)

Loken
Boldt
Gardner
McPherson
Wiebe

Guy
MacDonald (Milestone)
Weatherald
Lane

The Assembly adjourned at 5:30 o'clock p.m.