

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fourth Session - Seventeenth Legislature
61st Day

Tuesday, April 30, 1974.

The Assembly met at 10:00 o'clock a.m.
On the Orders of the Day.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PAGE GIRL LEAVING

MR. SPEAKER: — Before I call the Orders of the Day, I would like to advise the members that one of our page girls will be leaving us as of today; she'll be here today but will not be here tomorrow. Debbie Mitchell has taken a job with the Red Cross and we have known for some time that she would start work on the 1st of May with the Red Cross, so she'll be leaving after today. I think rather than doing the blood letting in here for the balance of the Session, Debbie will be glad to oblige any of us down there. But I do believe that all the Members will wish Debbie well in her efforts in her new employment. I am sure all Members enjoyed the service which Debbie gave at this Session.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

DISTRIBUTION OF HONEY

HON. J.R. MESSER (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I want to bring to the attention of all Hon. Members a one pound container of honey. I just noted the label reads, "VIP packets provided on behalf of the Saskatchewan Beekeepers Association." I don't know whether this means they have lowered their standards or not as far as giving away honey. At any rate I want to bring to the Members' attention a little proverb that is attached, "Who is afraid of the sting never earns the honey." Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I think that Members of the Assembly will agree with me that if beekeepers were not willing to take the risk of a few stings we certainly wouldn't have the honey industry in Saskatchewan which we now have.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I believe some of and perhaps many of the MLAs deserve a little bit of honey as well, because they sometimes subject themselves to the odd sting, not only from the Members of this Legislative Assembly, but the general public and even sometimes from myself, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure for me to make this available to the Members of the Assembly. I thought perhaps a more appropriate time would be at some difficult time during my Estimates, but I don't know whether my Estimates are ever going to come, so I thought I would break loose and make it available at this time.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

GRANT TO CATTLE BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

MR. E.F. GARDNER (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, before the

Orders of the Day I should like to ask a question of the Minister of Agriculture.

I understand this morning that some people from the Cattle Breeders' Association are meeting with your department officials regarding a grant that they have been requesting. I wonder if the Minister is aware that the Government officials have insisted that in lieu of a grant they be provided with a secretary for their association who would be a civil servant. They have shown some concern about this because they feel it would be interfering with their independence having someone from the Government actually a secretary of their association. I wonder if the Minister would consider a grant to these people, the Cattle Breeders, certainly a worthy organization, a grant in money with no strings attached so that they can hire their own secretary.

HON. J.R. MESSER (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, we would consider such a proposal and I think that is one of the reasons that my officials are now meeting with the cattlemen, certainly we have not made up our minds that a grant is not an alternative to providing secretarial services from within the Government.

CONSTRUCTION STRIKE

MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Milestone): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Snyder). I think the Minister of Labour knows that the construction industry has been struck for five weeks and that this strike is right at the height of the construction season, millions of dollars in value of projects are now idle, thousands of working people are no longer earning regular income. I wonder if the Minister of Labour could tell me, first of all, what is the total value of the projects that are shut down in the Province of Saskatchewan because of the dispute, many people do not know the magnitude of the problem and second, how many men directly and indirectly are idle because of the shutdown or strike? Could the Minister also tell me what was the precise date that this strike originated in Saskatchewan?

HON. G.T. SNYDER (Minister of Labour): — Well, I am not sure that I can answer with precision any one of the three questions that the Member has directed to me. In terms of the actual dollar value of construction, that has been interrupted, I think that is one of the intangibles because there is a direct and indirect effect any time there is a work stoppage of this nature. As far as the actual number I am sure that I can't put a precise figure on that number and the actual date it began. I can find out for the Member, I know it's in its approximate fourth week, the end of the fourth week since the construction strike actually began. There wasn't an exact beginning date with respect to all of the projects that were shut down. It began in Regina, went to Saskatoon, I believe that was the next provincial point that was affected, laterally in the city of Moose Jaw and Prince Albert. So for a precise date when the work stoppage actually began it is not easy to detail. I should say perhaps that the Deputy Minister of Labour, Mr. Ching, has been directly involved in discussions with the construction association and the various building trades. There is a meeting taking place, I believe, at this moment and

we are hopeful that before the end of the week there will be something encouraging to report.

MR. MacDONALD: — Again, a supplementary question. I find that very difficult, Mr. Minister, to understand where a strike that is probably the biggest in the history of the Province of Saskatchewan with the number of people involved and the total value of dollars that the Department of Labour and the Minister of Labour is completely unaware of the value of the projects involved and the number of people that are out of work. I think that the Minister of Labour should certainly know exactly what that dollar value is and the number of people involved.

MR. SPEAKER: — Will the Member ask his question and not make a statement please?

MR. MacDONALD: — My supplementary question. I heard a news report on Friday that the construction industry had asked for a high level negotiator to be appointed. I am sure that Mr. Ching is doing his best. Is this correct? If so, has the Minister appointed a new high level negotiator or has he used his personal good offices to bring about a settlement in this strike and get these people back to work and once again get the construction industry operating again in the province?

MR. SNYDER: — I don't know if I should reply to the editorial that the Member for Milestone always seems to preface his questions with. But I think it is not unexpected that I should be unaware in total of the total value of construction projects that are not presently in operation, because as I suggested earlier, that is a matter that has progressed over a period of time, and the Department of Labour as such hasn't assumed a direct responsibility for gathering statistics and tabulating the precise number of people out of work at any given time or the precise figure with respect to the value of construction. What we are interested in and our principal concern is the provision of services to the parties in dispute in an attempt to bring about a resolution to the construction strike or any other work stoppage that takes place.

With respect to the Member's second question, as to whether an outside mediator has been requested, I understand that that is not correct. I heard the report on radio, at least I heard of it, I didn't hear it directly, but it was referred to me. The undertaking that was given to me by the Deputy Minister was that prior to the strike, a matter of two weeks prior to the breakdown in negotiations, a request was made by the building trades involved. At that time it was rejected by the Labour Relations Council of the Construction Association and since that time there has been no request. We think that everything has been done at this point that can possibly be done and I am perfectly satisfied that Mr. Ching and the Department of Labour has done all of those things that are required at this stage. I don't believe that at this point an outside mediator could serve any more useful purpose than is being provided at the present time. As I suggested earlier, I think things are progressing and I would hope by the end of the week there would be something further to report.

REGINA CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

MR. E.C. MALONE (Regina Lakeview): — Before the Order of the Day I have a question for the Minister of Social Services. As the Minister is aware there have been three major incidents at the Regina Correctional Centre in recent months. The first of these was in the fall where there was an attempted mass breakout; about two months ago there was a major riot in the institute and recently a successful mass breakout, although I understand some of those people have been recaptured. My question is: Has the Minister determined the causes for these incidents and secondly what if anything has he done to ensure that these incidents don't happen again in the future?

HON. A. TAYLOR (Minister of Social Welfare): — Mr. Speaker, the Member asks the causes of the incidents, the causes of the one attempted escape and the one actual escape was a dissatisfaction of being incarcerated. That seems to me a fairly standard cause. The riot is far more complex. At present we are investigating. We know what the surface cause was, we think there must be something deeper and we are investigating to attempt to discover what this is.

MR. MALONE: — Mr. Speaker, by way of a supplementary question, it was a very flippant amusing answer, but it doesn't come to the problem. Now, what, if anything, are you doing to ensure that there won't be major mass breakouts again in the future? Have you tightened security, have you found whether there is any problem with the institution, have you done anything?

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, we are taking the steps that appear to us to be necessary which is emphasis on security in the institutions. Our staff are attempting at the present time to see if these can be strengthened to a greater degree and if there are more moves that they can take in this regard. They are attempting to find out where the weaknesses in the present system are. Once this is discovered, then we can take the necessary steps.

PERMISSION TO MAKE ANNOUNCEMENT

MR. J.G. RICHARDS (Saskatoon University): — Mr. Speaker, if I may just before the Orders of the Day, I have a very brief announcement on behalf of Dr. Penman, not in his capacity as chairman of the Medical Care Insurance Commission.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! We can't accept announcements or statements from private Members.

MR. RICHARDS: — With leave?

MR. SPEAKER: — Is the House prepared to give permission? No, well . . .

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

FIRST REPORT OF THE SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND PRINTING

MR. J.C. McISAAC (Wilkie) moved, seconded by Mr. D.F. MacDonald (Moose Jaw North): **That the First Report of the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Printing be received.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, the First Report of the Public Accounts Committee has now been read into the records of the House by the Clerk and I wish at the conclusion of a few comments here to make a motion at this time that this report now be received.

Over the years, in looking back, Mr. Speaker, the usual motion has been, in dealing with this First Report of the Committee, to move concurrence. For reasons, Mr. Speaker, that I will discuss later I, at this time, cannot move concurrence in the Report and in a couple of the recommendations that are before us.

Mr. Speaker, your Committee met 18 times during the course of this Session and a number of departments and Government agencies were called before the Committee. The Auditor's Report itself was studied in some detail and I want to say, Mr. Speaker, at this time that as Chairman of the Committee, I am sure I am speaking for all members, the vice-chairman and other members when I say that we want to thank, on behalf of the Members of the House, Mr. Lutz, the Auditor and his staff for their co-operation in our work and in our studies. Thanks also are extended on behalf of the Committee to the Comptroller, a new man this year, Mr. Schneider and his staff for their assistance to the Committee and their attendance at all of the meetings and I certainly mustn't forget to mention the former Comptroller, Mr. Al Kerr, who also attended many meetings and as Members will be well aware has, I think, close to 40 years service to the people of this province in that Department.

I want also, Mr. Speaker, to thank the committee members themselves for their work and their attention to the general deliberations of the Committee. I think Members will be well aware, and I will review a little bit of the history of this Committee, that this Committee is chaired by a Member of the Opposition which in this case this year happened to be myself. At the same time the majority of the Committee by eight to four is comprised of Government Members. And in keeping with the reorganization of this Committee in a report that was tabled in here in 1965 and acted on in 1966, the actual meetings of this Committee are conducted in camera. At the same time the complete verbatim, and it is totally unedited in any way, and there may well be errors in it for that matter, but it is totally unedited and is then made available to the House, to the Press and to the public. I have a complete copy of all of the verbatim proceedings here to table.

I might also say, Mr. Speaker, that any material tabled with the Committee, any material that was circulated to the Committee by the Auditor or the staff, all answers to questions that were asked in the deliberations of the Committee is also tabled in the House as property of the Committee and, of course, all of this in turn is tabled with the Report and it becomes the property of the House, available to the Press, to the public

and to all Members.

Almost every year when the Committee begins hearings, the question is raised by at least one or two members of the Press as to the reasons behind these deliberations being held in camera. Mr. Speaker, that decision to change that procedure is not one for the Committee, or one for me, it can only be made by the Members of this House. However, at the beginning of our hearings this year I sought the comments of members on this procedure and on this practice and while I won't go into all the arguments pro and con at this time, the point was raised and was discussed by members of the Committee. And the discussion of course can be read in the verbatim record and I shall be tabling. But I think, Mr. Speaker, it is a fair assessment to state that by far the majority of Committee members felt that the present approach is the one that results in the most effective job being done by this Committee by the Public Accounts Committee on behalf of the Saskatchewan taxpayer. I support the present policy as it now stands and I believe that I am not revealing any secret to say the vice-chairman, the Member for Touchwood (Mr. Meakes) also supports it. But there may come a day, Mr. Speaker, when politicians may not be so tempted to embark on frivolous fishing trips as they seem inclined to do in the presence of the Press and there may come a day also when civil servants will feel just as free in front of the Press as they do in its absence. And if and when that day comes the Committee can work effectively either way, I am sure.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to comment on a number of the recommendations made by the Committee and read into the records by the Clerk. Recommendation No. 3 is one that comes to the Committee as a result of last year's report and I believe perhaps it was dealt with in the previous year's report. It reviews the matter of sinking funds and recommends that all of the various schedules dealing with that be assembled into one schedule, not condensed necessarily, or consolidated, or anything cut out of it, but assembled into one schedule so as to show the current status of each debt in relation to its corresponding sinking fund. Again this is a recommendation designed in order that the Public Accounts text and the material in it may be a little more easily readable, not only by Members here but by anyone of the public.

