

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fourth Session - Seventeenth Legislature
64th Day

Friday, May 3, 1974.

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

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

HON. E.L. TCHORZEWSKI (Humboldt): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce through you to this House a group of students from the Annaheim School in my constituency. There are 23 Grade Five students who are accompanied here by their teacher, Orville Theisen, the Parish Priest, Father George Brodner, as well as a number of parents. I want to extend to them a welcome to the Legislature this morning. I know that they have a number of places that they will be visiting today and I am sure that they will enjoy their stay in Regina.

I want to, on behalf of the Members, welcome them here and wish them a good day and a safe trip home.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. H.H. ROLFES (Saskatoon Nutana South): — Mr. Speaker, may I join with my colleague in welcoming the students from Annaheim. Anaheim is a little town, if I remember correctly, where I was born and raised.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROLFES: — Well, it's such a long time ago since I have been there. I certainly want to give a special welcome to Father George and I hope that the students and Father George will enjoy their stay here in the House.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. R. GROSS (Gravelbourg): — Mr. Speaker, I should like also to introduce 24 Grade Seven, Eight and Nine students. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Allen from Bateman. I trust they will have an informative morning and I look forward to meeting them later this morning. I believe they are seated in the Speaker's Gallery.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. D.G. STEUART (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether it is Annaheim or Bateman which is the separate school but I, on behalf of the Catholic Church and the Liberal Party, should certainly like to welcome them all here.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

INCREASE IN RENT AT PIONEER VILLAGE

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MR. E.C. MALONE (Regina Lakeview): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I have a question I wish to direct to the Minister of Social Services.

The Minister is aware, I believe, that there have been a drastic increase in the rentals to be paid by residents of the Regina Pioneer Village. I believe some people will be paying as much as \$140 more each month. The Minister announced yesterday, at least according to a press report, that those people at Pioneer Village who receive social aid will merely have the increase absorbed by increased assistance. However, I am sure the Minister is aware as well, that there are many people at Regina Pioneer Village who don't receive social aid but are probably just on the borderline and do not get it at this time.

In view of this, my question is, Mr. Speaker, is the Minister and the Government prepared to look at the situation and perhaps arrange for a further subsidy to Regina Pioneer Village to offset this drastic increase in rent?

HON. A. TAYLOR (Minister of Social Services): — Mr. Speaker, the board of Pioneer Village is the authority responsible for establishing rates. The Department of Social Services is more than happy to assist those who are in need of assistance and there are some, quite frankly, who are not receiving assistance at the present time, but because of the increased rate may need that assistance and certainly to them the assistance will be provided.

INCREASE IN COST OF LIVING

MR. J.G. LANE (Lumsden): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

Living costs have increased in Saskatchewan 8.1 per cent in the last year and last month Regina and Saskatoon had the third highest increase in Canada, in food costs, housing components, transportation, all factors in which the Provincial Government is involved.

I am wondering if the Minister would give consideration to a Prices Review Board to be established by the Government of Saskatchewan and the first priority of investigation be Intercontinental Packers which is owned by the Government of Saskatchewan and its effect on food prices in Saskatchewan?

HON. E.L. TCHORZEWSKI (Minister of Consumer Affairs): — I think first of all, Mr. Speaker, there needs to be a point of clarification, in that Intercontinental Packers is not owned by the Government of Saskatchewan. The Government of Saskatchewan is involved in Intercontinental Packers to the extent — if the Members will be orderly I will continue my answer — of 45 per cent. There have been good reasons given for that particular decision when it was made.

We have not considered establishing a Prices Review Board in Saskatchewan. There is a National Prices Review Board. We don't see a need for establishing a duplication of Prices Review Boards throughout the country in each individual province. As said in this House before if we are going effectively to tackle

the issue of inflation we have to have some concrete action that is taken at the national level because the influences that cause inflation are national as well as international. I have said that before and we continue to maintain that position, Mr. Speaker.

MR. LANE: — By way of a supplementary, I wonder if the Minister is aware of a statement made by the now Premier, in Melville, on June 11, 1971, when he said the only way to fight inflation was to introduce price controls and if elected he would set up a Prices Review Board to protect all the consumers from unwarranted price hikes. Then on June 14, in Swift Current, the Hon. Premier said the Saskatchewan NDP Government would impose selective and wage controls if inflation continued and if Ottawa failed to act. So there is every indication that the Government of Saskatchewan . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! We can't have a statement, the Member can ask a question.

MR. LANE: — I am going to ask the reason of the Minister why he is either being shafted by statements by the Premier or there has been a complete reversal of NDP promises and policies since the election of June, 1971?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, anybody of fair mind who wants to examine those commitments and how they have been acted upon will know that out of 139 commitments made, 133 of them have either been fully carried out or are in the process of partial completion. And for the Member to stand up and say that we have not kept our commitments to the people of Saskatchewan is totally erroneous.

MR. LANE: — Can't you make it 134 and put up a Prices Review Board?

ADJOURNED DEBATES

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 14 — EQUAL PARTNERSHIP IN MARRIAGE

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the Resolution by Mr. Malone:

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 sources.

HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I am sorry the Member rose so quickly that I didn't get a chance. But let me just simply say this, Mr. Speaker. I have delivered my comments with respect to this motion. I am going to be introducing an amendment to the motion. Quite frankly, it was my belief that the motion should not go to a vote in its present suggested form. I stated, I thought, some comprehensive reasons for that. The implications with respect to the other aspects of the division of marital property; the questions with respect to alimony; questions of what happens if the wife received after marriage by way of a bequest a substantial part of her family's estate — does that go into part of the pot for division on an equal basis. I have also outlined to the Members why I felt that we need to have a thorough review of the situation.

The Members will know that the Province of Ontario has been studying it for the past, I would say, several years and has not yet come up with any amendments or with any legislation in this area. Neither has the Federal Law Reform Commission. The problem is fraught with many difficulties. I believe that many of the Members on the opposite side believe that the nature of the problem is one that cannot be dealt with superficially.

The Members will also know that we tabled for first reading yesterday a proposed amendment to The Married Women's Property Act which in many ways is itself a superficial amendment and that's why we have not pursued it as an alternative to become law. The amendment that we tabled does not say that it is a straight question of economic equality in marriage but it certainly allows a judge upon consideration of all circumstances to so rule, given a particular case, given the facts of any particular circumstance. The important thing is we hope that the amendment will provoke discussion, criticisms and comments from women's groups, other organizations, from lawyers, from the bench and from the Law Reform Commission.

I have already told the Members of the House, and I repeat to the province, the Law Reform Commission has been asked by myself to look at this problem and we are so doing. I am led to believe that there is a good possibility that the Commission will hold two or three public hearings in the course of the summer and fall in their consideration of legislation and possible amendments. I think the result will be when we reconvene next year, a set of amendments. I hope if everything works out well, that it will be not only meaningful for women, today's women, but practical, having in mind all the various implications which this type of a drastic change in the law would have.

Let me say that to a large extent the law with respect to married women's rights, is really outdated. It has been built up over years and centuries by now outdated statutes and outdated concepts, and without being critical of the judiciary as they only seek to interpret those laws embedded by precedent in their decisions. We are looking here at a revolution, if you will, in thinking of the position of a woman in marriage and the position of her in terms of economic status in case of a

marriage breakup. We are not going to cure it with the simple passage of an amendment either to The Married Women's Property Act or by a simple passage of a motion on Private Members before this House. I think this deserves very careful consideration by all the Members of this Legislature and all the people of the Province of Saskatchewan.

Having said that may I repeat again my own personal view that I support the basic thrust of the Hon. Member's resolution, the basic concept of economic partnership. I should like to see the law reflect that. I believe that my Department officials, in concert with the Law Reform Commission and others, sooner or later will be able to draft meaningful laws to bring about this objective. In the meantime I think the best course for all of us to take is as indicated in this proposed amendment which I will now move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the Minister of Health (Mr. Smishek):

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

Commends the Government of Saskatchewan for referring the question of married women's property rights to the Saskatchewan Law Reform Commission with a view towards introducing legislation to recognize the concept of equal partnership in marriage as soon as possible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

The debate continues on the motion and the amendment concurrently.

MR. J.G. LANE (Lumsden): — Mr. Speaker, we are a little surprised at the Government having had months to consider this matter and still doesn't have a formal resolution or an amendment prepared. We saw an example of what happens when the Attorney General tries to throw something together at the last minute, it makes it very difficult for the Speaker.

I don't know how much more study the Attorney General wants on this very pressing problem. He has referred to the Ontario Law Reform Commission and the Canadian Law Reform Commission and the Saskatchewan Law Reform Commission and the Bill that he tabled in the Legislature for debate the other day. All that the Attorney General wants to do on this Bill and his amendment proves that he wants to study this problem and he does not want to act on the problem. He has had months to act, he has had months to assess, the Premier says 'years'. I should like to refer the Premier to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women and that was not all that long ago, the Premier may recall, that the suggestion came in and the words of the amendment by the Member for Lakeview (Mr. Malone) who referred to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. It is very interesting that the Attorney General's approach indicates a complete and utter lack of confidence in the Royal Commission on the Status of Women and that is what he is asking the Members of the House to do. He is asking us to insult the Royal Commission on the Status of Women who did study the problem already and have made this very strong, very sincere and, I think, very wise recommendation. This particular resolution was taken from the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. The study has already been done. It is merely an

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avoidance of the issue and that is what the Government opposite is guilty of by having another study and having a White Paper for discussion.

Again, with the amendment that the Attorney General has proposed, we are in fact insulting the competence of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. We are saying that they are incompetent and I urge the Members of this House to vote in favor of the Motion and against the amendment and urge action on the part of the Government and not to postpone the issue by further study.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. A. THIBAUT (Melfort-Kinistino): — Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a short comment. I am not a lawyer and I don't want to enter into the competition.

I want to draw to the attention of the House that there is nothing in the Act to cover total catastrophe. In the case where you have an accident where the family is completely wiped out, it is deemed that the wife, if she is younger, died last and, therefore, everything that is inherited goes to the descendant of the wife's relations, which is totally unfair. Lawyers are drawing up wills and leaving that out and not even mentioning it, therefore, I think the Act should start clearing some of these things up. It would be very important when the Law Reform Commission is making their study that they look into that aspect of the situation. We have total catastrophes every now and then with aeroplane crashes and our automobile accidents and I don't think it is fair for one side of the family to inherit and the other side be denied. If there is no will and even if there is a will, if the total catastrophe area is not covered in the will you are faced with the same problem.

MR. K.R. MacLEOD (Regina Albert Park): — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Kinistino may not be a lawyer but he certainly zeroed in on a point rather clearly. His point is exactly and precisely well taken. We run into that problem frequently in insurance. What happens is, if a husband buys \$50,000 worth of insurance and makes it all payable to his wife and later the two of them are killed in an automobile accident, she lives for five minutes after he lives, and you can prove it, it all goes to her and passes from her to her family entirely. And his family which may well have spent a lot of money putting him through university does not get one cent. So this whole area, quite frankly, needs a lot of examination and of course it needs attention from the lawyers.