The fourth recommendation dealing with the matter of Federal-Provincial cost-sharing agreements were discussed last year. It was brought to our attention in the Auditor's Report again this year. We do note some improvement in this regard but wish to point out that there is still room for improvement with respect to some Government departments and agencies to be maintaining and keeping these cost-sharing agreements more up-to-date and a little more current. And in regard to that, one of the steps that the Committee felt would be for the Department of Finance to establish a central registry of all of the various cost-sharing agreements between the Provincial Government and the Federal Government. The problem here is one of someone being able to keep on top of these various agreements, they are handled by each individual department but there seems to be more of them year after year and it was felt that the idea of setting up a registry would assist in keeping on top of those, keeping them current and keeping the federal moneys that are owing and accruing to the province in the Treasury rather than owing.

The fifth recommendation, Mr. Speaker, deals with a uniform

system of records and procedures to control public property. Now this recommendation was made last year by the previous Committee in 1973 and it is made again this year. We note that there is some improvement being made in this regard. We note and learn from the Finance Department that a private firm has been commissioned to look into ways and means to handle this question. But we also learned that it is going to take two, perhaps three years before that study is completed. For that reason, the Committee recommends that interim regulations and controls be applied to new departments and agencies until a final and an overall policy is finalized and developed as a result of studies. It was felt I think here that to wait two or three years to resolve this thing totally is to wait too long.

Recommendations numbers six and seven, Mr. Speaker, deal with the format of the Public Accounts text that is now printed and put out. No. 6 is a recommendation that comes to the Committee from the Comptroller himself suggesting a somewhat different presentation of the facts in the Public Accounts Committee. Again to make the text and to make the facts and material in that book much more readable and much more easily accessible and understandable. At the same time as we recommend it, we bear in mind, Mr. Speaker, that this Committee can only recommend to the Government in this regard but that the Comptroller be allowed some flexibility to deal with those changes.

Recommendation No. 7, I think is one that the Members should think about, some consideration was given to raising the limit of expenditures below which no reporting would be made in the Public Accounts. We look, for example, at the Province of Ontario where salaries below \$20,000 are not reported or printed in the Public Accounts text of that province. At the other extreme we have the Province of British Columbia where they print everything and oddly enough the size of their book as a result is not as large as you might think. This whole question of reorganizing of the Public Accounts again to make the material more accessible, more readable and much easier to study and get at the facts was considered in one or two meetings at least of the Committee.

However, a recommendation here I suppose is one that really says we'll put off the real battle with this until next year. We recommend that the entire matter or reorganization and a different segregation of some of the details of various programs, the House Building Assistance Grant and so on, that that be considered next year after the basic organizational changes recommended in recommendation No. 6 have been implemented. At the same time we did allow the Comptroller flexibility with respect to what he might wind up doing. Consideration was given I might say, Mr. Speaker, to putting out a second section, or an appendix or a second text in the Public Accounts.

Recommendation No. 8 deals with the Provincial Auditor's Report where it was pointed out in Recommendation 12 of the Auditor's Report that payments were made without proper authority by the Human Resources Development Agency, the two specific organizations, namely the Metis Society and the FSI (Federation of Saskatchewan Indians). The recommendation here is that the Committee expresses its disapproval of such actions and recommends the adherence by all Government departments to new guidelines that have been inaugurated and are being developed by the Comptroller of the Department of Finance.

Now, Mr. Speaker, recommendation No. 9 and No. 10 and No. 11 are certainly the recommendations that are, if you like, the essence of this Report. They deal with matters a good deal more serious and it is with these recommendations that I want to take a few more minutes at this point in time to review what the recommendations are, what they are dealing with and why it is that I said at the beginning I cannot concur in the Report but rather I am going to move that this Report be received.

Mr. Speaker, recommendation No. 9 sets out a recommendation resulting from a study of the Auditor's Report on page 11, Item 13, and that deals with commitments of funds in excess of the amounts appropriated by the Legislature. If you read page 11 you will note that:

No department of the public service or a branch thereof shall contract any indebtedness or assume to bind the province in any amount in excess of the money appropriated by the Legislature or otherwise lawfully available.

On the following page, page 12, you will notice that there were a number of departments and agencies, six or seven in actual fact, where over-commitments were made. And of those agencies and departments listed, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Northern Saskatchewan with a commitment in excess of the appropriation of \$666,000 was the one that perhaps could be said to be the most serious offender in this regard. As a matter of fact in the course of deliberations of the Committee it was decided then to call the Department of Northern Saskatchewan before the Committee.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it is fair to say it was recognized and will be recognized by any Member in this House that this Department was established by legislation assented to on April 21st, 1972. It was a new department, it was brand new in the year under review, and I suppose, therefore one could expect some problems perhaps in that first full year of operation of this or any new department or a new agency. And I think, Mr. Speaker, it is certainly fair to say also when we examined DNS in some detail we found more than the forgivable kind of lapses that one might anticipate, as I say, in any new department. Certainly the kind of sloppy, shoddy, non-existent administrative practices that were discovered in that department, I believe shocked even the Government Members of the Committee just as much as the Opposition Members. All except perhaps the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Brockelbank) and I think his comments and his amendments with respect to the recommendations in regard to that department indicate one of two things. First of all either he is not too concerned with this slipshod sort of slaphappy way that department has been operating or secondly, Mr. Speaker, he was concerned and his actions in trying to water down and dilute the final recommendations of the Committee in this regard was a deliberate attempt of his to shield the Government from this 'bonaventure' of northern Saskatchewan. Here again I only ask all Members of the House, both sides of the House to read the verbatims of the last day or two's proceedings of this Committee and go ahead then and form your own judgment.

I think to put the situation with respect to DNS in some context, I should like, Mr. Speaker, to read into the records some excerpts of a letter addressed and sent to the Hon. Mr. Bowerman, written by Mr. Lutz, the Provincial Auditor. Now this letter ..

MR. SPEAKER: — If I could interrupt the Hon. Member for one moment, there is a school group in the gallery that the Member for Nutana South would like to introduce before they have to leave.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

MR. H.H. ROLFES (Saskatoon Nutana South): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to take this opportunity to introduce to you and to the House a group of 72 students from Georges Vanier School. They are seated in the west gallery. I take very great pride in introducing these students because George Vanier is the school that my two children are attending.

I hope that the students who are here will find this afternoon an interesting afternoon. It's a somewhat different afternoon in that you will be hearing a report of the Public Accounts Committee. I hope to meet with the students a little later. These students are accompanied by one of their teachers, Mrs. Stodola.

The Assembly resumed the interrupted debate on the First Report of the Committee on Public Accounts and Printing.

MR. McISAAC: — The letter I referred to was one dated December 12th, 1973, addressed to the Hon. G.R. Bowerman, from the Provincial Auditor, W.G. Lutz, and I will just read to you, Mr. Speaker, some excerpts from the letter to try to put into context for the House the problems uncovered in DNS and the situation that we were faced with respect to DNS.

In the middle of page 1 (and this is a seven page letter), Mr. Speaker, and I will quote directly. This is the Auditor speaking here:

From the outset the Department appears to have experienced administrative difficulties, the nature and extent of which identification is made later in this report. Inadequate consultation with officials of transfer or departments, combined with an inaccurate appraisal of staff requirements (in terms of both quality and quantity) have been major contributing factors. The main cause, however, for the day-to-day administrative difficulties encountered was the failure to design an adequate system for the payment of suppliers' accounts.

The next paragraph, Mr. Speaker:

In June of 1973, the problems of the Department became apparent to officials in Regina and a special investigative team, hereinafter referred to as the Task Force, headed by the director of the Budget Bureau, was assigned the task of:

- (i) diagnosing the administrative problems;
- (ii) implementing necessary systems changes;
- (iii) reducing the backlog of transactions to be processed;
- (iv) recommending action to prevent a recurrence of such problems.

Mr. Speaker, he goes on to say, and I continue to quote:

After reviewing a copy of the Task Force Report, which was made available to my office, it was considered impractical to conduct an examination in the usual manner because of the widespread internal control deficiency apparent. Notwithstanding the limitations imposed by these deficiencies a course of action was adopted which it was hoped would permit my office to fulfil the substantive reporting requirements of Sections 21 and 24 of The Department of Finance Act, and any other statutory requirement which might come to light as a result of the review.

Another paragraph in the centre of page 2, under the subheading 'Revenue and Public Property':

During 1972-73 no systematic method for handling cash receipts was in use, nor was a revenue transfer account established for the purpose of depositing receipts intact in Lac La Ronge. No written record of cash received and transmitted was maintained by the Department.

Down at the bottom of the same page, page 2, Mr. Speaker:

Apparently due to the lack of consultation mentioned earlier, the sources of revenue for which the new department was to be responsible, were not clearly identified, and no controls were established to ensure that all revenue that should have been received, was received. Confusion appeared to continue in this area, as former officials of the DNR, now in the employ of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, continued to transmit revenue from licensed communications, etc., to DNR.

And he goes on to point out other areas. I quote again from page 3:

Since June of 1973 a system has been designed to control the use of CVA vehicles.

And I point out, that's June of 1973. The Department had now been in operation for a period of about 14 months (15 months if you want to be exact from the day it was officially assented to here in the House). Another quotation, Mr. Speaker, that I think is very much worth noting:

Related to the revenue question, and of urgent concern, is the matter of establishing inventory controls for public property, which is now the responsibility of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

Further down on page 3, the Auditor comments again:

I must report that for the year ending March 31, 1973, these control features were not maintained nor were the revenues and public property of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

Page 4 of the letter from the Auditor to the Minister deals with the slackness of Department officials in submitting claims under the Canada Assistance Plan. I think a figure is mentioned here of something like \$800,000, which was owing to the province at the end of the fiscal year, March of 1973 and have not been claimed or not been bothered with whatsoever by Department officials.

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In respect to one other area that the Committee did considerable study on, Mr. Speaker, Accounts Payable by the Department to suppliers. Accounts Payable reported at March 31, 1973, are summarized as follows: I will just give you the final figure, it adds up to \$1.12 million. There was some slight change in that when the officials from the Task Force group of the Budget Bureau were finished with it.

I would turn now to page 6 of this letter of the Auditor's, dealing with the Social Services bank account.

October 8, 1972 an account was opened with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in La Ronge, entitled Department of Northern Saskatchewan Social Services Account.

It goes on to point out that:

Because of their failure to submit such payments promptly for reimbursement a bank overdraft existed at March 31st, 1973 of \$565,000.

Down on the bottom of that same page, Mr. Speaker, another bank account statement, another comment with respect to a Wage Bank Account, and that states:

Again, because of the failure to provide an accountable advance and to submit payments promptly for reimbursement, a bank overdraft was incurred at March 31st, 1973, in this instance totalling \$65,000.

Small, I'll agree in comparison to the previous one mentioned. On page 7, the Auditor deals with the question of the Saskatchewan Assistance Program, or the Federal counterpart, the CAP, and I'll read a section here, Mr. Speaker.

A thorough investigation of one suboffice was under way at the date of this report.

This is November 12, 1973.

In view of results documented in a preliminary report, it was estimated that overpayments could total close to \$100,000 for a period of 12 to 18 months, when the study was completed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is \$100,000 of overpayments to Social Service recipients in one suboffice of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. Whether it was during a by-election, whatever, these facts have yet to be unearthed and ascertained. The fact worth noting, Mr. Speaker, is that there are five suboffices of the Social Services people in northern Saskatchewan. This isn't to say (and I don't say) that because there is an overpayment of \$100,000 in one suboffice that there's automatically \$500,000 in total. I don't say that and this Report does not say that.

MR. GUY: — But it's possible!

MR. McISAAC: — But it's possible, is right, as the Member for Athabasca says.

Another paragraph I can read here, Mr. Speaker:

Where overpayments have been made because regulations were not followed, I would suggest that as soon as the amounts can be accurately determined, consideration be given to recovery of such overpayments from subsequent payments to beneficiaries.

I think we all recognize and realize the extreme difficulty, the staff, and the Government is going to be faced with in this kind of action, and to think that it need not have occurred had any kind of administrative procedures been established when this Department was set up in the beginning.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to deal (and there's a good deal more that I could discuss — there's a good deal more that's contained in the Verbatim Report of the Committee in this regard), a good deal of time and a good deal of information is available and came out with respect to housing contracts awarded by this Department, and many, many other things, and I recommend the Report, the Verbatim, to all Members for a thorough study in this regard.

I just want to go now, Mr. Speaker, to the recommendations contained in the First Report here that is before us. The recommendations particularly that deal with DNS. At the moment a recommendation is as follows:

1. We go on to note the establishment first of all of the bank accounts without Treasury Board approval.
2. The incurring of large bank overdrafts.
3. Extended delays in payment of supplier accounts.

I don't think there was much disagreement by Committee members on these three points.

4. Delayed deposit and recording of revenue obtained by DNS.

Mr. Speaker, in a detailed examination of this Department it was admitted by the DNS people themselves, it was stated by the Auditor, and it was stated by the Comptroller of the Department of Finance, that there was absolutely no recording, and no depositing of revenue received by this Department in the year under review. So to state, as the recommendation does, that delayed depositing and recording of revenue obtained by DNS is not a proper reflection and true statement of what actually happened. The next recommendation in the Report that was read by the Clerk:

5. Substantial overpayment of benefits to Social Service recipients.

These are five of the facts that were noted. Other notations might well have been made.

The next aspect of the Committee recommendation is one that I cannot concur in and do not agree with:

Your committee regrets that the Department did not correct the lax administrative procedures in the year under review.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that that is a total understatement

of what this Committee should be saying to this particular Department. We go on to state:

We recommend more thorough scrutiny of all new departments and agencies by the Comptroller.

And I think the reason for that is pretty obvious. The next part of it I don't necessarily agree with again, personally, and we go on to state:

If necessary, new staff and methods should be employed to prevent a recurrence of the lax administration procedures which existed in DNS in the year under review.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think that we would need to be recommending new staff or new people if the people that were employed by that Department were doing their jobs. If they were doing the job, this would not have happened, and that certainly starts, Mr. Speaker, with, I regret to say, the Deputy Minister and the Minister. As a matter of fact, in most jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that the Minister and the Deputy Minister, both would have resigned and should have resigned when they became aware in June or July of last year of the kind of mess this Department was in. The fact that they didn't, I think, indicates their callous disregard for Treasury regulations and other regulations dealing with the proper handling of public funds in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I could point out to you a few of the detailed remarks in this respect. In formulating the recommendations I want to read from page 564 — the first I will read from is Mr. MacDonald, the Member for Moose Jaw:

Well, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me, in my business, if I don't record and deposit E and H tax, for example, or if I didn't record and deposit funds that came into my office, I'm sure the Department of Internal Revenue would suspect that it is mishandling. It's clearly mishandling to receive funds and not make any recording of them, or deposit them.

THE CHAIRMAN: — My own opinion to say, 'delayed deposit' (as we were developing this recommendation), certain doesn't describe it. If we had said, 'failure to deposit.'

Mr. Lutz, at this point, Mr. Speaker, says:

I think, Mr. Chairman, the reason there was never any mention in this regard of theft or sort of related activities, was simply because the situation was so terrible when this group of 14 went up there, that they really had no way of establishing: (a) what had been received; (b) what should have been received; and how much was still there.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in this regard the Auditor is speaking of the amount of something over one-half million dollars in cheques and cash that were found lying around the DNS offices in La Ronge, in open baskets and open boxes, they had been accumulating there for 12 months. This is the kind of thing we are talking about.

AN HON. MEMBER: — How much cash?

MR. McISAAC: — Some Member opposite asks 'how much cash'. I think the fact of the matter is, nobody knows how much cash, nobody knows. Something in the neighborhood of \$525,000 in cheques and about \$1,100 in hard cash. Whether the figure of \$1,100 should have been \$11,000, nobody will ever really know. Nobody will ever really know. Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I think you can see, and any Member will see, when he peruses the facts that were given in the Verbatims, why the recommendation that's before you isn't strong enough, isn't adequate enough to deal with the situation that was uncovered and discovered with respect to the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and their handling and mishandling of public funds.

One further comment, Mr. Speaker, with respect to another item, and that is Item 11 in the Recommendations. Here, I will read that Item again, it refers to a section in the Provincial Auditor's Report. We called in the Land Bank Commission and a study of the Land Bank Commission revealed that the fiscal year-end of that organization, that agency, was established by a board minute. The Provincial Auditor, in his Report, suggested that any statute establishing a Government department, or a Government agency, contain specific recommendations for audit requirements, a specific recommendation for a year-end, and our recommendation No. 11 deals with that particular item. We were informed also, it's fair to say, that legislation, most of it this year, does comply with what has been previous practice in setting up new departments, new agencies, for a definite year-end and a definite audit requirement and procedures for financial reporting and is made a part of the statutes setting up new agencies.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is fair to say that the findings with respect to the Land Bank, in a very minor way, and certainly the finding with respect to DNS are pretty clear indications of the haste with which this Government, in embarking to set up new agencies, new departments, is not showing the kind of concern and the kind of respect that they should for public funds, for proper procedures in the handling of public funds and I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that any Member of the House, or any member of the public wishing to peruse this Report, will certainly find that to be the case.

Mr. Speaker, I now move, seconded by Mr. MacDonald, the Member for Moose Jaw that the First Report of the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Printing be now received.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. K.R. MacLEOD (Regina Albert Park): — Mr. Speaker, I was rather trying to extend a courtesy to the other Members of the House to speak on this before I rose to give a few remarks on this particular motion.

Mr. Speaker, it is very clear the sooner the Government can get over this motion and this Committee the better. Because the Committee established I think one of the worst possible records for political and administrative management in the history of Saskatchewan government.

One of the shocking things about it was that the undoubted shock to some of the new Members of the Government who had, I

think, to date been blindly believing that their Government was rather an honourable government and was in fact capable of managing the affairs of the province rather well. That thought is no longer a reasonable or credible one in the minds of any Opposition Member who sat on this Committee. It is not possible to be a Member of that Committee and examine the political cronyism and the mismanagement and the clumsiness of this Government and still believe that this Government has any right to deal with the affairs of the people of Saskatchewan.

I should like to refer briefly to one particular area. During the year under review the Government decided that it required certain housing for staff of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. It then sent out tenders under the hand of the Hon. G.R. (Ted) Bowerman, Minister of Northern Saskatchewan. According to the testimony before the Committee of the Deputy Minister, this was on a selected or invitational basis. There was no tender published in any newspaper in Saskatchewan; no tender to the public. There was however, a selected invitational tender to people who were known to the Government. The story unfolds about these people rather well known to the Government, as you can see. Somebody said, are these NDP supporters? Who would know, except they seemed to have received a rather unusual favor. The letter that I refer to is dated February 13, 1973, Regina, Saskatchewan. It is signed as I said by the Hon. Minister and it sets forth some of the requirements for northern housing and that the Government of Saskatchewan would enter a contract with the successful person when they had received their response to the bid. Just to make it look good, they sent copies to some six or seven people. If anybody phoned up and said, "I have heard about this thing, I want to be in on the bidding," a copy of the letter went forth to the bidder, to the person interested but of course without any chance whatsoever of his getting a contract; it had of course already been chosen.

On February 13, the letter went forth to eight people in total. I am sorry, seven of them went out that day, at a later date a very well known contractor received a copy of this letter but of course he had no chance to get the bid and he didn't get the bid.

One of the people involved was a Mr. G.W. Thorpe, Delta Holdings, Prince Albert. Now a very interesting thing happened. First of all Delta Holdings received the contract. A contract was entered into pursuant to that arrangement and I brought my file with the — I am sorry, I have already filed it with the Committee — I will read some of the information which I have received from the office of the Registrar of Companies, in Regina dealing with this company.

The Minister's letter is dated February 13, 1973, addressed to Delta Holdings, Mr. G.W. Thorpe. That company was incorporated the following day, February 14, 1973. Obviously he was satisfied that the contract was likely to be awarded to him and he proceeded post haste.

The officials of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan admitted that they had made no investigations into the affairs of the people to whom they gave contracts. Not a one. And the reason was that if this company built these houses the Government would enter a contract to rent the houses from them. So presumably the Government of Saskatchewan had no financial interest in this nor was it their concern to see whether these companies

were financially sound or not. It was sufficient if the Government determined that the company was a strong supporter of the Government, that was the sole criterion.

Now, therefore, this company was incorporated and I have also before me a copy of Form I. To the uninitiated this is the form which sets forth the capital and shares of the company. There were shares issued, there were three of them issued. They were worth a dollar each. The owner of one of these shares was George Walter Thorpe, Prince Albert, one common share; Alfred Phaneuf, teacher, one common share; and Boris Mamchur, one common share. So this company boldly starting out to build many thousands of dollars worth of construction for the Government of Saskatchewan, started out with a three dollar capitalization.

It is very, very interesting to notice some of the history of this batch of companies. On the 11th of June, 1973, Delta Enterprises was incorporated with George Thorpe having one share worth a dollar and Morris Mamchur — this is Morris not Boris — one dollar share. So this company, an associated company, has two dollars in capitalization and on the 20th of June, these shares were transferred to their wives.

Delta Systems seems to have something to do with it. It was incorporated earlier than that. It has the grand total of a two dollar capitalization. So this is the corporate structure to which the Government of Saskatchewan entrusted the construction of their government rented housing. There were to be two large apartment blocks and some 30 other houses. So, Mr. Speaker, with obviously a good deal of hope but with a good deal less care the Government of Saskatchewan put Delta Holdings Limited in the position of fleecing everybody in sight.

It is interesting to see what has happened to Delta Holdings. To begin with the testimony before the Committee as it appears in the verbatim was that the Government of Saskatchewan had no concern with the finances of Delta Holdings Limited for the very reason that they were going to rent these houses after the housing was constructed and the Government of Saskatchewan therefore, wasn't going to worry until they were up and going.

I wonder how this company is getting along? "Delta Holdings in Difficulty" is the heading in the headline of a story in the Leader-Post on the 24th of April, 1974. Very interesting to note that a Government contract ..., same company apparently, Delta Holdings Limited — a company which was awarded a Government contract to build two 24 unit buildings and 30 three-bedroom houses in La Ronge is in financial difficulties. One scarcely wonders. But what about the suggestion that the Government of Saskatchewan needed not to concern itself because they had no financial commitment.

I see here further that what has happened is that the Government of Saskatchewan appears to have lent \$145,000 to this company and has guaranteed loans of \$675,000. In other words, Mr. Speaker, while we were told with the straightest of faces a week or two ago that the Government would have very little or not be concerned with the financing of it — the Government seems to have \$800,000 worth of the people's money of Saskatchewan at stake in a company which was handed a gravy contract.

It is very interesting also — when I filed this material

with the Committee the Hon. Member for Notukeu-Willow Bunch (Mr. Engel) said, "Well just a minute you are pulling a fast one here." He said, "Just a second, that letter is addressed to Mr. G.W. Thorpe, Delta Holdings and the contract was awarded to Delta Holdings Limited." He says, "There is no difference." And I refer the Hon. Members to page 508 to the testimony of the Hon. Member for Notukeu-Willow Bunch. He said, that he, himself, had been a contractor all around Saskatchewan. He bid on lots of jobs and he didn't incorporate his company until he got the job. He overlooked the fact that this incorporation had occurred the day after this stuff was put in the mail. It seems rather quick work by Mr. Thorpe having regard to the fact that this had to come to Regina and undoubtedly went into the mail about the 13th of the month. But he said they are the same person there is no difference between a corporation and an individual. Quite apart from the fact that this is rather strange since we have heard lots of nonsense about the grave difference between corporations and individuals in the House.

I want to draw the attention of the Hon. Member to the fact that Mr. Thorpe is now trying to draw rather a big distinction. Because while the letter was to Mr. Thorpe, (Delta Holdings not Delta Holdings Limited) the contract was awarded to the limited company. But Mr. Thorpe has now filed a lien himself against this property. In other words a lien against his own company and his own property and here I read what is said and reported in the Leader-Post and I assume that it is accurate. The most recent lien against the apartment property is a claim of \$58,000 registered by one of Delta's three partners, George W. Thorpe.

So, Mr. Thorpe having received a contract, having put that contract into a corporation, Delta Holdings Limited, now seeks to have a \$58,000 lien registered against the property and share in whatever is left over. This company has just passed its first birthday, and this one year old infant which hardly walks seems not to be able to survive the current year.

Mr. Speaker, this is only one of a long list of mismanagement of affairs of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. And severe as it is, it almost loses its size when you match it up with all the other things done by the Hon. Minister. This Department undoubtedly must win the blue ribbon as the worst run department in the history of western Canada, certainly in the history of Saskatchewan.

Just to indicate the severity — oh, he deserves the red ribbon also and every other ribbon for mismanagement and clumsiness and total destructiveness in everything that was touched by this Department. Just as a matter of interest liens at the present time approach \$300,000. The fact is that people who dealt with Delta Holdings, believing that the Government of Saskatchewan was involved in it and would see to it that all was well, are going to lose \$300,000. Small businessmen, sub-contractors, perhaps even workers and workmen, are going to suffer loss because the Government of Saskatchewan was so careless as to give this contract directly to Delta Holdings Limited.