Speaking to the Resolution itself, the problem we have is that in our zeal to bring equality and equity to the ladies in our society we may well be doing men a definite and serious injustice. I believe the debate has two parts. The first part is that the law should recognize the contribution of women to the marriage, it may be a large contribution, it may be a small contribution, but the law should recognize it. That does not necessarily mean that there will be an equal distribution. It may mean that the wife should get more than half. In some cases the wife should get less than half. If you look at the contribution of the two parties to the marriage, during the marriage and judge it fairly, then I think justice will be done.

But we cannot do that without having some recognition of all the various possibilities.

For example, are we going to eliminate alimony? That is, are women going to be entitled to receive half the property and complete property rights and still have rights to alimony and support. Are women going to have full and complete property rights and still have homestead rights? As you all know women have homestead rights, men do not. Now in the provinces like Manitoba The Dower Act, acts equally for both the husband and the wife. But that is not the case in Saskatchewan. In Saskatchewan, it is a completely one-sided affair, the wife has homestead rights and the husband does not. If we are to give the wife complete equality as to property rights and if this resolution were carried out, it would amount virtually to community of property. If we were to do that and leave with women all the alimony, homestead and other rights that they now have, it does seem to me we might well have tilted the pendulum too far in the other direction. More than that, however, I don't think it will want to go to community of property in place of alimony rights. Let's suppose you have a couple married, say 20 year olds. The husband is at university and the wife is working. So she puts him through university and at age 25 or 28 he become a lawyer — I had better pick a better example, somebody that makes money — let's suppose he becomes a teacher or a doctor, so at age 27 you have the husband, who has graduated from university, he has been put through university by the wife, but they have no property at all. But then he has a tremendous income making potential. If they were suddenly to separate or become divorced, community of property and sharing of property is of no value to her. Surely women don't want to give up some of the traditional legal rights they do have. I agree that this matter is a very complicated one.

I support the spirit of the motion by the Hon. Member for Lakeview. I am not sure that the amendment isn't out of order, having regard to the fact there is virtually an identical one already on the Order Paper. For that reason I was a little disappointed to see the Bill come in, because it is too narrow, it has to be examined by the Law Reform Commission because it is a very broad field. I support the intention of the Hon. Member for Lakeview. I am a little reluctant to congratulate the Government. Therefore, I will perhaps vote for the amendment with some regret.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. E.C. MALONE (Regina Lakeview): — Mr. Speaker, I'll be very brief. I should like to repeat some of the things I said earlier when I moved this Resolution. I believe at that time I acknowledged that the problem was one that would take a good deal of work to solve. A review of my remarks I think will indicate to the Attorney General that I acknowledged there was a great deal of difficulty, that we were talking about such fields of law as alimony, dependents' relief applications, land holding, Homestead Acts and so on. Really the purpose of bringing in the Resolution was to indicate to the Government that we were dissatisfied that they had done nothing in view of the Rathwell and Murdoch cases. I think the resolution may have been effective in that it has moved the Government to take some steps at least to review the law so far as it respects to women's rights.

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I must say, Mr. Speaker, that the amendment brought in by the Attorney General, I believe yesterday, to The Married Women's Property Act in my view does not begin to come to grips with the problem. It is certainly not broad enough, in fact it does not incorporate the basic principles that were contained in my resolution which, as you are aware, is in the same wording as the recommendations by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I must say that I am pleased to see that the Government is going to take some steps between now and the next session to bring about the proper legislation to cure this injustice. I am afraid I could not vote for the amendment, because I don't think the Government can be commended at this stage for doing anything. They have obviously been embarrassed into moving, as a result of this resolution. I trust that the Law Reform Commission and the Attorney General's Department will get to work immediately and that at the next session we'll have proper legislation before us to be considered and to be voted on.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

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

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. McIsaac that: **The First Report of the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Printing** be now received.

MR. K.R. MacLEOD (Regina Albert Park): — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I made a few remarks with respect to the problems in Northern Saskatchewan, the fact that the Government of Saskatchewan had seen fit to give a friendly contract to a company, a consortium of three companies with a total capitalization of \$7 for the three corporations, and the mess that that brought to the northern people, the number of people in northern Saskatchewan who are going to suffer injury and financial loss through the manipulations of the Government. The fact that the Government had indicated a total aloofness from this Delta Holdings operation because they were to have no money involved in it at all and they were to come into the picture after the two apartments and the 30 houses were constructed and rent them for the Government. Then we discover later on that the Government's commitment is in excess of \$800,000. We reviewed the facts that there were buckets of money, some half million dollars sitting around in baskets and boxes without properly being handled. We observe that there was a Task Force of some 14 people who had to descend on the North to try to straighten that matter out. We also observe that in one sub-office alone it appears that some \$100,000 may be overpaid in social assistance and welfare payments. Today I should like to deal with one other aspect of the Public Accounts Committee and that is what is really happening in the Land Bank.

I have two or three comments to make. The first is that

the Land Bank is not at all responsive to the needs of the people and does, in fact, carry out the intention of the Land Bank as expressed by the Opposition far better than the statements of the Government. I think if you look at the transcripts commencing with that of March 28th you will discover that the Land Bank is out to buy land. It is not intended to buy land at fair prices, for the Commission Chairman admitted that the same quality of land identically in one area may receive a higher price than the same quality of land in some other area, despite the fact that they are identical, the difference being based entirely upon the difference in neighborhood prices. So if the prices in area No. 1 are higher, the Land Bank is prepared to pay more money for land in that area. If area number 2 has prices at recent sales of lower value, then the Land Bank drops down to the lower value. In each case the Land Bank officers in the Land Bank match the local prices or outbid local farmers. Just in case there is any question about that I refer to the statement of the Chairman of the Commission on page 221, in the transcript. It says:

We still base our price on local sales, that is, the average of the local sales. Now if the next door neighbor wants to pay the top of those local sales we'll outbid him naturally.

Now what is happening is that the Land Bank then isn't attempting to provide a place to sell and, if there are no other sales available which is what we were told when this was presented to us. They are an authority that wants to buy land and if it has to do so, it will outbid local farmers in accordance with the testimony of the Chairman before the Public Accounts committee. So that I think puts the lie to some of the remarks made in this House by those who so strongly support the Land Bank for the social good and economic good it is to do to the farmers.

In fact there are cases that have been brought to the attention of the MLAs where the Land Bank has outbid local farmers and have, therefore, done no good for that local area.

Secondly, the Land Bank is not responsive for what happens in the area. What happens is that they have shown that they do not consider other departments nor do they make any effort to determine if a farmer can sell to someone else. They admitted that their counselling service is not intended to help the farmer at all. The counselling service is a service to the Commission and not to the vendor. On page 22, Mr. Moxley, the vice-chairman said this; that it is not intended to show the farmer can get the most money for his land, not at all, that counselling service is intended to show the farmers how they can deal with the Commission. I quote Mr. Moxley on page 222. There are three questions.

Mr. MacLeod: Well the counselling service intends to show the farmer how they can deal with the Commission. Is that correct? It is not a service intended to obtain the maximum price for the farmer?

Mr. Moxley: You mean how to dispose of his land for the maximum prices? Is that what you are suggesting?

Mr. MacLeod: Yes.

Mr. Moxley: No, it isn't.

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It isn't intended, according to Mr. Moxley, to show the farmer how he can dispose of his land for the maximum price. It is solely intended to show how the farmer can sell to the Commission. It is not intended, however, as a service to the farmer as it would be if the farmer were able to get a better price as a result of these counselling services.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, I regret to say that the Land Bank Commission has not served the people of Saskatchewan in the way the speeches in this House would have us believe, unless you listen to the speeches of the Opposition. We said and we say again, it is a scheme and I don't like the word "scheme", it is a program by the Government of Saskatchewan to go forth and purchase land. They will pay more in one area if they have to outbid the local farmers for that land, they will pay less in another area regardless of the value of the land.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on at some length on this aspect. I don't propose to do so. I cannot help but remark, however, on how totally the Land Bank isolates itself and its files from reality.

On Page 227 it became obvious to us how totally incurious the Land Bank seemed to be with respect to local sales. They deliberately kept off their files any records that did not reflect properly on the Land Bank. I might also say that they denied us information with respect to sales. A resolution was put before the Committee asking that the third and every 40th file thereafter be presented to the Committee for examination of their procedures. That was outvoted. The Government Members refused to accept that. They turned us down and we were unable to get that information.

It also became apparent, Mr. Speaker, that the records that the Annual Report of the Land Bank Commission of which the Hon. Minister is so proud, are inaccurate. They acknowledged that the number of new units shown in the Report couldn't possibly reflect any accuracy at all, because whether land was taken, bought from a farmer, and added to someone else's holdings, thereby not creating a new farmer it nevertheless showed up on the Land Bank records as a new unit. Well, it may be a new person and a new lease, with whom the Land Bank Commission is dealing, but it isn't a new farming unit. The fact of the matter is, a careful examination of the transcript will cast considerable doubt on whether there is one single new unit in Saskatchewan. It is very possible that the effect of the Land Bank has not increased the number of farmers, by one.

Consequently, Mr. Speaker, while I have grave doubts about some of the workings of the Public Accounts Committee due to the denial of information from the Government Members, nonetheless I think it has served this purpose. It allows us to examine the officers of the departments directly. We frequently get more candid answers when we are asking the Minister, quite apart from asking the people who do the work and therefore usually know more about it. So it has served that purpose. I think we have received a lot of information from the Public Accounts Committee that we would not have got in the House in questioning the Ministers.

Secondly, it shows how foolish are some of the remarks made by Members of the House. The Hon. Member for Hanley (Mr. Mostoway), I am sure with great conscientiousness said

that his Welfare Committee went to the North and found absolutely nothing wrong. Now that is the kind of remark that we got when he was speaking on that Welfare Committee. They went to the North of Saskatchewan and found nothing wrong. The fact of the matter is, that when you have \$500,000 in money tucked in boxes and in Buffalo Narrows alone you have overpayments of welfare by more than \$100,000, you wonder if the Members are just closing their eyes or if they actually believe totally what the Ministers tell them. Even the Ministers, I am sure, don't know for certain. I am not suggesting in any way that the Hon. Member for Hanley lied in the House, not in the least. I am suggesting that you wander all around northern Saskatchewan unless you have the right to inspect the documents, unless you have the right to examine people, fully, freely, without fetters you are not going to find anything wrong. You may have a great deal of suspicion, but unless you have the right to examine fully you aren't going to find anything. Listening to people submit briefs to a committee is not the way to examine into the operations of the Department.

Mr. Speaker, with these brief words, I want to suggest that I have enjoyed sitting on this Committee; I have enjoyed the work of all other Members of the Committee and I have enjoyed the little battles I had with the Minister and others. Particularly I cannot help, as I say, complimenting the hon. vice-chairman for the contribution he continuously makes and the chairman to the workings of the Committee. For the reasons indicated by the hon. Chairman of the committee, because the recommendations were so watered down by the Government majority, they barely gave a slap on the wrist to the Government, and because it makes a mockery of the recommendation procedure, consequently, I support the Resolution that the report be received. I could not, of course, support any Resolution that it be concurred in.

HON. J.E. BROCKELBANK (Minister of Government Services): — Mr. Speaker, in my comments on receiving the Report from the Committee on Public Accounts and Printing, I wish to echo the comments of the chairman when he presented the Report and support him in the suggestion that the auditor, the comptroller, departmental people and staffs be given a vote of thanks by the Public Accounts and Printing Committee for their co-operation while working with the Committee and appearing before the Committee.

I think it is worth noting at this time, Mr. Speaker, that the time consumed by the Public Accounts and Printing Committee seems to be extending itself with each passing year. In 1972 there were six meetings; in 1973 there were 10 meetings; in 1974 you will recall the chairman reported there were 18 meetings. My recognition of this particular fact is to indicate that Members of the Committee have taken the general attitude that as much time should be used by the Public Accounts Committee as is adequate to carry out their investigations.

It should be noted in passing, that the Government majority on the Committee in no way attempted to restrict the time that was consumed by the Committee nor was there any serious indication at any time that it was their intent to compress the amount of time allowed to the Opposition Members on the Committee.

I note that the Public Accounts for 1972-73 were laid on

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the table December 19, 1973, and the first meeting of the Committee was on March 8, 1974.

During the meetings the members of the Committee availed themselves of the opportunity to ask dozens upon dozens of questions about Agriculture, Land Bank, Department of Northern Saskatchewan, Public Services Commission, Executive Council, Continuing Education and the Department of Public Health, as well as extensive questioning of the auditor, the comptroller and their staff.

A check of the verbatim reports seems to indicate that 17 official motions for information were considered by the Committee. Of those, 13 were approved and four were rejected. I know, Mr. Speaker, this is contrary to the comments of the Hon. Member for Albert Park (Mr. MacLeod) who suggested, quote:

Time after time resolutions were defeated.

The opinion of the Member for Albert Park that time after time resolutions were defeated is false. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Members of this House are becoming accustomed to the exaggerated comments of the Member for Albert Park and consequently are beginning to treat him accordingly.

I invite the Members of the House, Mr. Speaker, to examine the verbatim report and satisfy themselves. This is the verbatim report here — that questions were asked and answered, that motions were presented, answered and passed and that the general conduct of the Committee was such as to carry out its responsibilities to the people of Saskatchewan and his Chamber. Mr. Speaker, later I will have more to say about some of the distortions attempted by the Member for Albert Park.

It is fair to say, and I agree with the chairman, when he presented his report, that the Committee members were able to reach consensus on the report as presented by him on points one to eight and eleven to thirteen inclusive. The Committee's opinion on points number nine and ten was divided.

Members of the House will recall, point number nine dealt with commitments made in excess of new unexpended appropriations and point number ten dealt with the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

I might say that the lack of unanimity became most apparent when the Committee began to deal with item number thirteen in the Provincial Auditor's report, wherein a table set out the commitments made by the departments and agencies of the Government in excess of net unexpended appropriations for the year under review.

It is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that Members of the Opposition on the Public Accounts and Printing Committee treated that item in the auditor's report as an astounding new revelation which they thought should be treated accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, the context of the verbatim report will show clearly, that the Opposition Members on the Public Accounts and Printing Committee intended to exploit the item politically to the fullest extent possible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BROCKELBANK: — You weren't there. I will say that the Member for Milestone (Mr. MacDonald) was not there, Mr. Speaker. Allow me to put this in its proper perspective. In the first place, I agree the provincial auditor has every right, yes, a responsibility to bring to the attention of the Public Accounts Committee the facts that commitments in excess of appropriations were being made and to suggest corrective action be taken.

With regard to the historical context. I have here reports of the provincial auditor for the last six years for the Province of Saskatchewan. These reports, Mr. Speaker, span two different governments, two different auditors and numerous Public Accounts Committees. Permit me to deal with them, Mr. Speaker, in ascending order as regards commitments in excess of net unexpended appropriations.

In 1967-68 under the previous administration, there were commitments in excess of appropriations of \$2,661,491.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Ohhhh!

MR. BROCKELBANK: — The greatest offender, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. MacDONALD (Milestone): — Don't talk about the past. Talk about DNS.

MR. BROCKELBANK: — Mr. Speaker, the Member for Milestone, it should be noted in the record, wants to change the subject. I don't blame the Member wanting to change the subject.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BROCKELBANK: — I said, Mr. Speaker, and I repeat, in 1967-68 under the previous administration there were commitments in excess of appropriations of \$2.6 million. The greatest offender was the Department of Highways and Transportation with commitments in excess of appropriations of \$2.2 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Ohhhhhh!

MR. BROCKELBANK: — The largest offender, again, was the Department of Highways and Transportation with commitments in excess of appropriations of \$2 million. This was not reported in the provincial auditor's report.

In 1969-70, under the previous Liberal administration there were commitments in excess of appropriations of \$187,000. The largest offender was the Department of Welfare, at \$129,669. This was not included in the auditor's report, Mr. Speaker.

In the fiscal period 1970-71, the provincial auditor retired and an acting auditor was appointed. In the 1970-71 period under the previous administration, Mr. Speaker, commitments in excess of appropriations were \$99,486. The biggest offender was the Department of Telephones at \$53,893. This was not reported in the auditor's report, Mr. Speaker.

In 1971, I think I should remind the House at this point

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there was a change in government in Saskatchewan. In the fiscal period '71-72, the acting auditor was appointed permanent auditor. In 1971-1972 commitments in excess of appropriations amounted to \$192,000. The largest offender being the Department of Highways and Transportation at \$85,919. This was not reported in the auditor's report.

In 1972-73 commitments in excess of appropriations were \$827,190, the largest offender as everyone knows was the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, at \$666,630. This was reported in the auditor's report.

Mr. Speaker, it would be a useless and a needless exercise to speculate as to why two different auditors over a period of five of the six years I have enumerated did not report commitments in excess of appropriations by the provincial auditor is the result of more active pursuit of the duties and responsibilities which fall to the auditor.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BROCKELBANK: — It is clear to anyone who wishes to observe, Mr. Speaker, that about \$6,435,000 of commitments in excess of net unexpended appropriations have been made over the last six years. However, less than 13 per cent of that amount occurred in the year under review. Just so that the Members will have that suitably impressed upon their minds, I will repeat it, Mr. Speaker. In those six years, \$6,435,000 commitments in excess of net unexpended appropriations were made and less than 13 per cent occurred in the year under review.

Mr. Speaker, I would be the first one to agree that this practice should be curbed and, in fact, every attempt made to eliminate the practice. In reality the previous Minister of Finance had directed the comptroller to act on the situation and subsequently corrective changes have been initiated before the auditor's report was laid on the table, Mr. Speaker. However, the facts are clearly before us. Commitments in excess of appropriations is a practice that has existed for some time and is not something that occurred in the year under review for the first time, as the Members of the Opposition would like the public to think.

I note that the chairman . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Hear, hear!

MR. BROCKELBANK: — I'll get to that, if you can just hold your nervous tension for a while, I will get there. I note that the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee in his opening remarks to this Chamber on April 30th, described me as, quote:

. . . not too concerned . . .

Another phrase was:

His actions in trying to water down and dilute the final recommendations . . .

The third phrase, quote:

A deliberate attempt of his to shield the Government . . .

I believe that the chairman's remarks arose as a result of amendments I offered to point number ten in the report that he eventually presented to this House. I am sure that the Members of the House will be interested to know that the rough draft presented to the Public Accounts and Printing Committee for discussion by the chairman was highly political. It can be demonstrated that the first draft intended to color the evidence and information which was obtained by the Committee in its hearings. I ask all Members to carefully look at point number ten, in the chairman's report which was presented to the House, which is practically word for word, the amendment I offered to the Committee which in turn was accepted by the Committee. Comment number ten in the report dealt with the Department of Northern Saskatchewan wherein the Committee noted, quote:

1. The establishment of bank accounts without Treasury Board approval.
2. The incurring of large bank overdrafts.
3. Extended delays in payments of supplier accounts.
4. Delayed deposit and recording of revenue obtained by DNS.
5. The substantial overpayment of benefits to social service recipients.

Which, Mr. Speaker, was followed by a comment and a recommendation as follows:

Your Committee regrets that the Department did not correct the lax administrative procedures in the year under review. Your Committee recommends more thorough scrutiny of all new departments and agencies by the comptroller. If necessary new staff and methods should be employed to prevent a recurrence of the lax administrative procedures which existed in DNS in the year under review.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, does that indicate to you that I am not concerned about the responsibilities and the importance of the Public Accounts and Printing Committee holds in this system? I think you will agree with me, Mr. Speaker, that to suggest that point number ten represents a shielding of the Government by me is laughable.

Mr. Speaker, you will then recall that the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee quoted extensively from a letter sent to Mr. Bowerman, Minister of Northern Saskatchewan from the provincial auditor, dated December 12, 1973. I note that the quotes were given reasonably dispassionately up to page seven, where the chairman quoted the following paragraph:

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

By the nature of this comments it became quite clear that the chairman of the Committee in his report allowed his political bias to assert itself by suggesting that the item I have just quoted illustrated his point that overpayments in one suboffice

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were confirmed as being \$100,00 in the year under review. Previous to this time, Mr. Speaker, the chairman in Committee had made that same misrepresentation in his rough draft to the Committee. You will note, Mr. Speaker, that the chairman expanded his remarks beyond the auditor's quotation and neglected to observe two rather important points.

The auditor stated that the \$100,000 overpayment was an estimate and he further suggested that it could span a period of 12 to 18 months. Members, therefore, can appreciate that a period of 12 to 18 months cannot conceivably all fall in the year under review.

It might be well, Mr. Speaker, to look at the verbatim report of the discussion regarding the estimated \$100,000 overpayment. Page 350 in the verbatim report has the following comment:

Mr. Carter: Yes. I indicated that the audit in this area is not a final one at this point in time, but the amount that would appear to be a close figure would be in the neighborhood of \$100,000. This has been determined on a progressive basis on audits over the last four months. Those amounts that were identified as overpayments on various files have been acted on, whereas the cost of recoveries are being made at a level we feel would not adversely affect the recipients at all.

On page 351 of the verbatim report, as follows:

Mr. MacLeod: I take it the identification of overpayments is an ongoing thing and that in the past four months you have identified some \$100,000?

Mr. Carter, who I might say is an official of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Carter: If you are saying that we have identified \$100,000 that has occurred in the last four months, that is not correct.

Mr. MacLeod: I understood your answer to be in the last four months you identified \$100,000 in overpayments which had occurred in the period under review?

Mr. Carter immediately responded by saying:

And before. (Meaning in the period under review and before).

Mr. Carter continued:

The audit has gone back in some cases into 1971 and 1970. It has been over quite a long period of time. As a matter of fact before we came into the picture, as you know, we took over the social services component in October of 1972 and these audits go back prior to that period of time.

Mr. Speaker, page 364 in the verbatim report contains a comment by Mr. Lutz, the provincial auditor, wherein he discusses the present good relationship with the administrative people in Northern Saskatchewan. Dealing with the \$100,000 the auditor

said in part:

Yes, you are right Bob (referring to Mr. Carter). It is probably beyond March 1973, simply because this was the time span that came up with this number. But really how accurate it is in the time span, is difficult to tell. It could go back to say January 1973 to now, or it could go back — it's hard to say. The problem is with these cases, once you start looking at some of the back steps, one step will lead to another step and pretty soon you are back three years in an extreme case. Really you have no way of knowing where it is going to stop.

Therefore, I am sure you can see, Mr. Speaker, why my amendment to point 10 sub (5) in the report, sought to delete references to \$100,000.