Now the fact is that if there was a little less cronyism, if there was a little more concern with whom we were dealing with, a little more concern with the validity, with a little more concern with the support given to your political party, you would not have got the Department into this mess, the people of Saskatchewan

into this \$800,000 loss and you would not have got the small contractors and businessmen in that neighborhood into the terrible mess.

The Hon. Minister shakes his head, and well he should. After all it is his Department, it is his involvement, his people who handed out this plum, they are the people who created the situation which has caused such devastation in this one area alone.

It is rather interesting to note that the mess and the difficulty involved with Delta Holdings is only one small fraction of the mess in northern Saskatchewan. Before I go ahead though, I should say that I had presented to me a moment or two ago the Resolution from the Hon. Member for Prince Albert East (Mr. Feschuk) dealing with northern Saskatchewan. And then I listened to the remarks from the Hon. Member for Hanley (Mr. Mostoway), Chairman of the Welfare Committee. And he said in this House that when they went to northern Saskatchewan they found nothing wrong. Nothing wrong. As a matter of fact there was in the case at Buffalo Narrows alone, one suboffice of the Department of Social Welfare in northern Saskatchewan over an 18 month period, overpayments under Saskatchewan Assistance Plan of \$100,000 according to the report of the Provincial Auditor. One hundred grand in one suboffice alone, not including La Ronge itself, not including Uranium City, Green Lake, Creighton and so on. The fact of the matter is that the Hon. Member for Hanley said, "We found nothing wrong." I will tell you why we find nothing wrong in the Department of Northern Saskatchewan or in northern Saskatchewan, it's because when you go up there you can't see anything because you are not allowed to see anything.

You try to talk to officials up there and they shut up like clams, it is a closed door. Oh, yes, they are friendly, they smile and they shake hands and they stand around moving from one foot to the other. But to get information there is no possibility of getting information up there. The Hon. Minister of Northern Saskatchewan has made it abundantly clear that nobody up there is to talk. He has made it abundantly clear that the only person who can go up there is the Provincial Auditor. Were it not for the fine work of the Department of the Provincial Auditor in this province, not one of these things would have been exposed. I have no doubt that there will be an effort by this Government to muzzle the Provincial Auditor. That has to be the next step. Because you can't possibly have him running around finding out all the nonsense that is going on in Saskatchewan.

I predict that the Government will muzzle him. The first step in the muzzling process took place in the Committee of Public Accounts. Resolution after resolution was presented by the members of the Public Accounts Committee and resolution after resolution calling for information was defeated or amended

Let us give you one example, Mr. Speaker. I asked for information on the number of civil servants who travelled into northern Saskatchewan into the Athabasca constituency during the year under review. That happened to be the year that the Hon. Member who now serves Athabasca was in the midst of a by-election. I can tell you that we got very little information. That was amended and it was amended not to provide the civil servants who had gone North that year, just those people who travelled into the area during the exact period of the election. They were careful to deny us any information concerning people who travelled

into that area prior to the by-election so that we are not able to obtain — and the Government Members outvoted the Opposition Members — denying us the right to know who went into that constituency just before the election. They refused to tell us and all you have to do is look at the verbatim and you will find that the Hon. Member for Shaunavon (Mr. Oliver) moved an amendment so that we would be effectively denied the information we required. The first step that is going on to muzzle people, to deny people information is to deny the Members of the Public Accounts Committee information and it is almost impossible to believe that there could be as many resolutions defeated, that were defeated. But I invite the Members to look at the resolutions presented at the Public Accounts Committee. Resolution after resolution was defeated if there was any chance at all that it would reveal something embarrassing to the Government. Last year we saw step one, the Committee last year got some information relating to Service Printers. I can assure you that is the last time we will ever directly obtain information of that kind. The majority members of the Committee will deny us information as they have done this year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MacLEOD: — Oh, we received lots of information as soon as the Government had a chance to study it and consider whether or not it would reveal anything to the people of Saskatchewan.

So here we have, Mr. Speaker, a record unparalleled in Saskatchewan. How we can possibly have a half a million dollars of bucks in a basket, just lying around unrecorded and then the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Brockelbank), gee whiz that isn't very good, fellows. He came very close to congratulating the Government, that would have been the next step. We think that that conduct should be condemned. We were prepared to step back and say, we deplore it but that wasn't acceptable to the Minister either. He said, how about regretting, we'll regret. Just a little slap on the wrist. In the ratio that goes from condemnation to congratulation, we came very close to congratulations according to the way the Minister wanted it worded.

Now there is so much in this Department that is worthy of condemnation and this alone focuses our attention on the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

Our committee examined the Land Bank and, of course, we were denied all sorts of information. We examined other departments of Government. The fact of the matter is it is almost a shame that we have got to concentrate so much on the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and overlook all the other wrong doing of the Government of Saskatchewan. I hope that the members of the Committee had their eyes opened. I hope that the New Democratic Members whom I believe went into that party as dewy eyed people, believing in right, and believing in justice and believing in the truth and virtue of their cause, will forever have the dew removed from their eyes. They will see the utter and abject truth of what they are saying. No wonder the Member for Arm River (Mr. Faris) is starting to vote against the Government. I think he is starting to see the light, starting to see what a bunch of incompetent people are running this Government.

Mr. Speaker, it is my desire and intention in the coming

days to examine at greater extent some of the other errors and ways in which the Government has mismanaged the affairs of the people of Saskatchewan. How they have wasted money and consequently I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

I might say before doing so that I am sorry to have had to speak today. I wasn't quite prepared to go today but the obvious reluctance of the Hon. Member, the Minister who sat on this Committee moved me. And I might say also that I rather enjoyed the presence of the Minister there. Certainly he more than adequately protected the interests of the Government and I should tell the Premier that the presence of the Hon. Minister (Mr. Brockelbank) on that Committee justified his presence there. He was there every moment as a watchdog to see to it that the Public Accounts Committee got nothing that would cast even the slightest shadows upon the affairs of the Government. The Hon. Minister did a good job and I rather enjoyed our jousting. Clearly he is an expert politician and clearly I have to take my hat off to him.

Also before sitting down I should say this that the staff of the Public Accounts Committee did an outstanding job, most excellent. I appreciated the appearance before the Committee of the various public servants and obviously we do have many, many very fine public servants in Saskatchewan. Perhaps Saskatchewan over the years has developed one of the finest public services in Canada. I certainly hope so and that covers both governments. It is unfortunate that they are being led in such a helter skelter fashion. The leadership of the Civil Service must be an embarrassment to the public service. There is no question in my view that the Civil Service in Saskatchewan must in many cases hang their heads in shame for the kind of leadership that they are being given by Government Members.

MR. BROCKELBANK: — On a Point of Privilege, I thought the Member was going to adjourn or I would have raised the point at that time. He said I was in the Committee at every waking hour of the Committee if I heard him correctly. If he checks the records I think he will find that I missed at least three days of the Committee where I wasn't watchdogging it constantly as he states.

MR. MacLEOD: — As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, those were the days we got most of our information. I do have to say that the Hon. Minister should be congratulated by the Premier because he did his job very well, he is an expert politician, if a politician means to deny the Opposition and the people of Saskatchewan information which casts any shadow upon the work of the Government.

Now I want to make a remark about the Hon. Member for Touchwood (Mr. Meakes). The Hon. Member for Touchwood has undoubtedly been a member of that Committee for many years. His experience and his work on the Committee I think deserves some vote of commendation from this House. I have greatly appreciated his advice, greatly appreciated his sincere efforts to improve the work of the Public Accounts. I believe that the Hon. Member for Touchwood has done a good job over the years and I think that much of the good that has been done heretofore and up to now by the Public Accounts Committee is due in no small measure to the work of the Hon. Member for Touchwood. I want it on record that in many cases when disputes came about, the wise counsel of the

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Hon. Member for Touchwood in fact helped us over the hurdles. And I think that the Public Accounts are better today than ever before, due in no small measure to him and of course to other Members of the Committee who worked to put the accounts themselves in good order. But what the Committee has no control over is what they look at. The mismanagement of the Department is something that the Committee has no control over. We watch, we look, we examine and to the extent that we are allowed to see, we observe the actions of the Government.

Mr. Speaker, having said those few words on this Committee Report, I now beg leave to adjourn the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BROCKELBANK: — Would the Member permit a question before he resumes his seat?

MR. MacLEOD: — Sure I'll be glad to do that.

MR. BROCKELBANK: — Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of his remarks the Hon. Member held himself out as generous and said he extended the opportunity for a member on the other side of the Committee to speak on this debate today. Unfortunately I wasn't prepared to take him up at that time. I would ask him if he at this time would sit down, not adjourn the debate and allow me the opportunity to reply.

MR. MacLEOD: — I noticed the Hon. Member was in his seat, I don't think the Hon. Member for Touchwood was in his seat but I noticed that the Minister was in his seat and I waited and waited, Mr. Speaker, until somebody on the other side, not on this side, called Questions and that's the reason I spoke, Mr. Speaker. I do beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

MOTIONS FOR RETURN

RETURN NO. 186

MR. K.R. MacLEOD (Regina Albert Park) moved that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 186 showing:

For the period July 1, 1971 to March 31, 1974, the persons under contract to supply personal or other services to any government department, branch, commission, agency, or Crown corporation, giving in each case: (1) the name of the individual or corporation; (2) the department, branch, commission, agency or Crown corporation to whom or with whom the contract was made; (3) the period of commencement; (4) the time of termination or if not completed, anticipated date of termination; (5) the purpose; (6) the cost, or if not completed, the estimated total cost.

He said: I might say, Mr. Speaker, that what prompts this Motion is that some things that we have been reading from time to time and hearing that the Government is using contract personnel

for purposes, first of all using contract personnel and these do not show up very readily as employees of the department. They are people who are not employed at all by Government but are subject to contract. I don't want to go into this because certainly if I knew all the answers I wouldn't be asking the question. But I know that in the past Mr. Gerry MacDonald, who was a candidate who opposed me in Regina Albert Park, was employed under contract to the Minister of Education. Another one who has recently come to my attention is Mr. Ralph Danchilla, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, who wrote a letter to the Prince Albert Herald. The letter to the Editor was in fact published and the heading "Credibility of Blakeney Government Concerns Writer." That was published in the Prince Albert Herald the 29th of March, 1974. I should like to read only a small bit of this and then file this copy of the letter, Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to file it with the Clerk. Let me read the first paragraph and then one or two other little paragraphs:

During the 1971 provincial election I worked day and night for the NDP candidate in Prince Albert West. As one of those who then felt confident that the affairs of the Saskatchewan taxpayers would be better handled by Allan Blakeney I am now deeply disappointed, even shocked at the course which this Government is following.

Later on in it, he does have I might say — well I'll read another paragraph then:

DNS Minister, Ted Bowerman, saw fit to spend our tax money in order to repay the party workers who worked in his 1971 campaign. Mr. Bowerman gave several months severance pay to some even before the individual was out of a job. That is putting the cart before the horse.

That's just another little bit of the cute operation of the Hon. Minister of Northern Saskatchewan. I read again:

I can personally testify to the NDP Government using public funds for political purposes. In 1972 I was under contract with the Provincial Department of Agriculture to assist in various aspects of agriculture policy. About a month before the Federal election I received a telephone call from the Hon. Jack Messer and I was instructed to make myself available to the Federal NDP candidate in Prince Albert. I was to be paid with provincial tax money, not with NDP funds.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! I think we are getting off on this motion into a topic which the motion doesn't cover. When the debate is opened too wide we shall have too wide an answer coming back.

MR. MacLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, I was merely giving a little background for the reasons that we must have this. The motion itself as stated above I will propose to move and I observe that it is debatable, I assume it will be amended. I hope that the amendment if it does come forward and I am not speaking to it because it isn't there yet, I hope the amendment if it does come forward does the following: That it gives us a chance to see who has been contracted by the Government of Saskatchewan during that period so that we may examine further the presence of these gentlemen in and around election time and in and around NDP election campaign headquarters.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious to us that when somebody is contracted by this Government to deal in the area of policy, it is quite obvious that that contract, the word policy is an euphemism for a political campaign word. Consequently I so move that motion, seconded by the Hon. Member for Athabasca (Mr. Guy).

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say a few words briefly with respect to this Motion for Return.

Mr. Speaker, the motion that is presented by the Hon. Member is one which really almost defies answering because of the complexity of Government contracts and Government work that is involved. There is, Mr. Speaker, almost no practical way to list all the kinds of contracts that are entered into by departments and agencies and commissions and Crown corporations.