Although it was preferred by the chairman, upon examination of the record, it proved to be: First an estimate, and secondly, a time span which could not definitely be determined.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to deal with point 10 (4) in the chairman's report. The verbatim report will show that the chairman's rough draft of point 10(4) reads as follows:

(iv) The mishandling of revenue funds by the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

The series of events dealing with this particular aspect of the examination of DNS was as follows: First, the chairman presented his rough draft; secondly, I presented my amendment which read as follows:

Delayed deposit and recording of revenue obtained by the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

It was my feeling, Mr. Speaker, that the amendment was required since, in my view, the phrase 'mishandling of revenue' had a far wider scope of meaning than the facts would support. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, money and cheques were handled in this instance, in the amount of \$526,100, of which \$525,000 was in cheques. The verbatim report shows on page 564, after a discussion of the use of the phrase 'mishandling of revenue' as opposed to 'delayed deposit and recording of revenue,' Mr. Lutz the provincial auditor stated:

I don't believe mishandling is the correct word in this instance.

Thereupon, Mr. Speaker, the vote was taken in Committee and my proposed amendment was accepted. The verbatim report . . .

MR. McISAAC: — On a Point of Order. The Hon. Member's reporting of the statement of the auditor is not a correct report of it. I think he is well aware of it. The auditor has corrected that statement that it was incorrectly transcribed.

MR. BROCKELBANK: — Mr. Speaker, I quoted the page in the verbatim report and if the Member wants to deal with it, he may deal with it. And I quoted it exactly.

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MR. McISAAC: — It was incorrectly transcribed in the unedited version that you are quoting from.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! Well those are debating points, they aren't Points of Order, they are debating points.

MR. McISAAC: — No, it's very much a debating point, Mr. Speaker. He is reading a statement attributing it to the auditor, that was later corrected by the auditor.

MR. SPEAKER: — Those are debating points.

MR. BROCKELBANK: — I am referring to the verbatim report, Mr. Speaker, which is available to all Members of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! Will the Member for Lakeview take his own seat if he wishes to make comments.

MR. BROCKELBANK: — I would say, Mr. Speaker, I was saying, that thereupon the vote was taken in the Committee and my proposed amendment was accepted. The verbatim report on page 566 shows that the debate continued after the amendment was accepted by the Committee. It should be noted that Mr. Carlson, after a comment by the auditor, regarding deposits in the year under review, was in the process of offering a further amendment in part as follows:

Mr. Carlson: Okay, I had earlier said that I would be prepared to change those words. If you want to say 'lack of deposit in the year under review', or the fact that it wasn't deposited, anything that you say naturally in the terms of depositing or recording, I am prepared to support, but to say 'mishandling', as far as I am concerned I will leave it like this but if somebody wants to suggest saying . . .

It can be noted then, Mr. Speaker, in the verbatim report, that the chairman of the Committee cut off Mr. Carlson in mid sentence and moved the discussion to point 10 (5).

Now, Mr. Speaker, I should like to deal with the Land Bank Commission and the chairman's comments with regard to the Land Bank Commission. The chairman of the Committee, in presenting his report to this Chamber, made reference to the Land Bank Commission in point 11. The chairman then took the opportunity to expand unfairly on the point, to the extent of suggesting that some devious manoeuvring was going on in the Land Bank Commission because the fiscal year-end of that agency was established by a Board Minute. It is true, Mr. Speaker, that the fiscal year of the agency was established by a Board Minute and that the Committee noted that with an appropriate recommendation to which I agreed.

However, there is nothing to suggest that anything more serious than that which is noted in point 11 happened in the year under review with regard to the Land Bank. On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, I have a copy of the Land Bank Report for

the year ending March 31st, 1973, wherein there is a page entitled "The Saskatchewan Land Bank Commission."

MR. D.F. MacDONALD: — What page number?

MR. BROCKELBANK: — There is no number. It's right there, buff color. We already dealt with that in the Committee.

Financial statement for the period July 1, 1972 to March 31st, 1973. Office of the Provincial Auditor, Regina, Saskatchewan. Overleaf on that particular page, Mr. Speaker, the auditor's comment in part is as follows:

In my opinion these financial statements read in conjunction with a note appended to the statement of revenues and expenditures present fairly the financial position of the Saskatchewan Land Bank fund as at March 31st, 1973, the results of its operations for the period July 1, 1972 to March 31st, 1973, the cash transactions of the Administration Account for the same period and funds in this account on hand at March 31st, 1973, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Signed: W.G. Lutz, C.A., Provincial Auditor.

Mr. Speaker, I said that I would take an opportunity to make a few more remarks about the comments of the Member for Albert Park (Mr. MacLeod) when he spoke first in this debate on April 30th.

At the beginning of my remarks, I believe I effectively dealt with the suggestion that he was denied information by the Committee. The record is clear. Of the 17 Motions placed in the Committee, 14 were placed by the Hon. Member for Albert Park. Mr. Speaker, no member of the Public Accounts Committee asked more questions and received more answers than the Hon. Member for Albert Park.

I should now, Mr. Speaker, like to deal with a much more serious charge, made by the Member for Albert Park, when he spoke in debate on April 30th. He said, and I quote him directly:

I have no doubt that there will be an effort by this Government to muzzle the provincial auditor.

Mr. Speaker, don't rely on my word — let's rely on the record for information about who responds to the requests of the provincial auditor and who responds to the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee. First the provincial auditor:

During the seven years of the last Liberal regime, six positions were requested over a period of six budget reviews.

Were six positions granted to the provincial auditor, Mr. Speaker? No, one position was approved.

MR. STEUART: — They weren't working hard enough anyway.

MR. BROCKELBANK: — The Leader of the Opposition says they weren't working

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hard enough anyway. Well, I intend to get around to the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee and I'll invite him to venture the same comment then, because obviously there were recommendations being made that weren't being carried out.

Mr. Speaker, seven years of Liberal regime, six positions requested, one position approved. However, to be perfectly fair, Mr. Speaker, in May and August of 1970 the final year of the Liberals in office, well after the 1970-71 Budget was approved, three additional positions were finally approved for the provincial auditor. They could see the writing on the wall and they wanted to have a strong auditor's staff in place.

What about the New Democratic Party Government's record? I'll tell you, and I said, don't rely on me, check the record. In 1972-73 no positions requested by the provincial auditor. In 1973-74, four positions requested by the auditor. Mr. Speaker, I'll give you a guess, how many were approved?

MR. STEUART: — Five.

MR. BROCKELBANK: — Four approved. Four asked for, four approved. In 1974-75, no positions requested by the provincial auditor. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, after three Budget reviews, under a New Democratic Government, four positions requested, four positions approved. Is that muzzling the provincial auditor, Mr. Speaker? No, Mr. Speaker, that's open government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BROCKELBANK: — I might add, Mr. Speaker, at this Session, now on your desk, is legislation that is being introduced by the Government, to increase the provincial auditor's salary by approximately 20 per cent from \$22,400 to \$26,598, effective October 1, 1973. Mr. Speaker, that's not muzzling the auditor. There's no hint of muzzling the auditor whatsoever — more staff, as much as requested by the auditor, and an increase in salary for the provincial auditor.

I want to stress at this time, Mr. Speaker, that the unusual administrative problems that were encountered in the Department of Northern Saskatchewan have in no way been hidden from the provincial auditor. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the opposite is true. All Members of the committee will recall a letter dated December 12, 1973, to the Hon. G.R. Bowerman, Minister of Northern Saskatchewan wherein Mr. Lutz, the auditor, makes reference to the Task Force Report, of which he received a copy. It is a fact, that when the Government became aware of the serious administrative problems in the Department of Northern Saskatchewan the Government immediately appointed a senior official of the Department of Finance to lead up a Task Force with specific instructions to identify the problems, put an immediate halt to the bad practices which were being allowed, and to suggest remedial action.

Let me stress that the Task Force Report referred to in the provincial auditor's letter, was an internal document of the Department of Finance and need not have been released to anyone. However, with a view to isolating the problems and identifying the bad practices, the Department of Finance did make a copy of the Internal Task Force Report available to the

provincial auditor. Mr. Speaker, I say to you, this is not muzzling the auditor, this is open Government.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that it is within my knowledge that the Minister in charge of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan was fully committed to the view that the problems should be solved and the situation rectified. Mr. Speaker, given the size of the task to be done in northern Saskatchewan and given the many problems which will beset the person in charge, I must say that I am proud to support and be associated with the Hon. Ted Bowerman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BROCKELBANK: — I believe it is fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that he is solving some of the problems in northern Saskatchewan that the people to your left, Mr. Speaker, shirked while they were in office.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BROCKELBANK: — Mr. Speaker, I want to spend some more time dealing with the ridiculous statement made by the Member for Albert Park (Mr. MacLeod) that this Government intends to muzzle the auditor.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, my previous statement showed that the Liberal Government never, at any time, intended to muzzle the auditor. Their method was strangulation.

Mr. Speaker, let me leave aside this subtle form of an intimidation used against previous provincial auditors by the previous Liberal administration and deal for a moment with the Treasury Board regulations.

The 1967 Report of the Select Standing committee on Public Accounts and Printing, endorsed the recommendation of the provincial auditor, which read as follows:

I would recommend that the existing Treasury Board Regulations be reviewed and consolidated in order that they may be issued to the various departments for their guidance. I would further recommend that in those instances where legislation implies that Treasury Board Regulations be issued for guidance of the department either in the procedures to be followed or the accounting records to be kept, steps be taken to ensure that the regulations are issued.

The problem, Mr. Speaker, identified in 1967 under the previous administration was not resolved until the fiscal year 1972-73 when a revised edition of Treasury Board Regulations was printed in November of 1972.

Section 6 of the 1973 report of the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts acknowledged that the job had been done. It can be noted, Mr. Speaker, that a continuous updating of the Treasury Board Regulations has been carried on by the comptroller's office since 1972 when the regulations were revised and consolidated.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to trust accounts. The 1970

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Report of the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Printing stated in Section 6:

In the perusal of Public Accounts in the Auditor's Departmental Report your committee noted a wide variation in the financial reporting of the various trust accounts. Your committee would recommend more detail and uniformity in the reporting of trust accounts under the control of Government departments.

It should be noted that although this item had not been acted on in 1971 it was completed in the year ending March 31st, 1973.

Mr. Speaker, the matter of gross budgeting was commented on in Section 8 of the 1970 Report of the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Printing as follows:

The Province of Saskatchewan has for many years followed the practice of budgeting and accounting on a net basis. That is, certain revenues are estimated and recorded as reductions of expenditures rather than items of revenue. In the opinion of the committee this makes the estimates and accounts difficult to interpret. Your committee recommends consideration be given to budgeting and accounting on a gross basis.

Mr. Speaker, I say that the implementation of gross budgeting in 1973-74 fiscal year by a New Democratic Government clearly illustrates that the previous Liberal administration did not have the political courage to implement gross budgeting, whereas the New Democratic Party has responded to the call for a more open government. Mr. Speaker, I have cited these examples to illustrate clearly and without doubt to this Legislative Chamber that this New Democratic Government has demonstrated that it has courage to move ahead. It has the courage to practise open government and it has the desire to respond to any reasonable request of the Public Accounts Committee and the provincial auditor.

Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the balance of the comments from the Member for Albert Park today. After sifting the chaff from the wheat I came up with what appeared to be a couple of kernels and I don't necessarily regard them as truths. The Member reiterated the charge that he was denied information in the Committee. If there is one Member who should not mention that charge in this House it is the Member for Albert Park. As I illustrated he asked more questions and got more answers than anybody else on the Committee. I am not saying that is wrong, that is perfectly right. But he says that in the Land Bank Commission that they should have received the third file and every fortieth file thereafter. I ask you and I ask the House, would the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation, SEDCO give its files for everyone to look at? I don't think SEDCO would, Mr. Speaker. Those files were compiled on the basis that the person giving the information felt that his information was going to be treated in a confidential manner. The confidentiality of those files is being maintained and I believe will continue to be maintained, Mr. Speaker. So I deny the charge made by the Member for Albert Park that information was denied to him. He asks questions which we are not going to answer as conscientious Members and guardians of that confidential information that has been presented to us in Land Bank or in SEDCO or in any other area that is sensitive to that extent.

The Member reiterates his remark that the records of the Land Bank are inaccurate. And, Mr. Speaker, I can only refer, again, to the Land Bank Commission Report which states clearly, it has the auditor's seal on it, as being accurate and fairly presented. I think, Mr. Speaker, that the charges of the Member for Albert Park fall on deaf ears in this Chamber when he suggests that there is something wrong with the Saskatchewan Land Bank.

During his remarks he said nothing about the financial operation of the Land Bank, he talked about policy. There are other areas where the policy of the Land Bank can be discussed and I am sure the Member will take the opportunity to raise those comments at that time in the proper place. However, I do not accept his charge that information was denied in the committee and I think I have successfully set aside that particular charge.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. D.F. MacDONALD (Moose Jaw North): — Mr. Speaker, I am just as disappointed in the speech that the Minister has just made as I was disappointed at many of the actions that he took during the Public Accounts Committee. I think the very speech that he has made today has proved the point made in this House by the chairman of this Committee and the Member for Albert Park that this Minister is nothing more than an apologist for the Government. He was put on that Committee to try and gloss things over, to try to protect the Government. Not once in his speech today did he refer to the gross irregularities that were pointed out by both the auditor and which were subsequently discovered through questioning by members of the Committee.

The Minister even on one point stooped to misquoting the provincial auditor, he deliberately quoted from a passage that he knew was incorrect in the transcriptions of our Committee. He absolutely and deliberately used this. If he had even read the rest of the paragraph he would see that the statement that he gave would be completely out of context. It was wrong, he knew what was said by the auditor and yet he used this to try and prove his argument.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MacDONALD: — There is no question that the only reason that the Minister was on that Committee was to subvert the other Members.

The Minister said that the time of the Public Accounts seems to be extending itself. Well, this is a fact and it will undoubtedly extend itself further and further and further. With well-run departments it is quite reasonable to suspect that we could bring a department in and in three or four hours of questioning could look into that department and satisfy ourselves. This is not so with departments such as DNS. It is going to take six or eight meetings to discover anything and to pry any information out of them.

He talked about motions and what were turned down and what were not turned down. The Committee required members to put all their requests for information in the form of motions. Then members of the Government would say, notice of motion. To give you an example of what was required. We asked for a copy of a

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CUPE agreement, a very simple request for information, just a copy of a CUPE agreement from 1972, a very reasonable request. We had to make a written motion and then the Members opposite called 'notice of motion'. This is the type of thing that was required by us. They tried to slow down the Committee, tried to get us off the train of thought. They used every tactic that they could. There were motions turned down, they said that only four motions were defeated. I would suggest, that if you look at the four motions, 25 per cent of the motions almost were turned down by the Minister's words. I think that you would find that every major request was denied by the Members opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MacDONALD: — There is absolutely no question and the Member for Albert Park (Mr. MacLeod) tabled in that Committee information which showed without any doubt at all that there were tremendous irregularities in the Land Bank. After having tabled that showing that there were some discrepancies, showing that there were some problems, then the motion was put and it was defeated. That was a very, very legitimate request. There were irregularities, we knew it, and yet we weren't allowed to get into the files.

We asked for information regarding the Community Clinic. No one could deny that there has been some irregularities and so on in the Community Clinic. The motion was turned down completely, we were refused any information by Members of the Government. Not members of the Department of Health, but Members of the Government. We were not allowed to look into the contracts of the Government and so on between the Community Clinics and the Government.

The Minister went on to talk about commitments in excess of appropriations and that this somehow had gone on for years and years and I would like to point out that there is considerable difference, for example, one is the Department of Attorney General and they had commitments in excess of appropriations of \$22,000. This is on a total budget of \$11 million. This is the type of thing that has gone on in the past, there is no question and no one is denying that, it has gone on for six or seven years. \$22,000 in excess of a total budget of \$11 million. But let's look at DNS. The Department of Northern Saskatchewan has in excess of appropriations two-thirds of a million dollars on a budget of \$2 million. Just a little bit of difference.

I would like to read to this House what Mr. Schneider said. Mr. Schneider is the Government comptroller. I'd like to say what he said to the Committee in this regard. I am quoting from page 73 and he is talking about the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and I quote:

When the program started they sent a qualified accountant in charge of that side and in the course of events the administrative procedures didn't go as planned so they had to change the situation and bring in new people to revise it. But this occurred after the year-end, not in time for the examiner to pick up any specific problem. In other words, I am saying that there were many administrative problems because of it and this kind of overexpenditure did occur. It would not normally occur

in departments but in this case, because they had serious problems this happened.

And that is the point that we are trying to make, it was not the normal type of thing that happens, which may not be excusable but which does happen, it is not normal as the comptroller has admitted to our Committee.

The Minister also made statements about the auditor's staff and with the kind of goings-on that is happening in this Government I can assure this House that the auditor's staff is going to have to increase and increase and increase to even try to keep up in any semblance of order in the Government opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MacDONALD: — I want to read a couple of statements from the Public Accounts record and these are the type of things that Members opposite apparently are not going to address themselves to. They are going to try and quickly cloud the issue and they are not going to talk about the issue. It is interesting to note that the Minister of DNS does not deny any of these things. He has to admit them, they are facts. There is nothing he can do about it. The same Minister of DNS, when he was criticized by the DNS employees in the North, he discredited them. The same Minister when "Next Year Country" criticized him he immediately discredited "Next Year Country." He discredited the New Breed for any criticism. He discredited the Metis Society for any criticism. He tried to discredit the Liberal Opposition whenever they have criticized. He has tried to discredit the Press generally for any criticism that they have. But he is caught on this one. The Minister of DNS cannot discredit the auditor. The auditor is acting on facts and facts that he cannot deny. It is finally time that the Minister is going to have to own up to this time.

I have to be very amused when the Minister of Government Services in this House today congratulated the Minister (Mr. Bowerman). You know when the Member for Albert Park spoke both in Public Accounts and then in this debate again, he suggested that when writing the Report the word 'deplore' was used and that really this was a rather moderate word, the proper word should have been 'condemn', he chose to be more moderate and use the word 'deplore'. The Minister of Government then changed and amended it to read 'regret'. And when he did the Member for Albert Park made notice at that time that in the whole scheme of things, taking in order the different verbs that could be used, that 'condemns' would be the worst, 'deplores' is a little better than condemns and regrets is much better and in fact it almost borders on congratulations. And yet the Minister comes in here today and, indeed, has changed it from 'regret' and has congratulated the Minister. Congratulated the Minister with this kind of evidence. It is absolutely impossible.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MacDONALD: — I should like to read some of the statements of Mr. Lutz's that are on record, page 564, and I quote:

I think, Mr. Chairman, the reason there was never any mention of this regard of theft or sort of related

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activity was simply because the situation was so terrible when this group of 14 went up there, they really had no way of establishing (a) what had been received; (b) what should have been received; (c) how much was still there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MacDONALD: — Absolutely impossible, by the auditor's own words to determine whether there is theft or not. But go on down further and Mr. Lutz was speaking:

My comment was that one has regard for the rules and regulations that have been laid down for the handling and accounting of Government revenue and if one consider the fact that there was no handling or accounting of looking after Government's revenue . . .

Then in the words of Mr. Lutz this word 'mishandling' which the Minister of Government Services had removed from the report, Mr. Lutz said the word 'mishandling' is not the incorrect word. Mr. Lutz agrees that 'mishandling' should have been in the record.

MR. BROCKELBANK: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Privilege . . .

MR. MacDONALD: — Mr. Speaker, he didn't allow that . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — The Member has risen on a Point of Privilege.

MR. BROCKELBANK: — On a Point of Privilege, I quoted directly from the verbatim report and the verbatim reports says, and this is Mr. Lutz:

I don't believe mishandling is the correct word in this instance . . .

MR. MacDONALD: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister has just made that point. He knows absolutely well that this is not the auditor's statement. He knows absolutely well that the auditor did not make that mistake. This is a mistake written by a typist, it is a typographical error and the Minister knows it absolutely. And for him to use this as the type of tactic to becloud the whole issue. Every Member on the Public Accounts Committee knows that that is a typographical error and to use it, to deliberately use it to mislead this House is inexcusable.

MR. BROCKELBANK: — On a Point of Privilege. Mr. Speaker, the Member says that I know that that's an incorrect quotation. I ask the Member to show me where that was corrected in the verbatim report.

MR. SPEAKER: — I think . . .

MR. MacDONALD (Milestone): — On a Point of Order. I have a suggestion, Mr. Speaker, to clear up this thing, that we bring the auditor in this House or ask the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order!

MR. MacDONALD: — . . . to call the Committee together tomorrow, bring the auditor . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I think the Members are talking about — I think these are debating points, they are not points of Order or Privilege.

MR. MacDONALD (Moose Jaw N.): — The Minister is using the good office of the auditor by stooping to those tactics.

Mr. Lutz went on to say, on page 565:

We don't know how much money should have been there in the first place when it was finally deposited. They didn't issue a receipt, they didn't write it down anywhere, it was just kicking all over that office, something in excess of half a million dollars.

These are the words of the auditor. On page 566, the auditor's statement:

Mr. Chairman, may I offer one more suggestion, in the year under review, there was no deposits made to cash at DNS. Can you at this point call it delay in depositing?

Mr. Lutz's statements in this regard are made having to do with the amendments that the Minister of Government Services was trying to make to water down this report. It is quite obvious from the remarks of the auditor, that the auditor wasn't very happy about having a watered down report.

Mr. Lutz goes on, on page 570:

Mr. Chairman, in regard to Northern, I would have to say that their bad practices started the first day they got a cash receipt and they never changed.

That is the way it happened. The people that were there, you asked them a question and they just threw up their hands, shook their heads and said, "Gee whiz, I don't know."

On page 571 there is a rather revealing bit — the Hon. Mr. Brockelbank is asking a question:

Mr. Lutz, you are suggesting then that no procedures were begun until after April 1, 1973?

Mr. Lutz answered:

Oh no, I am not suggesting that, Mr. Brockelbank, there were procedures up there, they opened the mail . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MacDONALD: — I want to read into this House another rather revealing statement, this is made by Mr. Churchman, page 345.

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Mr. Churchman says:

I would agree with you, I would think it would too. It was a pleasant surprise to find that it checked out.

He is talking about the Central Vehicle Agency. A pleasant surprise that it checked out. Continuing, he said:

Why it got a priority, I don't know. There are a number of things that are pretty hard to explain during that first period, to put it frankly.