For example, to give you just a couple, what about the Department of Highways? The Hon. Member for Rosthern (Mr. Boldt) would know of this. There are gravel hauling contracts with hundreds of operators. What about the Department of Agriculture? Hundreds of construction contracts per year of one form or other. What about the Department of Government Services? Hundreds of construction contracts per year. What about contracts for such things as the engagement of solicitors for various activities of the Government? Mr. Speaker, one can readily see that to answer this type of question in this form is certainly one which is wildly impractical; wildly impractical for the Hon. Member even to ask.

I also have another concern about the proposed motion and that is that it seeks to include Crown corporations in this form of revelation of contracts. They, too, have many contracts, all sorts. I can think of all sorts of contracts that are entered into. Contracts of insurance, individual insurance, for example. We all enter into a contract with SGIO. There is no delineation of that. Does the Hon. Member want this as well? I don't know how many thousands of contracts SGIO or SGIO agents enter into with individuals of the Province of Saskatchewan. The Member simply hasn't asked his question with precision with any degree of precision which would enable the Government to reasonably answer what the Hon. Member asks for.

Now, I want to make it clear that we have no objection to answering questions with respect to contract employment, individual service contract employment. I think we have done that. In fact, in some areas where the Hon. Members have placed questions on the Order Paper where technically we could have simply answered, No, technically and correctly, the Government has adopted the attitude of answering where at all possible.

Again an example, it was a question involving one Barrett Halderman. Is he employed with the Government of Saskatchewan? The technical answer to that is, No. We answered, Yes, with Government Finance Office Crown Corporation. I used that only as an example that where any of these questions are specific we will show you whether by contract or by straight employment. But if you look at what the Member asks for. He asks for the persons under contract that supplied personal or other services? What in the world does, 'other services' mean? Should we list all of these operations? And I say quite honestly and quite

sincerely to the Members, without any political connotation to it, that is so massively wide as to be meaningless.

In the area of Crown corporations I have expressed some concerns with respect to contracts. But what about the situation where a contract has been entered into and the revelation of it may prejudice the commercial position of corporations to divulge information in this regard. We all know that there may be a consultant's contract which may be involved in Sask Tel or Sask Power or SGIO, which is not related to anything other than a strictly business type of operation, which to reveal would be in effect open showing to all the competitors of those Crown corporations. Now I say to the Hon. Member that really this question has so many loopholes and problems with it that it is almost unanswerable. I am almost tempted to recommend to the House that we defeat it and ask the Member to resubmit in a way that it could be more specifically answered. But I don't want to do that. I think perhaps if we take a better look at it we might be able to come up with some amendments which will allow the Hon. Member to get what he wants. He wants to know individual personal contracts, well, I think what I'll have to do, Mr. Speaker, at this stage of the game is look at it, study it and see what we can do by way of amendment and I, therefore, beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

THIRD READINGS

MR. A. THIBAUT (Melfort-Kinistino) moved third reading of Bill No. 04 — **An Act to Incorporate Cenaiko Foundation.**

HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — I just want to make one comment with respect to this Bill in third reading. I am not sure whether I am technically in order but I will try and make my remarks as brief as I can and to be in order.

This Bill incorporates a charitable foundation. Basically, it is a family controlled and operated charitable foundation. It has to do with a religious organization. The control of the foundation is in the hands of the sponsors of the Bill, who are the family, the Cenaiko family in and around Wakaw, I believe.

I think the objectives of the foundation I would agree with. I am not of that particular religious persuasion but I think it does religion good and is well motivated and I would accept that. One concern that I voice, not in this particular case but I think sort of as a signal, if I may, to all others in the future, is the device which is used in this way, namely, an individual or individual family petitioning a public assembly for the establishment of a foundation with its charitable and taxable implications as a means of achieving the objective set out. I think that a much more desirable way is to proceed by way of The Societies Act provisions. We were, however, in this case caught. There was one precedent which was already established by the Legislature in the late 1950s or early 1960s. We could not deny this individual this right, the precedent having been set. But I do think that I voice the feeling of the Committee, the Private Bills Committee and certainly if I don't, my own views, that in future we as Members of the House should be very careful indeed before we permit the establishment of a foundation through public means which is basically controlled, owned and operated by one family in its appointment methods and

so forth. Now as I say this is not to cast any aspersions on the motivations of the Cenaiko Foundation or on the motivations of Dr. Cenaiko and his family. I wish him and the Cenaiko Foundation well. I just simply say that it certainly would be my view that as Attorney General in future if we are petitioned with matters of this nature that this Bill and the subsequent one ought not to be treated as any precedent upon which to base a course of action.

MR. K.R. MacLEOD (Regina Albert Park): — Mr. Speaker, I understand the direction that the Attorney General proposes to turn us in this matter but I am not sure that we should prejudge any of these. There are apparently this one and one other foundation incorporated by the Legislature. The result of it will be, of course, that there will be some restriction on who might be involved in the foundation. I should not like to think that this Legislature having gone ahead today to pass a Bill would say that these people received today that which we would deny others and that is really what we are saying, that if anyone else were to do this now we would perhaps say no to their petition and their request. I would suggest, quite frankly, that each new application should be dealt with on its merits and that if we are doing the wrong thing here that we should say no, and if it is the right thing, then we should be prepared to observe with an open mind the next application that comes before us.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a third time.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

RESOLUTION NO. 14 - EQUAL PARTNERSHIP IN MARRIAGE

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed Resolution by Mr. E. C. Malone (Regina Lakeview):

That this Assembly urge the Government of Saskatchewan to forthwith introduce legislation to recognize the concept of equal partnership in marriage so that the contribution of each spouse to the marriage partnership may be acknowledged and that, upon the dissolution of the marriage, each will have a right to an equal share in the assets accumulated during marriage otherwise than by gift or inheritance received by either spouse from outside source.

MR. ROMANOW: — Stand.

MR. MALONE: — I wonder if the Attorney General instead of allowing this Resolution to stand off the Order Paper and not be dealt with that he would say so. If he intends on debating at a later time I would appreciate some advice ..

MR. SPEAKER: — Actually it is not debatable when the Member has asked to stand it.

MR. WEATHERALD: — On a Point of Order, I believe stand is only a courtesy measure and I believe that a Member has a right to speak on it if he so wishes.

MR. SPEAKER: — When a motion is stood by a Member the Member is in at the time and asks for it to stand in the House, if the majority gives permission, it stands.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

FINAL REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON WELFARE

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Mostoway (Hanley): **That the Final Report of the Special Committee on Welfare** be now concurred in.

HON. A. TAYLOR (Minister of Social Services): — Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to have the opportunity of making a few comments on the Final Report of the Special Committee on Welfare. Let me say at the outset that our Government treats this Report very seriously and intends to give it every consideration both as we develop our own programs in the future, and in the present round of Federal-Provincial conferences which are attempting to chart a new direction in social security in Canada. You only have to read the report, Mr. Speaker, to recognize the vast amount of work, time and effort that has been put into the study by the members of the Committee. I, for one, wish to commend the members of the Committee for their diligence in this regard.

I also want to say that I have heard from a number of individuals and groups who presented briefs and ideas to the Committee in their round of public meetings, and to add that these groups and individuals have indicated to me how pleased they were with the reception they received from all Committee members representing both sides of the House.

Mr. Speaker, it hardly needs to be said that the subject of welfare is always a touchy issue. On the one hand, there are those who claim that the poor are not provided with enough in order to permit them to climb out of their circle of poverty. This was a position taken by the municipalities about a year ago at the Tri-Level Conference. On the other hand, there are those who believe that welfare payments are already too high since they provide unfair competition in the labor force. It is also relatively simple to confuse the public regarding the worthiness of any particular individual to receive public assistance. People may be aware of an individual receiving assistance and yet who looks physically fit and appears mentally alert. They may not be aware that he is suffering from a severe physical, mental or social problem that is undetectable by outward appearance. Because of this problem the person may indeed be a 'deserving recipient'. There is also no doubt, that there is some abuse in the welfare scheme. This I believe is to be expected. There was certainly abuse in the days of beggars. There was abuse of assistance in the days when it was handled by the churches, and there is abuse today. There is abuse today also of the income tax system and of the Guaranteed Income Supplement. There is abuse in almost every type of program. I want to suggest, however, that the amount of abuse is extremely small. The vast majority of people receiving public assistance are most deserving.

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Mr. Speaker, I should like to point to some of the recommendations of the Committee which have already been acted on in whole or in part by our Government. Recommendation No. 2 calls for public discussion to be led and encouraged by advisory boards in each region. Some of our boards are already doing this on their own; others have invited myself and staff members from my Department to attend public meetings and lead discussion on these questions.

Recommendation No. 4 asked our Government to attempt to have family size and age of children included in the criteria to determine the amount of Family Allowance paid by the Federal Government. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we have made every effort to do so but unfortunately have met with no success in this regard.

The Intersessional Committee has also suggested that an income test should be adopted for the Assistance Plan. Again we have attempted to do this and have sought the approval of the Federal authorities to do an income test at least for those people who are living in institutions, such as homes for the retarded or senior citizens in nursing homes. Unfortunately again, we have not been able to secure such agreement with the Canada Assistance Plan.

During the social security review now under way with the Federal Government we are attempting to follow recommendation No. 8 and gain a more extensive definition of need for services under the cost-sharing agreement. We should like, Mr. Speaker, to look beyond the straight financial need of services.

My Department has already acted to tighten up the policy for granting assistance for those in the 16 and 17 year age group. We intend to insist that a plan of self support or training be established before such assistance may be granted. We are also requiring parents to indicate a refusal of support. As recommended by the Committee food and clothing allowances have already been increased, as has the maximum board and room rate been increased to \$90 per month as recommended by the Committee.

The recommendation on pre-added budgets has already been implemented and has been well received by the majority of our clients. Also as recommended by the Intersessional Committee we have greatly expanded the amount of money available for job creation activities — from about \$500,000 last year to \$1,500,000 this year. Included in this figure is an amount which will permit a select number of jobs to be continued on a 12 month basis for experimental purposes.

Like the Intersessional Committee we believe as a Government that a first priority in social security must be an employment strategy. We have at various conferences with Federal and Provincial Ministers emphasized the need for this. We have called upon the Federal Government to cost share such jobs as they now cost share the Assistance Plan. So far, this cost sharing has been refused. This means, Mr. Speaker, that the \$1,500,000 we will spend on the Employment Support Program this summer will be a net cost to the province which, if we had provided instead public assistance, would have cost us somewhere around \$700,000. We believe this to be unfortunate and unnecessary. We recognize that government activity in the job creation field can indeed create competition for the private labor market.

However, we believe this to be essential. It is totally meaningless to say that everyone is expected to work in order to support himself if we are unwilling at the same time to ensure that there is a job for him to work at.

Mr. Speaker, in line with the Committee recommendations we have already acted to ensure that there are representatives from the client group on the Provincial-Municipal Advisory Board. This I might say has been of benefit not only to our clients, but also the Department in formulating policy. We are also attempting to move in the direction recommended of establishing suboffices in smaller centres of our province. We have, Mr. Speaker, effective April 1st of this year increased the foster home rates in line with the recommendations of the Committee.

The new Day Care Program has been announced with increased subsidies available to parents. In line with further recommendations of the Committee we are negotiating with some Indian Bands to train local workers in the provision of Child Care Services. We intend to enter further into the field of Community Training Residences in the Correctional System, and we are attempting to devise a means whereby Fine Option people will not be incarcerated in Correctional Centres.

I might also add, Mr. Speaker, that I have just in the last few days signed an agreement with Chief Ahenekeew of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians whereby we are requesting federal funding for parole and probation services on Indian reserves. These are all in line with the recommendations of the Intersessional Committee.

There are many other actions which my Department has already taken with relate closely to the report of this Committee. We have, for example, been approaching the Federal Government with a request to reduce the age for old age security to 60; and we have been attempting in a small way to make our office more effective as Manpower Placement Centres. We do this I might say, hesitatingly, feeling that this is not really the role of Social Service offices. But we feel compelled to do so since the regular Manpower offices are failing our clients.

Let me comment now briefly on some of the other actions which we are considering taking or which we have started. I am inclined to be in wholehearted agreement with the Committee recommendation regarding the dissemination of information. There are two areas in which information is badly needed. One is the public area as to what welfare is all about and who receives public assistance. This, I believe, would correct many of the mistaken ideas now held by a number of people. But it is just as important that information be provided to clients and potential clients. Unfortunately, as in many other situations, it has often been the squeaky wheel that got the grease. I believe that every client should be made fully aware of his or her rights. And more than this, that those who are not clients should be made aware of their right to apply for assistance.