Those are the words of Mr. Churchman. "It is really hard to explain during that first period, to put it frankly." The words of the Deputy Minister.

On page 347, Mr. Churchman again, and I quote:

Well, I think I can, Mr. Chairman. No one was more surprised than I when I discovered the situation. I felt I had competent staff and that they knew what they were doing. The accounting system was well in hand and it was one thing that I — I am not an accountant — didn't have to worry about. I asked from time to time for information in respect to the situation and I was usually given a satisfactory answer.

Mr. Speaker, the point that I should like to make having quoted from Mr. Lutz and from the Deputy, is that there is absolutely no question that the Minister of DNS should resign.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MacDONALD: — Absolutely no question. The Deputy Minister, Mr. Churchman should be fired immediately. You say there is only one reason why he hasn't been fired. A mess went on in DNS for 11 or 12 months that we know of, because that is the year under review. We don't know what happened after that, we will get into that later. But we do know a mess went on for 11 or 12 months. The Deputy Minister admits that he is frankly surprised, can't understand, doesn't have any idea, he sits in Regina. The only reason that he was not fired is because he is a political hack.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MacDONALD: — Any other Deputy Minister, if he had not been a political hack, would have been fired immediately. Any other manager of any kind of business whatsoever would have been fired by any business in Canada, in North America, anywhere for that kind of action. That any one should be hired to manage a department or manage a business of any kind and carry on in this manner and not be fired, is incomprehensible. It is an impossible situation, there is only one thing that can explain it and that is that the man is a political hack brought in and they can't fire him.

I suggest that in a department that administers for less than 25,000 residents and to get into this kind of a mess in one year, to be criticized for not only this but for many other things which I think we are going to have to accept from the "New Breed" and the things about Delta Systems and their housing

and the information that has been brought out by "Next Year Country" and by the Press and by everybody else, we are going to have to start putting some credence in that information. The Minister can't be right every time in every criticism. There is no question that the Minister should resign, or the Premier should replace him if he won't resign, and the Deputy Minister should be fired on the spot.

Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed that this report from the Committee had to be so watered down. The auditor did a good job, the members of the Committee did a good job and to suggest that we have to end up with a watered down report, I think, is a disgrace, it is a shameful thing. It just makes a farce out of the Public Accounts Committee when they are not allowed to report what they actually find. It is a disappointment that this final report is brought into this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. J.R. MESSER (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a couple of brief remarks in regard and respond to and to take exception to some of the accusations that have been made particularly by the Member for Moose Jaw North and the Member for Albert Park in regard to the Government trying to, as they, quote:

Deliberately misinterpret the auditor's report.

I want to turn specifically to some of the remarks that were made by the Member for Albert Park in regard to the policies of the Land Bank Commission. The Member quoted from the Standing Committee's Report, page 221, a question that he asked the chairman of the Land Bank Commission and also quoted the answer given. I just want, again, to quote that question and answer, Mr. Speaker, and make a comment or two in regard to it. On page 221, Mr. MacLeod asked the following question and I quote:

What I am directing my attention to is the fact that we occasionally get complaints with the Land Bank, it is competing with the neighbors and outbids the neighbor, and you are saying if that happens, it is done so — because you try not to find out what is happening with respect to the neighbors. If the neighbor is bidding on it, you don't want to know about it.

MR. WESSON: We never know about it.

MR. MacLEOD: — Never?

MR. WESSON: — It doesn't influence our offer. We still base our price on local sales, that is the average of the local sales. Now if the next door neighbor wants to pay the top of those local sales we'll outbid him, naturally.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Albert Park knows full well that the policy of the Land Bank is to take the average of the sales in the region. He quoted this and said that we were deviating from what our policy was in relation to the purchase of the Land Bank, because the chairman had said that we will naturally outbid the highest offer made in any particular

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region.

I talked to Mr. Wesson, the chairman of the Land Bank Commission and he does not recall having said that, he said if he did he must have misinterpreted the question, or perhaps it was a typographical error as the Member for Moose Jaw North referred to. But what I think is questionable and debatable as to whether, in fact, he was legitimately answering the question or not.

But I do want, for the records, Mr. Speaker, to make it perfectly clear that the Member for Albert Park, as do other members of the Public Accounts Committee and I suspect the Members of the Opposition, know that that is not the policy and this is certainly not the policy that the chairman administers as the chief officer of the Land Bank Commission.

If the Member was not trying to take statements out of context in regard to this report — and he says he was not — but I say that he was. And if he was a responsible Member and I think a conscientious Member, he would have simply related to the previous page where he again was questioning Mr. Wesson. I want to quote several of the answers and questions involving Mr. MacLeod and Mr. Wesson. Just probably only 30 seconds previous to this question where Mr. Wesson says he did not understand the question or was misquoted in the verbatim statement. I want to start, Mr. Speaker, on page 219, where Mr. MacLeod questioned and I quote:

If the farmer accepts the offer that you make him then you proceed to process the transaction.
Is that correct?

Mr. Wesson: Yes.

Mr. MacLeod: If he has accepted the offer then discovers that there are sales in the neighborhood of a higher amount, would you reconsider the offer?

Mr. Wesson: No.

A direct conflict to what the Member tried to interpret from Mr. Wesson's response on the following page. Mr. MacLeod went on to question:

And you never have, is that correct?

Mr. Wesson: Yes.

Meaning never, have we when we made an offer for Land Bank land in a particular region that was based on the average price, ever increased that offer because a farmer of this potential seller came to us and said he had a higher offer from a private party.

But the questioning goes on. Mr. MacLeod, again, questions and I quote:

Then let me take it the other way. Suppose the farmer rejects the offer, do you then reconsider your position?

Mr. Wesson: No, not unless he comes back to us in a later year and offers it back to us.

Mr. MacLeod: I have one or two instances drawn to my

attention where an offer was made to the Land Bank and rejected and then subsequently an offer made of a higher amount. Does the Land Bank (and at the same time the farmer was negotiating with a neighbor) is the Land Bank ever aware of these dual negotiations? If you become aware that the farmer was also negotiating with a neighbor, what is the position taken by the Land Bank Commission?

Mr. Wesson: Our only position is that we are establishing our price fix on local market sales and if we can't improve our offer based on that we won't do it.

Mr. Speaker, I think that Mr. Wesson's response to three or four questions of Mr. MacLeod, only 30 seconds or so before, where obviously, Mr. Wesson was confused in regard to the question and it was misinterpreted indicating that the policy of the Land Bank is clear and that Mr. Wesson administers that policy as it should be interpreted and that is that all prices offered for the Land Bank are on the regional average. And at no time do we try to compete oricker to establish a higher price when we get involved with other offers on sales of land that have been offered to the Land Bank. I think that the Member for Albert Park should be severely chastised, especially as a man of the legal profession, who chooses to take one answer out of the total questions and answers that were involved with Mr. Wesson and try to misinterpret the activities of the Land Bank Commission.

If anybody has been deliberately trying to misinterpret the report of the Standing Committee it has been the Members of the Opposition and primarily, Mr. MacLeod, the Member for Albert Park. I think that is very unfortunate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. D.G. STEUART (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words about this report and some things that I think should happen as a result of it.

I am going to concentrate my remarks on the situation as it has been uncovered in regard to the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

I rose in the House a couple of days ago to ask the Premier if he would consider the situation, in the light of what has been brought out by this Committee report and in the light of what has come forward from the Auditor. The unprecedented criticism of handling of funds and of the activities of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan's employees from the top officials right through the Department. In the light of that would the Premier consider now complying with a request made by the Member for Athabasca (Mr. Guy), that a judicial inquiry be instituted immediately to look into this whole situation? I still put forward that request.

If you look at the history of the DNS the Department was started not too long ago and it was given tremendously wide powers. At that time we predicted that they were asking for trouble; the Government was. We predicted that the reaction of northern people would not be positive, they would be against it, that they would not like it, that they would not want to live under those kinds of conditions, and, of course, subsequent

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events have proven that we were right. Subsequent events have proven that the situation we predicted at the time has come to pass. In fact, it is much worse than we ever imagined that it could be in such a short time.

Let's just take a quick look at the history. After the DNS was formed, complaints began to come in almost immediately. The Minister and the Premier at that time and other Members of the Government answered these complaints by saying it was natural when you moved in with a new department, breaking new ground, bringing in new people, attempting to develop new programs that there would be some growing pains. And there would be some complaints. This wasn't too unreasonable.

But the complaints continued. They came in from, first the people themselves, the northern people. A great many of them were native people. These complaints were answered in the manner I had mentioned by the Government: "Well they are not too serious and they will work themselves out." Complaints began to come in then from business people, people who had invested their money up there in retail outlets; people who had invested their money in the tourist business; people who were trying to go into the North to develop that part of Saskatchewan. They began to complain. Well, their complaints again were brushed off by the Government, by the Minister, to the effect that they were either greedy or they weren't prepared to go along with the plans or they were trying to exploit the people of the land. And so, their complaints were brushed aside.

Then people who were working for the Government, public servants, began to complain. They actually began to complain publicly. Even after they were chastised, even after they were threatened, even after they were moved around, the complaints continued to come. Some of them were even dismissed. In spite of this action taken to harass them, they continued to complain and they continue to complain to this very day.

The Press were taken North by the Government. It was to be a triumphant tour by the Minister of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, the Member for Shellbrook (Mr. Bowerman). Instead, it turned into a disaster, because instead of talking to the Public Relations Officers or the people who had been set up along the way to sing the praises of the Minister and the DNS and the NDP Government, the Press did what any good press people would do. They wandered away from the official party and began to talk to other people, and when they talked to other people they found discontent, they found unhappiness, they found frustration and so they reported it.

We then sent up some people of our own. We sent up some of our MLAs into the North to see at first hand what was going on. They talked to employees, they talked to the native people, they talked to long-time residents, they talked to people who hadn't been there very long. And they came back and they, again, reported publicly that there was a great mess up in northern Saskatchewan. They found, for example, that people wouldn't talk to them freely, especially public servants, or people who depend on the Government for a living. They were afraid to talk. Our MLAs went into one office; the employee there talked to them about welfare and he wouldn't even admit that there were any people of welfare, he didn't know what the criteria were. He didn't know how many people, or how much they were paid. They said they pointed out the window, as a matter

fact, and asked: "Is that sawmill going?" He said, "What sawmill?" He was so frightened that he would hardly admit that he worked for the Government or what his own name was. In other words, they found that the word from Regina, from the Minister's office, from the NDP Government, had preceded the Liberal MLAs North and the word had been sent, 'don't talk to them. In fact, if you do talk to them, probably on pain of being dismissed'. So they found silence up there, but they talked to enough people and they saw enough to convince them that there was a great deal wrong in northern Saskatchewan and it wasn't just growing pains.