The Intersessional Committee also identified a major area of need in the field of social security, an area which has too long been ignored. That area is that of the working poor or the low income wage earner. This, as Members will recognize, is the person who is working at or near minimum wage with three, four, five or more children and finding it very difficult to

make ends meet. I have already said a fair amount regarding this in an earlier debate in the House. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Family Income Plan is our attempt to meet this need. We believe that the Family Income Plan will provide an incentive for people to take jobs where they are available and to progress in the work force as their abilities enable them. The Plan will ensure that everyone who works is better off than he would be on public assistance. It will provide for some of the added expenses that accrue to a person because of work — expenses such as clothing, transportation etc. It will provide the low income working family with the income to take advantage of the many opportunities that before had simply passed him by. We do not suggest this to be the perfect answer. We do believe it to be a first step in finding a solution to this vexing problem.

It is also our intention, Mr. Speaker, to move in the direction indicated by recommendation No. 41. This will involve the establishment of a strong financial unit within the Department of Social Services; we hope to accomplish this within the next few months. We have already embarked on a study with the Department of Public Health regarding the feasibility of coterminous boundaries for our departments.

You will see from this, Mr. Speaker, that our Government does take seriously the work undertaken by various committees of the Legislature and their recommendations. We do not intend to let any of them sit on the shelf and gather dust. No government of course will commit itself to accept every recommendation, but the actions we have already taken must certainly assure the Committee members that their voices have been heard and that their time and effort has been well spent.

I want to turn now for just a few moments, Mr. Speaker, to make a few comments on the Minority Report. I must say at the outset I was disappointed. In spite of the way in which the Committee seemed to work together throughout the study, it seemed abundantly clear to me that political, rather than social consideration prompted the Minority Report No. 2. The writers of this report strongly criticize the Committee for recommending a move towards a Guaranteed Annual Income on the basis that it did not consider adequately the costs involved. They pointed out that the Committee undertook no cost projections. I want to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that my concept of the task of an Intersessional Committee is that it should point to the direction in which the province or country should be moving in terms of its social benefit. It is the government, with the expertise available to it, which must decide whether recommendations are financially practical at any given time. The Majority Report seems to agree with this concept. The Minority Report to which I referred emphasizes the stand frequently taken, unfortunately, by Members of the Opposition — a stand which would seem to suggest that those on welfare are there because they want to be there, and not because they have no alternatives. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the irresponsibility was not shown in the Majority Report, but by the Members of this Minority Report, who once again, emphasized their distaste for a public assistance program which would not be demeaning and which would indeed provide financial security for every citizen of our province.

The Minority Report is further irresponsible in saying:

We also take strong exception to the proposed removal of the extreme hardship clause, the removal of this clause would, in our view, provide access to welfare funds for anyone who merely does not want to work.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that the removal of the extreme hardship clause will permit us to grant assistance to those who are working. At the present time they must leave work and go on total assistance in order to gain the benefits. It is clear that this Minority Report was written with no research, or the members would surely have recognized this. The removal of this clause will not be a disincentive to work, but the reverse is true. The reverse is that it will be an incentive to work because one can receive additional benefits while working.

The same Minority Report also says that the Provincial Government announced its acceptance of the Federal Government's Family Allowance program. This, Mr. Speaker, was never the case. We have said over and over again that the Family Allowance should have been tied to income so that the greatest benefits could have been provided to the lowest income groups. This we have insisted upon on various occasions in the last one to two years.

Nor is it true to suggest, as this Minority Report does, that the change in Income Tax regulations will ensure that lower income families will benefit substantially more than those with higher incomes. Increased exemptions are only of benefit to those who are earning a sufficiently high income to pay income tax in the first place, and they are of absolutely no benefit to those whose incomes are low. The Minority Report is also irresponsible in that it claims the province should be guaranteeing employment rather than income. They do not, however, indicate how employment should be guaranteed; who should guarantee it, or who should bear the cost. There is no recognition that the cost of creating jobs or of maintaining persons in jobs created through Government programs is more costly than maintaining persons on public assistance. The position of our province and the Federal-Provincial Review on Social Security has been that the government's first line of attack on poverty should be guaranteed employment. We get cost sharing on income maintenance but not on employment programs. The Federal-Liberal Government does not appear interested in employment programs for anyone, but long-term unemployed welfare recipients and severely disabled persons.

Our province, on the other hand, has already been providing employment to welfare recipients through the Employment Support Program.

I can only conclude, Mr. Speaker, that the Liberal Members who wrote their Minority Report are once again attempting to ride two horses at the same time. On the one hand they do indicate support for increased allowances to those on assistance, but on the other, they intimate that they believe that if allowances are too high many people will choose that rather than work. This is not the record of Canadians. It is estimated at present, that about 500,000 Canadians are working for lower salaries than they would receive on public assistance. I believe in the integrity of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I do not believe that the poor are any more dishonest than are the rich. I believe that most of the people on assistance would prefer to work, and would do so, if capable of working and if employment were available for them and their skills, we intend, Mr. Speaker,

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believing this, to continue our efforts in the field of work creation for these clients.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Majority Report in effect, to be the responsible report of this Committee. I want to assure the members of the Committee that our Government will continue to give serious consideration to all their recommendations and to take such action as is necessary in the days ahead.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. E.F. GARDNER (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, I believe there are one or two Members on one side who would still like to speak on this Report and I should like to make one or two comments as a result of what the Minister has been saying. He talked very glowingly of the accomplishments of the Government and how they are listening to some of the recommendations in the Report of the Committee on Welfare. There has been one recurring problem that has been brought to the attention of the Committee, and certainly also brought to the attention of the Minister recently, as I had occasion to bring a couple of cases to his attention myself. And these are instances where one of the couple gets the old age pension and supplement and the other is yet under age and perhaps getting some small amount of money from the Social Services Department. The reason I have brought this up, and I'm sure it was brought up to the Committee on Welfare, is because today again I received a letter in regard to this, and this happens to be a case that I brought to the Minister's attention a couple of weeks ago, where the husband was getting about \$185 through the old age pension and supplement and the wife was getting some \$7.75 (which is a pretty meagre amount) and as a result of the investigations of the Social Services Department, they refused to give these people any increase. However, I did get a letter from these people today, including again their cheque stubs, and I'm sure the Minister is aware of what we can expect from this.

It seems that the Federal Government has given a small increase to the old age pensioners for a cost of living allowance. It only amounts to a very few dollars, but it is something. However, it appears also that the Department of Social Services is immediately sending out a form letter to the wife of all of these people in effect taking this small allowance.

This lady whom I told you about is getting \$7.75 and she is now getting \$4.43 — the result of my bringing it to the Minister's attention and the fact that he is now taking the few dollars that they are getting as a cost of living bonus. So the Minister talks in glowing terms about all they are doing and still he is allowing this thing to happen.

I will take responsibility for this letter, and it's a form letter from the Department of Social Services, a form letter where they simply put the name of the person at the top, and I'm sure that he has sent out hundreds from his Department in the last few days. This is dated April 23rd and it says:

Dear Sir or Madam:

You are aware the Federal Government's Old Age Security Guaranteed Income Supplement program now provides for

quarterly adjustments in the allowances paid. As your Old Age Security Guaranteed Income Supplement will increase, it is necessary to adjust your allowance under the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan for the same amount.

In other words, if you are getting \$4 or \$5, or \$3 or \$4 extra from the Federal Government, we are going to take off exactly that same amount. It says:

If you have any questions regarding this matter please contact your social worker.

It's signed so and so, the Regional Director, Qu'Appelle Region Office, Department of Social Services.

Now I would think that with the money the Government has available to them today, with all of the glowing remarks of the Minister today about the things that he is doing in his Department, that they wouldn't be squeezing two or three dollars out of every old couple in this province who hopefully should benefit by this small raise that they are getting from the Federal Government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. GARDNER: — It appears that this is their policy. It says that there is a quarterly revision of the Federal program, and as a result they are going to take exactly the same amount off. So here we have a case of a lady who is getting \$7 and some cents before and now they have reduced this to \$4.43. They have taken this \$2 or \$3 that these people badly need because they are not going to allow them this money that was given to them by the Federal Government. I think it a shameful act by the Department of Social Services and that the Minister should be looking into this because he is obviously aware of what is going on. These are form letters that are sent out where they just type the person's name at the top and say Dear Sir or Madam, send this out, send them a cheque less this few dollars they got from the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, on the Report, I'm sure there are some other Members who would like to make some comments and at this time I should like to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 26 - GUARANTEED MONTHLY INCOME FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Richards:

That this Assembly calls for immediate government consideration of guaranteeing minimum monthly income levels for senior citizens of \$350 per individual and \$500 per couple, as recommended in the Report by the Senior Citizens' Commission.

And the proposed amendment thereto moved by the Hon. Mr. Taylor:

That all the words after word 'calls' in the first

line be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

on the Federal Government to give consideration of guaranteeing minimum monthly income levels for senior citizens of \$350 per individual and \$500 per couple, as recommended in the Report by the Senior Citizens' Commission.

MR. K.R. MacLEOD (Albert Park): — Mr. Speaker, I only have a word or two to add to this. I observe in the February 27th, 1974 edition of the Commonwealth, a newspaper which is circulated in western Canada, partly at the expense of the people of Saskatchewan, that the Province of Manitoba is now going to the \$200 monthly minimum for Manitoba pensioners. The Report states very briefly that Manitoba's old age pensioners will be guaranteed a minimum monthly payment income of \$200 per month for single persons and about \$383 for married couples, as of July 1st. Now that is estimated to cost the Province of Manitoba about \$4 million, according to the Report.

Mr. Speaker, the point I wish to make is first of all that a part of any increased payment will be shared by the Federal Government. That has been made very clear by the Federal Government and there is absolutely no excuse for the Province of Saskatchewan not to go into this kind of a program, which will receive federal assistance. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the New Democratic Party in Saskatchewan has done surface, or superficial things for the old age pensioners and they have done very little of substance for the old age pensioners and in fact, virtually the entire burden of taking care of our senior citizens is borne today by the Federal Government. That is not to say, however, that the Provincial Government does not take 100 per cent of the credit.

I think that our purpose and my purpose in supporting this Resolution, Mr. Speaker, is to establish the principle that the province has a responsibility to our senior citizens. I wish that principle clearly and firmly established in the actions and the laws of the Province of Saskatchewan. The question as to detail is, of course, open. Whether \$350 or \$500 a month is an appropriate amount is something which I personally cannot say is the right amount, having regard to all circumstances, but what I am after is the establishment of a principle.

I do say that I oppose the amendment simply because it is an attempt to shift the entire burden onto the Federal Government. That's the kind of thing that has now become part of the entire tactics and doctrine of the New Democratic Party and the New Democratic Government. No matter how much money you get from Ottawa, apparently there is no end to the demands of this Provincial Government and consequently a call solely on the Federal Government is inappropriate and it's a denial of the principle that the province itself has a severe and continuing responsibility.

The Resolution, as it began in the first place, was more aptly worded. It called upon 'government' which I presume refers to two governments — the Federal Government and the Provincial Government. Those are the governments in Canada that can and must do something about old age pensioners. Consequently I oppose the amendment, but I will support the original Motion, with the reservation, as I mentioned, that I do not thereby

presume to be supporting the precise figures set forth in the amendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. J.G. RICHARDS (Saskatoon University): — Mr. Speaker, I shall be brief in my concluding remarks. I regret that the Motion has been amended, as in fact the Government did amend it. I think that this Motion has brought forward some fairly undemeaning debate in this Assembly. It has produced the kind of buck-passing which has created tremendous cynicism among senior citizens about the abilities of government to assess any of the major problems of senior citizens.

Last Tuesday I attended a public hearing in Saskatoon concerned with the construction of a senior citizens' highrise in my constituency. The highrise building violated all good logic with respect to community planning, nonetheless, on the basis of a bird in the hand is better than two in the bush, the majority of senior citizens present at the hearings were undeniably in favor of the construction of that building.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the debate that we have had in which both sides of the House have tried to claim that the responsibility for the poverty of senior citizens lies in the ballpark of the other administration, is the cause of the cynicism which results in senior citizens grabbing at any straw or any lifeboat passing in the sea in order to try desperately to improve their position economically. I hope and I would have considered it a great deal more logical if the Government had sought to amend this Resolution by saying that the responsibility lay both on the federal and provincial governments as clearly the responsibility does lie with both these levels of administration.

The Attorney General in comments upon this motion sometime ago, spoke about his feelings for Canadian unity and that we must not balkanize this country by one province proceeding to implement one particular program at the expense of other provinces. But surely the Attorney General must be aware that the pattern and progress of this country does not come from rational, central reform in the Liberals in Ottawa.