It wasn't just a case of a few little honest mistakes here and there. They found enough to convince them that there was a great deal going on up there that should be exposed to the public and that the Government, if it was sincere, should act decisively. The Premier should be prepared to recognize that native people are being pushed around, that the hopes of the residents, long-time and short-time in northern Saskatchewan are being frustrated and that real honest development in northern Saskatchewan has been ground to a halt by the power and the bureaucracy and the dictatorial attitude of the people that were given this unprecedented power in northern Saskatchewan. In fact, our MLAs found that a great deal was wrong. They came back here and we asked the Government to take some action, to expose this. If they had nothing to hide they could set up a judicial inquiry immediately to inquire into every aspect of northern Saskatchewan, every aspect of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

The Government refused. Again, and as usual, they ignored the legitimate complaints of the people concerned, the people who had chosen to live and make their future in northern Saskatchewan. They whitewashed every action from the Minister, the Deputy Minister and all the gang at the top that he surrounded himself with to have his own way and literally to be the dictatorial ruler in northern Saskatchewan. That's what they were in the old days when they worked with the DNR, that's what they are now with even more power behind them with the DNS under the Government. They ridiculed and they continue to ridicule. Anybody who dared to criticize the Department of Northern Saskatchewan is held up to abuse, to ridicule; and the Government continues to this very day to whitewash, to ridicule, to excuse and to cover up.

Now let's take a look as to whether this needed to have happened. You know, when you set up a department and you give them several million dollars to spend and they hire a great number of employees, do communications have to break down? Does there have to be an unbelievable mishandling of public funds? Is it necessary that we find after a short time that \$100,000 in just one office is handed out in welfare? God knows how much in other offices. Does it have to happen that the auditors walk in and find hundreds of thousands of dollars, money and cheques, just tossed around and ignored? Does it have to happen?

Well, I am not going back to our time in government. I'll go back to the setting up of the MCIC and the Premier will be aware of this. It happened when he was a Member of the old CCF Government.

When the government of the day decided to set up the Medical Care Insurance Commission they had a timetable to meet, they had great public pressures on them, they had a great many

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people all over this province who were opposed to what they were doing and watching them very closely. They set up Mr. Don Tansley, an individual whom I didn't agree with, in his philosophical outlook, but a man who had great ability. Well, Don Tansley set up that particular organization. He set it up in such a way that there was some criticism about the philosophy of the Medical Care Insurance program, there was some criticism about the way it worked. A great deal of criticism. But if you go back and you will find out that there has not been much criticism about the way that particular organization was set up. In fact, it's still there today, basically, almost unchanged. I want to use this example to show that it is possible, in a very short time, for a government to set up an apparatus to set up a department and properly account for the funds and properly carry out the will of the Legislature without the mess that we find in DNS.

I point this out to indicate the shallowness and the ridiculousness of the excuses that the Premier and the Government use day in and day out to whitewash and to keep a blanket of misinformation, or a blanket of no information over the entire DNS and to try to excuse their inept performance — that's too mild a word — their disgraceful performance from this Legislative Assembly and from the public.

So, Mr. Speaker, I again challenge the Premier, if he has nothing to hide, if he has such confidence in the Minister and the officials of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, then immediately he set up a judicial inquiry and send it into the North and let them come out and tell us what is going on. If there is nothing to hide, if the terms of reference are honest and above board, and you picked the right individuals, or the right individual and back them up with full terms of reference, let them go into the North. If they come out and say, "Yes, all it was was some growing pains, some honest mistakes," fine, then the public will know, we will know and that will be the end of it. But your continuous refusal to do this and your continuous refusal honestly to look at what is going on in the DNS in spite of everything that has happened, in spite of all the criticism and the most serious criticism by the auditor, demands that at least you follow the suggestions of the Member for Albert Park (Mr. MacLeod) and the Member for Moose Jaw North (Mr. MacDonald) and follow through on the suggestion and the request of the Member for Athabasca (Mr. Guy). Replace these DNS officials, launch an investigation and clear the air about this whole mess.

Mr. Speaker, this proves, without a shadow of a doubt, that it is a mess.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Milestone): — Mr. Speaker, I have a few things to say in this debate and, therefore, I want to go and investigate the auditor's report and, therefore, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

FINAL REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON WELFARE

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

MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Milestone): — Mr. Speaker, I am not going to speak too long on this particular resolution, but I know that other members of the Committee have expressed their opinion and I was out of the House on the last two occasions when this item came up.

I do not intend to repeat the discussion of other members of the Committee. I think they have very adequately covered the intention of the Government and the intention of the Committee, but I should like to make about four or five points that I think have not necessarily been covered by the members of the Committee.

The first thing that was very obvious to me, and I am sure to other members of the Committee, is that there is a real backlash against welfare in the Province of Saskatchewan and I am sure that this is not only restricted to the province of Saskatchewan but it is probably right across the Dominion of Canada. This backlash in generated, I think, for two reasons. The first reason for general concern of people about abuses and potential abuses in the welfare system is that everyone appears to know someone down the street who is on welfare, who is driving a car, who shouldn't be on welfare. There is a fear because they know one or two or three individuals who are abusing the system, that this abuse is a general abuse.

The second cause for this backlash, I believe, is the fact that everyone is concerned about those employables who are drawing welfare assistance and are making little or no effort to get back to work. I think, Mr. Speaker, that this backlash in welfare can very often, not only have a rather disastrous impact upon the willingness of the Government to respond to the needs of the legitimate persons on welfare and I am thinking of senior citizens or chronically ill, or handicapped people, and it very often makes it difficult for governments to respond to the growing cost of living, increasing welfare allowances and so forth.

The second thing that I found very obvious wherever we went on the Committee, was there was a general concern or a general desire of Saskatchewan citizens to see that those people who were receiving welfare payments and were capable of work, would work and that some general policy could be found either to do one of two things — to force people to go out and seek a job, even if it meant cutting off welfare allowances; and second, by providing a sufficient incentive within the system to see that those people did go to work and that any welfare system did not attempt to lock-in the individual within the system for the rest of his time. I think that this particular desire to see that the incentive was provided, that people that were of an employable nature should be forced to go to work was perhaps the second most important thing that I found in the general consensus of the public.

I think there was also a feeling that employables should be separated from other recipients of welfare. In other words, that not only should they come under (even if it's necessary to give them assistance at times) they should not be classified with those people who are not normally employables, that those people who are permanently requiring assistance from the taxpayers, such as handicapped people, whether it be mentally or socially, those people who have now reached an age in life where they no longer have an earning capacity and at the same time

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they are forced to come for assistance of some kind. Therefore, I think it would be wise if some system could be found or devised whereby employables could be completely separated and that employable people, if they did require assistance of some kind, would also have to have employment counselling, job placement and that kind of assistance.

The third thing I found, was a genuine concern of professionals within welfare. A genuine concern about the fact the tremendous amount of time and of red tape that was required to look after the red tape through the processing of applications, the looking after of the normal requirements of the means test, so that very little opportunity was given to them or provided to them in order that they might really look after the real purposes of their profession. There are so many social workers today who are leaving their profession because of frustration and not being able to devote the time and effort to providing real interest in the social concerns of the people whom they had hoped to help.

I think it is very, very necessary that we get into a much more simplified form of application of welfare and a much more simplified system of checking applications. A large number of strides have been made in this direction in the last few years — the permanent caseload has been put on a mailing renewal form each year and so forth.

The fourth thing I want to mention is the concept of the guaranteed income and I know it has been discussed by the members of the Committee and, therefore, I won't prolong it. In the past I have been very, very reluctant to accept the philosophy of a guaranteed income and I have been reluctant to accept it because I have been concerned about the danger of not providing an incentive to work and for people to get back to making a permanent contribution, or a regular contribution to society. I felt that if you put people on a guaranteed income that there would be a tendency to accept that position in life or that status in life and they would really become permanent welfare recipients. Experience in other places of the world, particularly in New York where statistics have been really put together, shows that there are welfare recipients of the fourth and fifth generation. I have been concerned about the guaranteed income in this regard. I am now beginning to think that the conglomeration of programs, the tremendous proliferation of red tape and bureaucracy that perhaps the guaranteed income has something to attract it to really careful examination. There are experiments going on around North America today that seem to indicate that it doesn't really detract from the incentive to work and for the first time, I think, I am willing to see the Province of Saskatchewan get into some type of an experiment in this regard and with a close scrutiny on whether or not it would have any impact on the incentive to work.

I have only one comment to make about the Committee and I think it is important and I think it is for committees in general. One concern I had about the Committee direction was not in any personal way in relation to any members of the Committee. I think most of the people, when you come to deal with welfare, most of the members of the Committee, were very, very sincere in attempting to arrive at the kind of a solution that would be beneficial to, first of all, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan and to their general responsibilities as an MLA. But one thing I did find, and that I am very critical of, is the

fact that there seemed to be a complete lack of financial responsibility. On more than one occasion members of the Committee requested that in assessing requests from the general public that before the Committee take them into consideration and before the Committee made recommendations, that we do a financial assessment of the cost implications. On more than one occasion we found that we didn't have the resources really to do a thorough investigation. I found that the majority of people who came to the Committee that whatever their complaint was, or whatever their request was, automatically became, or almost automatically became, a recommendation if there was a need that could be demonstrated. I think most members of the Committee would have to agree that really if we looked at the total package of those particular recommendations that we would have to say that they would bankrupt the Province of Saskatchewan. We have no way of knowing the total dollar value and I think all members of the Committee will recall that we didn't have the resources, we didn't have the research staff, nor the research capability to do that kind of an investigation. I think that it would be well for this Assembly to remember that if they set up a Legislative Committee, that they should always make sure that they do have the capacity to have the back-up staff and resources that are required.

One other thing that I did find, I think that the Welfare committee, probably more than any other committee, in the history of Saskatchewan, had public hearings hither and yon. In fact, we spent two or three weeks — I wasn't able to attend them all in northern Saskatchewan — but we went from community to community. I am not sure if it was not a public relations job of the Committee. Perhaps that was important and I am not going to debate that, but I do think that there was perhaps and we could have really simplified our work and have been just as productive by a little better organization and some restrictions on public hearings. On more than one occasion we went there without any written or prepared briefs being presented to us and it became a general discussion. My comment above, I think, is worthy of consideration. But I would suggest two things for the committee system:

1. That adequate funds be provided to the chairman and members of the Committee with a strong back-up and research staff, so that a real, true and accurate assessment and evaluation of any recommendations that are provided in a report be given to the Members of the Legislature and the general public.
2. That a time limit be placed on the Legislative Committee structure — I don't mean a real minimum requirement, I think every committee should have the opportunity to carry out their task and function adequately. I should like to suggest that I don't think a committee needs to take two years or two and one half years.

Mr. Speaker, I think that all the other points, members of the Committee have discussed very, very thoroughly the report and their findings. I want to say once again, I congratulate the chairman and the vice-chairman, I think they were sincere and I will be supporting the Report, but I do support also the reservations of some of the Members.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

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MR. J.K. COMER (Nipawin): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to say just a few words on the Report of the Special Committee on Welfare. I was one of those who served on that Committee. I think, by and large, we worked together fairly well. We did have a number of public hearings, we heard from a wide cross section of the Saskatchewan population.

There is one area that I should like to spend a little bit of time on, one recommendation. I would like to read part of a paragraph from the Report. This is part of a paragraph on work for welfare.

It (the Committee) feels that most people desire to work and will work if given the opportunity to do so. The idea is based on a number of observable facts. First, the number of persons who are actually employable and receiving welfare amounts to roughly 10 per cent of assistance caseload. In other words 90 per cent of the people who receive public assistance are doing so because there is no alternative; while 10 per cent are receiving temporary aid while seeking employment.

The Committee, and I think every one of us at different times has heard people complain about employable people being on welfare, or on some other assistance program.