What comes by progress in this country is that one province institutes a reform and kicking and screaming the rest of the country slowly drags itself along in the following decade. If one province were to commit itself in the major manner that is implied by this Resolution and by the figures as reported from the Senior Citizens' Commission Report, that would be the commitment that would end poverty among senior citizens.

Let it be perfectly clear that is no facile commitment. I estimated, when I introduced this Resolution, that it would cost \$75 million annually. Since then I have seen reports of more detailed studies of estimating the cost which put the cost to \$82 million as the annual cost of implementing this particular proposal, ignoring any potential federal cost-sharing. Eighty two million dollars is undeniably a large amount of money, but the question has to be asked: Are we serious about ending the problem? If we are serious surely the expenditure of \$82 million on this particular program will be one of the better ways that affluent Saskatchewan of 1974, which the Minister of Finance is so

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keen to talk about, can spend some of the ill-begotten wealth in this province.

Mr. Speaker, with those few concluding remarks I shall take my seat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Amendment agreed to on division.

Motion as amended agreed to.

SECOND READINGS

MR. D.L. FARIS (Arm River) moved second reading of Bill No. 125 — **An Act to amend The Liquor Licensing Act, (No. 2).**

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to move second reading of this Bill which will have the effect of raising the legal drinking age from the present 18 to 19. I don't have to remind the Members of the House that this age has been lowered right across Canada in the last five years, either to 18 or to 19.

I shall be presenting in my speech some data which I think is pretty significant in indicating that this has been part of an increasing problem amongst young people with alcohol. Those who read Time Magazine will be aware that it had just recently a cover story on alcoholism and if you turn back in that article you find that one of the major thrusts of the article was that a great deal of this increase in the problem was among young people.

There is no doubt there are a great many pressures, a great many factors in our society that lead to this increasing problem. I certainly would not hold that changing this one aspect of the law, or of government policy, would in fact solve the problem. That would not happen, that would be like just trying to contain a balloon by sticking your finger into it. It would simply pop out at another point.

I think this is one of the factors which affects the behavior of young people, I think that it is a matter which deserves at the very least, the serious consideration of all the Members of this House. I certainly consider this a matter of individual conscience, a matter of free vote. If one is to study the policies of governments across Canada, all of the various provinces, all of the various parties, one could not distinguish between them in regard to the way in which they handle these matters.

Now more directly in regard to the matter of raising the age to 19, there are, in fact, regrettably few studies of the effect of changes in the legal drinking age, but what studies have been done are turning up with what are in my opinion, alarming results.

For example the study of Metro Toronto showed a 900 per cent increase in impaired driving charges laid against 18 to 20 year olds from 1970 to 1972, just two years. The important fact is that the legal drinking age in Ontario was 21 in 1970. It was lowered to 18 in the middle of 1971. It was 18 for all of 1972. Here are the figures for Metro Toronto, the 18 to 20 year old age group, impaired driving charges:

In 1970 there were 48; in the second half of 1971 there were 259; in 1972 there were 457.

Taking the same time period, the same age group for personal injury accidents, in 1970 there were 179; in the second half of 1971 - 272; in 1972 it had increased 425.

Another study among drivers killed in the age group 15 to 19 in Alberta and Ontario, one year before and one year after legislation of lowering the drinking age to 18, revealed the following increases: In Ontario in 1970 there were 86 deaths; 38 of them on testing proved to be positive in regard to alcohol content in the blood; in 1972 the number of deaths had increased to 181, 85 of them showed a positive alcohol content. The absolute increase was 95 deaths and 110 per cent increase. The increases in regard to positive blood alcohol content was 47 deaths — 124 per cent increase.

For Alberta, the figures in 1970 were 27 deaths, 13 of them showing a positive reading; in 1972 it had increased to 43 with 22 with a positive reading — the increase was 16 over that two-year period, a 60 per cent increase in deaths; nine additional positive deaths were found and that is a 70 per cent increase.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to gather all the information that I would have liked to in regard to Saskatchewan. But all indications are that the same thing has happened in Saskatchewan as has happened in Alberta and Ontario. The only difference may lie in the fact that instead of lowering the drinking age from 21 to 18 in one year, Saskatchewan did it in two stages, the age was lowered to 19 in 1971 and to 18 in 1972. The total number of convictions under drinking-driving sections of The Criminal Code, that is Sections 222, 223 and 224, the .08 legislation, the refusal to take the breath test in the impaired driving section, increased as follows: from 1970 to 1973 for the 16 to 24 year old age group — in 1970 there were 925 convictions; in 1971 there was 1,863; in 1972 there was some levelling off at 2,020; in 1973 it increased to 2,901. The increase is 214 per cent over three years.

But one important point of interest is the increase of 1,000 convictions when the age was lowered to 19 and apparently levelled out the next year, at that same high level, but only to be matched by another increase of approximately 1,000 convictions in the year following the age being lowered to 18. It may be asked whether the increased convictions were not the result of increased enforcement.

There has, indeed, been increased enforcement but there is no reason to believe that it has not been uniform across age levels. It is therefore significant that while the 16 to 24 year-old age group, who represented 25 per cent of convictions in 1970, this group had 40 per cent of total convictions in 1973. This is a rate of increase in convictions three and a half times that of other age groups.

Unfortunately, the information was not available, and is not yet available, to break this down into the 16 to 18 year-old age group or those other classifications below 20, but I am sure that this material will break down exactly as it has in the other provinces, that is that those earlier age groups represent the larger increase.

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These increased drinking-driving conviction figures are undoubtedly reflected in increased deaths in these younger age groups. For example, the 1972 Saskatchewan study reveals that over 70 per cent of 15 to 19 year olds tested after being killed in traffic accidents had been drinking. This compares to some 40 per cent of older age groups, in fact, most of the older age groups, are somewhere around 33 per cent.

These general statistics reflect the same situation that I observed in my constituency. Chief Gray, the Police Chief in Davidson provided me with information concerning drinking driving charges against people under the age of 21 for the past ten years in the town of Davidson. In the seven years from 1965 to 1971 there were only three convictions in this category. In the two years, 1972, 1973, there have been ten convictions. In 1973 four of those convicted were sixteen years old. The first time in the last ten years that any sixteen year old was convicted in these charges. These examples bear out the truth that when you lower the legal drinking age you also lower apparently the illegal drinking age. This is most dramatically testified to by members of Alcoholics Anonymous and workers at alcohol rehabilitation centres who see the dramatic increase in the flow of young alcoholics. For example, the director of the Nova Scotia Alcoholism Commission reports only two under 20 years olds admitted to rehabilitation centres in 1970 when the legal age was 21. In 1971 the age went down to 19. By 1972 the number of under 20 year olds admitted was 20, an increase from 2 to 20 in two years. The same sort of thing is observed to be happening in Saskatchewan.

My personal preference would be to take the legal drinking age back to 21 but these Bills would only take it back to 19. The problem is that in the last five years the legal drinking age has been lowered from 19 to 18 in every province in Canada and in most of the states in the United States. My position is that if it must be 18 or 19, it would be better to be 19. We should then work for a national drinking age of at least 19, or in my opinion, even hopefully of 21. One of the problems which we would face, one of the influences I am sure in lowering it from 19 to 18 was that the bordering provinces of Alberta and Manitoba both have their ages at 18. As long as this kind of problem exists there is going to be pressure on politicians to reach the lowest common denominator.

If even an age level of 19 causes problems then what do I see to be the advantages of raising the age level from 18 to 19. I have spoken to a large number of parents, teachers and school principals and law enforcement officers about this. The vast majority of those to whom I have spoken support this one year age increase. They agree that while there are very few 19 year olds in high school, there are a great many 18 year olds. This means that in their experience, they have in this province had the unique experience of actually having both age levels and that they are having more problems controlling alcohol at school dances. This means that in the rural communities which I represent, in a good many of them the 18 year olds visit the beverage room at noon hour and then come back to school under the influence. It means that because 18 year olds, the Grade Twelves, associate and identify with those in younger grades that they are available to pull booze more easily for their younger friends. It is simply a fact that sociologically, certainly in the rural areas that I represent, that 19 year olds

are very often not as numerous present in the community but if they are, they tend to associate more with university or with working people, while 18 year olds are part of the high school set. In fact they are a very important part of the high school set because as I recall when I went to high school that when we were in the earlier grades we looked up very much to what the Grade Twelves were doing and were very anxious to participate with them in their activities.

Lowering the age to 18 has had the effect of greatly increasing, in my view, the amount of drinking among even thirteen or fourteen year olds. And I think that when the Members of the House, the most of them, look back to their own experience, certainly mine was that 20 years ago when I went to high school most of us were occasionally drinking at perhaps as early as thirteen or fourteen, certainly by the time we were in Grade Twelve, which would be 16 or 17 years of age. But what apparently is happening even with this age group when they have the legal drinking right is that they continue their illegal drinking customs and add on to them their legal drinking customs. This is what many parents observe to be happening, this is what parents and school teachers tell me, and what law enforcement officers tell me.

Now I don't believe that raising the drinking age by this one year is going to bring about any magical solution. There may be people who hold that view but I think that they are in a position where they are unduly isolating this one element and blaming it for a great massive problem that exists throughout our society. I believe, as I have said before many times and many places that the general availability of cheap booze, the decline in our society of family and spiritual values, the lack of an honest drug education approach to alcohol, the poor example given young people by many adults, that they are all part of the increasing problem in our society. I believe that we through legislation and through government programs do in fact have a great deal of power to influence these trends. I do not believe that governments are not helpless at the hands of these influences or trends in our society. I think we have the power to reverse some of the increasing damage done to the youth of our society. We get very upset when flood waters endanger our homes but we seem to be willing to sit by when the increasing flood of alcohol endangers our children. It doesn't make any sense to me and I think while this is a rather small step I think it is a step in the right direction.

Therefore, I am pleased to move this Bill for second reading.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

WELCOME TO BROWNIES

MR. E.C. MALONE (Regina Lakeview): — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to other Members of this House, 30 young ladies ages seven to ten years who are members of the Lakeview School Brownies. They are sitting in the Speaker's Gallery and they are led here today, I am advised, by Mrs. Gartner, Mrs. Humbert and Mrs. McNeill. I hope they will find their visit to the Legislature enjoyable and entertaining and I hope to see them before they leave.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

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The Assembly resumed the interrupted debate on Bill No. 125.

MR. A.W. ENGEL (Notukeu-Willow Bunch): — I am pleased to take part in this debate today, in Bill 125 that was moved by the Member for Arm River (Mr. Faris).

The reasons why this Member has moved and introduced this Bill are reasons that I agree with. I am disturbed, Mr. Speaker, by the alarming rate and the increase in the misuse of alcohol in our day and age. The Member mentioned an article in 'Time' of April 29th. This article outlines and talks about some of the reasons for the increase in abuse of alcohol, particularly United States.

The key reason for this excessive abuse and increasing misuse of alcohol by young people basically stems from the reasons that the Member for Arm River mentioned, the decline of family and spiritual values, and the lack of a good education program on the abuse of drugs.

Some of the figures he cited though, I would question, especially where there is an increase in the death rate. The percentage of the vehicle accidents where alcohol was involved has increased accordingly. In Ontario for example there were 85 deaths where alcohol was involved out of 181. Eighty-five fatalities out of 181 were positively identified as being under the influence which is less than half. Actually in Saskatchewan here I found that the death rate was much more than half. This article on alcoholism cites two examples and I just want to read from it. The writer says:

Yet today as has been throughout history, alcohol is troubling mankind for almost in every society there are those who cannot enjoy alcohol without becoming enslaved.

I'd like to underline that aspect of it.

Excessive drinking is taking a disturbing new turn and affecting new kinds of victims.

Then it goes on:

On a New York subway a 15 year old was holding his books in one hand and a brown paper bag containing a bottle of beer in the other. He takes a swig and then passes bag and bottle to a classmate.

Then the writer talks about San Francisco:

Several high school freshmen show up for a class drunk every morning, while others sneak off for a nip or two of whisky during the lunch recess.

The problem, as the Member for Arm River outlined, I agree with, but I'm not so sure if he's nailed down the solution. This article goes on to talk about other areas that I wanted to refer to. The National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism gathered some facts about alcohol abuse. The writer says they are depressing as well as impressive. After heart disease and cancer, alcoholism is the country's biggest health problem. I don't think that one year's difference in the age group related to the biggest health problem would have much effect if it were

just that we raised it by one year.

In half of all the murders in the United States, it was established that the aggressors or victims had been drinking. A fourth of all suicides can be related to drinking. People who abuse alcohol are seven times more likely to be separated or divorced among the general population. At least half of each year's automobile deaths and half of the million major injuries suffering in automobile accidents can be traced directly to drivers or pedestrians under the influence and there they rate the influence as .1 per cent rather than like we do here, .08.

And here comes the serious part of it, Mr. Speaker. Parents are seemingly relatively unconcerned about their children drinking. In fact, children who drink are often simply following the example set by their fathers and mothers. And I think that here's where we as parents really have a responsibility. When we lowered the age to 18 I stood in my place here and indicated that for my family's sake we could have taken the age limit right off and it wouldn't have made any difference, I have that kind of confidence in the training that I give my own family, that they will properly know how to use alcohol.

Many parents are really concerned and I run into this so often with relatives I have in California, in southern California. If they hear of a young person involved in hard drugs or marijuana they really create a scene, but when this same young person comes home drunk they'll simply put him to bed. I think this is a very serious problem and this is the reason why we need some alcohol education and need some concern and control.

Another reason I would like to develop, Mr. Speaker, is the social custom in our society. In our crazy value system that we have established, it's a matter of determining how masculine a person is by how much alcohol that young person can hold. They somehow assume this to be a sign of strength. In other countries, in Italy or Israel for example, drinking is a social custom and why is there so little alcoholism involved as far as Israel or Italy are concerned? I think there that the use of an alcoholic beverage is compared to a happy occasion rather than being the occasion itself, like we have developed here in Saskatchewan and North America in particular.

I believe we need to combat the use of alcohol and if I'd want to crown my term as a Member of this Legislature with any thing that would be a number one accomplishment it would be that of reducing the number of young people who are involved in excessive use of alcohol. We can do this through research, through education and through funding of local programs.

There is one more mention made in this article in 'Time' as far as alcoholism is concerned and that refers to a man I met last year when I was at the Prayer Breakfast in Washington, Senator Hughes. Senator Hughes himself is a person who is a rehabilitated alcoholic and he more than anyone else, I believe, is responsible for this turn about of the attitude that they have in Washington towards alcoholism. He said he is pleased with the tax dollars that are used in the fight against alcoholism and that the public is finally becoming aware that alcoholism is a treatable condition, and that two-thirds of those victims who are dedicated to help themselves can recover from this condition. But he says the problem is growing on us.

I could sum it up, Mr. Speaker, by saying there are seven basic assumptions.

1. It is always difficult to place an objective standard on maturity. Age is a poor criterion. But unfortunately it is the only suitable one we have available for this purpose.

2. Government cannot legislate morality. But at the same time this does not absolve us of a responsibility to set regulations and guidelines. And it does not absolve us of the responsibility as far as making a moral excuse is concerned.

3. We have to respect the rights of individuals, and how these rights should be exercised. We should also stipulate what these rights are and under what conditions we exercise these rights.

4. Not all 18 year olds are abusing their privilege as far as excessive consumption of alcohol is concerned. I was privileged to be at two different graduations this past weekend, Mr. Speaker. At the one graduation prom and at the banquet I was at, I would wager that only two of those grads weren't completely inebriated by alcohol, two out of a class of 23. The second graduation I was at was of 100 grads. This was at the Briercrest Bible Institute. I would wager that there wasn't one who touched any alcohol after that graduation. This is the difference education can make in purpose and personal commitments.

5. The education system has not accepted the challenge to create an awareness of the problem related to alcohol and alcoholism.

6. The age of majority — 18 — if we maintain this age of majority it's going to be very difficult to make an exception for the use of alcohol. We tell an 18 year old, you are old enough to choose a life partner. You are old enough to make a commitment for life or to sign contracts that can be held against you. You are old enough for criminal decisions of all kinds and yet you are not old enough to take a drink. I don't think that this kind of an assumption can be overlooked.

7. I have already referred to this one a little bit and that is a verse from Scripture:

You train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old (or if you translate that word from the original Greek — when he is grown) he will not depart from it.

I contacted some individuals regarding the stand I should take as far as this Bill is concerned. I felt that if there is any chance at all that we would be doing some good it would be worth supporting. I think, Mr. Speaker, I can properly say that I would support any program that I feel would be one that would be of benefit to our young people.

A former pastor of mine who is a counsellor in education today, a well accepted person and spokesman in Mennonite circles told me, "Al, there is no point in going against the stream when you are working with young people." He says, "You might enhance your popularity but you are not going to stop young people as far as consuming alcohol is concerned by applying coercion."

An RCMP Staff Sergeant is a good friend of mine, he told me that there were more offences when the age was 19 than there are now as far as young people being charged with liquor in cars is concerned. He cited two examples of two locations he was at. He argued that the 18 and 19 year olds are a natural group that group themselves together. When the 19 year olds were allowed to go into licensed beverage rooms and the 18 year olds weren't, the 18 year olds tried to sneak in and they were caught and the charges were much more prominent then, than they are today. He argues that the enforcement is less of a problem today than it was when the age was at 19 because of this natural grouping.

A high school principal who is very highly respected in my constituency told me that the problem in the last two years in his school is much less with alcohol being brought to school than it was before. He argues that if you tell an 18 year old he can't do a certain thing, that is when he is going to prove to you he can. I think this is one of the reasons why I can't support raising it just one year.

If it would help to raise it for one year, then I would be ready to add quite a few years there and say that, maybe we should raise this to the retirement age of 65. If it is going to help for one it would surely help them, because then we would get at the root of the cause and as far as the parents are concerned.

I think besides the education program that I suggested and besides the restraints we can place on our young people, I think one of the key solutions would be that if we change, I would like to see this Act amended to change the regulations that every bar and place that sells liquor for consumption, should have a breathalyzer installed in that bar. Then I would like to see it made illegal to sell liquor to anyone who exceeds .06 alcohol content. This would be getting at the real problems. I think if somebody wants to drown his sorrows and get away from it all with a good drunk, he should do it at home, where he isn't a nuisance to society. There are many other things that could be suggested, Mr. Speaker. But I cannot support this idea of just raising it one year. I don't think backing our young people to the wall and telling them we have no confidence in them is the answer.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. D. BOLDT (Rosthern): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to say few words on this Bill.

I am at a loss as to the Member who just sat down, I thought he said at the beginning that he supported the Bill and when he sat down he did not support the Bill. I think I understood him right. When I listened to the speaker who just sat down, several years ago, I remember him saying and in Committee I debated with him and I told him at that time that I wasn't worried about his family and that he need not be worried about mine. I am worried about the families where the parents don't care. There are far more families where parents don't care than those that do care.

I support the principle of the Bill, I don't support the age. It was wrong and I said so in 1969, to reduce the age

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from 21 to 19 and it was wrong to reduce from 19 to 18.

We at that time — I am not quite sure whether we had a free vote at that time but usually those votes are free votes — and I remember I chastised speakers on both sides of the House. I remember two years ago how speaker after speaker, Government and Opposition stood up and said, oh, we have confidence in the young people. They have the education. We now fly the Boeing 747, and we fly to the moon. But now they sing a different tune. I told them at that time, and experience tells them that it was wrong to reduce the age to 18. There is no argument that any politician can use that the legal age for drinking should be 18. To argue that we can go and fight or sign a contract is no argument whatsoever. I said in the debate in 1970, that if Nixon conscripted or Johnson or Kennedy whoever the President of the United States was at that time, if he would have conscripted the 45 year olds, there would have been no war in Viet Nam because they just wouldn't be foolish enough to go. But the 18 year olds are very easy fodder. They can be picked up, they have no responsibility, you pick them out of the schools, they just graduate out of high school, you can put them in the army, he is the easiest individual to pick up. Nobody has proven to me that an 18 year old is old enough to fight. I say he isn't. If wars were based on 45 year olds, I don't think there would be any wars. That is the argument.

Now the Highway Traffic Safety Committee has heard many briefs and most of them have been confronted with liquor. I remember the former fire chief of Saskatoon, Chief Lennan. He brought in an oral brief, and I am quite sure he wouldn't mind me stating this. He recommended that the Government rescind the Bill and bring the age back to 18. I congratulated him. He was the only supporter that I ever ran across who would agree with me that we should not have reduced the age to 18. He made this statement:

If I was a Member of a political party and we brought in legislation that would reduce the age from 19 to 18 I would resign from that political party.

I remember the Chairman of our Committee, Mr. Thibault, he asked us to comment on it and I wasn't to be quiet on that one. I told Mr. Lennan, I know that he is a Member of the Conservative Party, that there would be no party in Canada for him to support if he didn't believe in 18 year olds drinking. Because the Conservatives in Ontario have it at the 18 year old level, the Tories in Alberta at that time, this was last summer, Lougheed said that he was going to review all the liquor laws and make them freer.

What surprises me most of all is, in Alberta where you had the Premier, being a member of the clergy for many years, 30 years at least, the liquor laws were much more liberal than in CCF Saskatchewan. I know that the NDP and the Liberal Government in 1965 or 1964, were confronted with our young people, saying, "Well, we've got it from Manning, in Alberta, why shouldn't we have it here?" I took this up with Premier Strom in Australia when I had dinner with him and I said that I couldn't for the love of money see why you have a member of the clergy, the head of the government, throwing the liquor laws wide open to the 18 year olds.

You know, you can't preach salvation on one side and give

them liquor on the other side. I was young, and if my parents hadn't taken me to church, I would never have darkened the door of a church. I am sure everyone in this Assembly here would say the same thing.

The real responsibility must be the home. I have always said this. When the Highway Safety Committee was in Arizona, we had a fellow there from the Committee, he was a Reverend, I forget the name, he was being interviewed by the Committee, a Reverend from Detroit, he was then in a hospital rehabilitating the alcoholics. He gave us a really good message on alcoholic rehabilitation. I asked him, do you believe in liquor — do you drink? Oh, yes, he said, I think liquor is a tremendous thing in society. It is a real booster for society. Well, I want to tell my hon. friend from Arm River (Mr. Faris) that you convert the clergy first, get them straightened out first because you are not going to have the home, the church and the government convinced that liquor should be done away with when we don't set the example. Number one is the home. I think if you should go around and poll all the clergy, both Protestant and Catholic, I just wonder how many are sipping away at beer and liquor today. How often have the clergy today talked about the alcohol problem. Oh, they just glance over it, it is none of their business, it is a social thing. If you talk about it the pews will be empty. So they don't talk about it. I don't have to talk about your church or somebody else's, I can talk about mine. Years and years ago many of our homes in my Conference wouldn't have liquor in their homes. Today, I can't estimate, but if somebody said to me 75 per cent of them have, I wouldn't argue against it.

The more affluent we are, the more we are going along with the things of the world. Liquor has never done anybody any good. At least I don't think so.

It has wrecked many, many homes, it has killed many an individual. We, as the government, have to admit that the homes have failed, the schools have failed, the churches have failed. So now the Government has to act. Why should we be the last ones to act? But we are forced to act. If we don't act we are going to be in real trouble.

The Member for Notukeu-Willow Bunch (Mr. Engel) who just sat down — when we debated to lower the legal age — the Coming of Age Act from 19 to 18, I remember a meeting in Saskatoon at an MCC sale, a good number of the Mennonite people from that area came to me and the first thing they said, we want to congratulate you on the stand you took. I said don't congratulate me, you go and have a talk with your Member and try to get him convinced, he sits on that side of the House, he is with the Government.

Apparently they have gotten through to him. We need more Members in this Legislature who take it more seriously. But I have said it privately and I have said it in the House, if you associate alcohol with the vote, you will never solve it. If you identify the Indian problem with the vote, how it is going to affect the turnout at the election, you will never solve the Indian problem. If you identify the welfare problem with how these people are going to vote, you are never going to solve the welfare problem in this province.

I have been in the government and I know these considerations

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were given by the Liberal Government, these considerations are given by your Government, and it is wrong, absolutely wrong. You will not solve the alcohol problem if you are going to look at votes.

Don't think about how the 16 year olds are going to vote. I told former Fire Chief Lennan that if a government is really going to be in trouble and if it happened to be the Liberal government, now it happened to be the NDP, if you would be in real trouble, if you consider yourself in real trouble at the next election, which could be a year or two years from now, you might consider lowering it to 17 or 16. That is wrong, absolutely wrong. It was wrong in 1970, I took that stand and I am not ashamed of it. It was wrong when you formed the Government and reduced it to 18. I can guarantee you that all the consideration it was given, in both instances it was mainly the vote. That is wrong.

I am sure there are other Members on this side of the House who would like to speak on it. I should like to have more time to look at the remarks made by the Member for Arm River.

I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:32 o'clock p.m.