Myself, my personal feeling is that probably the biggest maybe I could call it, crime of assistance programs, is the fact that in our society we, in a sense, encourage or allow at least productive people to sort of be thrown onto the scrap heap. The reason they are thrown on the scrap heap is because the economic system can't provide them in many cases with an opportunity to produce, with an opportunity to be employed.

You know, some people will say that all this welfare is too much socialism. I think the problem of employables on welfare or unemployment insurance isn't a problem of an economic system that can only employ a certain number of people eight hours a day, 40 hours a week. It can't employ people who can only work two hours a week, because of disabilities, it can't employ people who can only work maybe one day a week because of disabilities. It can't employ people who don't have certain skills, it can't employ people to do necessary tasks that return nothing, such as cleaning up communities. This is the real problem of employables on welfare. It is a problem of society, it is a problem of economics, of the economic system.

I would like to congratulate the Department of Social Services in the last year for beginning a program called the Employment Support Program, a program which in some communities has employed people who are on assistance to do local necessary projects. In the community I live in they cleaned up lots, they cut grass on lots where the grass is never cut, generally it was burnt in the spring. They did this sort of public work that never could be done before, the municipality couldn't afford it, there was no program where the Government was aiding the municipality in getting the work done. I think the people who have been on assistance appreciated the program. The people who were working in the community, the farmers in the district, also appreciated it. They felt it was a valuable program. I think we need more of these programs. I think, also, we must look at the idea of making it possible for people who can only

work two hours a week because of certain disabilities, making it possible for those people at least to be productive for those two hours, whether it is doing something at home or doing something in the community. In many cases the work would have to be heavily subsidized, but I think everyone or almost everyone wants to contribute to society and the crime of our society is that we don't allow those people to contribute. I think in the long run this will have to be the real solution to the problem of social assistance.

Now some people say that the reason these people should go to work is because it is so expensive to keep them on welfare. I think we must remember that when we put a person to work it is not going to be cheaper than putting him on welfare, it's more expensive. These people need tools, they need equipment. Some people will need to get paid more in supervisory positions. It is not a way to save money, it is a way to save people.

People who get up and talk about the idea that by putting people to work you save money in terms of local community projects know that they are just whistling in the air, whistling in the wind and what they are saying really has no validity. It's just a political argument, which goes nowhere. This is my prime concern about welfare, the fact that we are allowing people in our society — as I said earlier — we are throwing people on the scrap heap when we don't need to, that's a crime, a serious crime. I should like to see programs like the employment support program making people valued members of their communities, extended and expanded.

Mr. Speaker, I will be gladly supporting the Report of the Special Committee on Welfare.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. P.P. MOSTOWAY (Hanley): — Mr. Speaker, just a few words at the end of this debate. I want to say that I had mentioned before that I probably wouldn't politic, I have changed my mind, I definitely will not.

In answer to some of the comments made, for example, by the Hon. Member for Milestone (Mr. MacDonald), he talks of a backlash. I agree that there was a certain amount of backlash. I think we would all agree to that. Work was a factor that was on the minds of many people, people not receiving assistance and people on assistance. I agree that everyone would agree to that. Insofar as the professionals and the red tape was concerned, I think this has always been a concern of people and particularly politicians. He mentioned something about the financial aspect of it. Well, this Committee really thought that it was not charged with crossing every t and dotting every i, they put out some recommendations for discussion points and kept in mind that they knew full well that the financial position of a province certainly changes from year to year as evidenced in Saskatchewan over the last few years.

The public relations program, I think the Hon. Member said he wasn't sure whether it was a public relations program or not. Well, I am not disputing that, but I look at it as a by-product of our various hearings throughout the province. I just do want to point out that when we decided to hold public hearings throughout the province, it was a unanimous decision.

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A few other points insofar as the guaranteed annual income is concerned. I just want to read a couple of phrases out of the Editorial Page Wednesday, May 1, 1974, from the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, "Guaranteed Income." They mentioned Health Minister Lalonde's interest in the guaranteed annual income. They say:

Health Minister Lalonde thought of the Guaranteed Annual Income as being a federal program which Ottawa would work out and probably control nationally. In early March he got his Government to pay out \$14 million to finance an experimental GAI program in Manitoba.

And I think he has always been partial to the Guaranteed Annual Income.

I am pleased to see that the Member for Milestone — I don't say he favors the Guaranteed Annual Income — but he certainly is having second thoughts about it.

I want to mention here, also, that Reuben Baetz, Director of the Canadian Council on Social Development (this is in the same editorial) says insofar as the Family Income Plan is concerned:

It is the most remarkable and boldest step taken by a provincial government in decades and one which cannot help but have a profound impact on Canadian social policies and the march to the objective of a guaranteed annual income.

I just want to mention once again that the politicians in the various Legislatures of the country and in particular on the federal scene, all agree that it is financially feasible, administration wise it can be put into implementation, but a lot of them feel that it is political suicide.

Insofar as work is concerned, I really do feel there was a bit of unfair criticism directed toward the Committee, in that regard because I believe there were numerous recommendations relative to work, I think in 14 and 15 we proposed agencies and we have said that people should be offered work for welfare. I take, for example, the Committee's recommendation that the "extreme hardship" clause be removed, certainly indicates that the Committee thought we should reward people for working if they are on low wages. I am glad to see that the Family Income Plan is doing exactly that. I believe somebody had mentioned abuses, certainly there are bound to be abuses, but I just want to point out that anyone in this province, whether they sit in this House or not, are really obligated to a certain extent to point out abuses and relay them to the appropriate agency which would in most cases be the Department of Social Services. We have an obligation to do that.

I notice there was some slight difference between some of the Members, I suppose that's a reflection of the philosophical differences between our Party and Members opposite; fine, I appreciate that there are differences.

I want to say that as far as I was concerned I thought it was a good Committee and I think we have evidence, now that I am closing debate, that we certainly didn't politic here. That pretty well sums up the situation when we were working together

and held public hearings. The Committee worked very well and I want to thank every member, plus various people who were involved with it. I want to thank them very much for making it a good workable Committee that came out with what I think is a very good Report.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly recessed from 12:30 p.m. until 2:00 o'clock p.m.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Faris that Bill No. 125 — **An Act to amend The Liquor Licensing Act, (No. 2)** be now read a second time.

MR. L. LARSON (Pelly): — Mr. Speaker, I listened rather attentively to the Member for Arm River and the Member for Rosthern (Mr. Boldt) as they took part in the debate on this motion. I agree that the problem of alcohol and drugs is a serious one. The Member for Rosthern is undoubtedly absolutely sincere and convinced of the viewpoints he expresses. I respect him for those views. The Member for Arm River (Mr. Faris) is undoubtedly equally convinced and concerned and is sincere.

As a person who has never had any problem with the use or control of either drugs or alcohol I am not sure that changing the age from 18 to 19 is very important. If we are to effectively do some good I believe we must go much further.

I have considered the amendment but I cannot decide whether the age limit should be 18, 19, 25, 40 or 85. When I make up my mind I will consider the amendment.

I, therefore, beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

MR. E.C. WHELAN (Regina North West): — Mr. Speaker, I wish to introduce to all Members of the Assembly 30 adult students from the Wascana Institute of Applied Arts and Science at St. Pat's Annex in Regina North West. They are located in the Speaker's Gallery with their teachers, Mrs. Quiring — I am not sure whether the other teachers are with them today — there were three or four other teachers here the other day when this group visited the Assembly on Wednesday we had adjourned. We met with them and encouraged them to return while the House was in Session. Their presence indicates that they are interested in the study of government. We welcome them and wish them every success with their course of studies. I hope they find their visit here educational and informative.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

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HON. W.E. SMISHEK (Regina North East): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce a group of students from the Dr. George Ferguson School, located in my constituency, they are accompanied by their teachers Mrs. Savage and Mr. Hill. On behalf of the Members of the Legislature I want to extend to the students a warm welcome and I hope that their tour through the Legislative Building and their experience this afternoon in watching the Legislature in session will be a worthwhile experience for them and will assist them in their Social Studies. Again, I welcome them and hope they have had a good day. I propose to meet with them later this afternoon.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. A. MATSALLA (Canora): — Mr. Speaker, to you and to the House I should like to introduce 40 Grades Five and Six students of the Buchanan School in the constituency of Canora. I have a special feeling for this school since it is one that I attended during two of my high school years. The young men and women are seated in the Speaker's Gallery. Accompanying them are the two teachers, Mrs. Frances Maksymiw and Mrs. Betty Popowich and their bus driver, Adam Shabbits. I am informed the students and their teachers through various projects raised their own funds to finance this trip to our Capital City and the visit to the Legislature. I should like to commend them for their initiative and their keen interest in making this trip.

I should like to extend to them a very warm welcome and the hope that they have a very enjoyable and informative day and a safe trip home later this day.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Romanow (Attorney General) that Bill No. 97 — **An Act to amend The Election Act, 1971** be now read a second time.

MR. E.C. MALONE (Regina Lakeview): — Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments to make about this Act.

MR. STEUART: — . . . went for seven hours.

MR. MALONE: — Well, it won't be for seven hours, it might be four or five.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, when this Act was first brought to my attention a few days ago, I read it and my initial inclination was to support it. The Attorney General in introducing the Act referred to three principles in the Act — disclosure, limitation of expenses and reimbursement.

Probably being the newest Member in the House, I have more familiarity with the expenses of an election than the others and I must say that I agree full heartily with the concept that election expenses must be cut. However, on the other two

principles I am not sure I do agree with them.

While the aims of the Act are admirable, I think that the results of them may not be the same. I say this because I feel that what the Act is trying to do is if future elections run on the same basis that the NDP has run their past elections, that is, using people rather than advertising. I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, and to other Members, that I can see nothing wrong with advertising per se and to put a limitation on the advertising that a political party or an individual candidate can do at any given election, is in my submission, improper in that it interferes with the freedom of the Press and also the freedom of a candidate to disseminate his information in any manner in which he sees fit.

I would suggest, as well, Mr. Speaker, that the concept of disclosure as the Act anticipates, is also unfair and I am not referring to the large donations by unions and companies and so on. I am thinking of the 100, 200 or 300 dollar donations. I would submit that there is no reason why people should not be allowed to support a political party in any manner in which they see fit. If they wish to support that party by donating money to it rather than working in an election, I can see no reason why they should not have that privilege and the privilege to do it without their names being published. It is their business as to which party they want to support; it is their business the manner in which they want to support it. I do not agree with this provision of disclosure at least at the rate of \$100. Perhaps if there was a higher amount of money shown as the amount that could be donated without disclosure, I could bring myself to support it.

I fear, Mr. Speaker, that the Act also is in complete conflict with the Saskatchewan Bill of Rights. I should like to refer the Members to the Saskatchewan Bill of Rights and in particular to Section 4.

Every person and every class of person shall under the law enjoy the right of freedom of expression through all means of communications, including speech, the Press, the radio and the arts.

I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that the provision in the proposed Bill restricting the amount of money that can be spent by a candidate or by a political party in any election takes away this freedom of freedom of expression as contemplated in Section 4 of the Bill of Rights.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I would submit that the proposed Bill is also in conflict with Section 16 of the Bill of Rights, which provides:

. . . and expressly provided, nothing in this Act . . . from any right, freedom or liberties which any person or class of persons is entitled under the law.

And surely one of the greatest rights we have in this society is to support a political party in any manner in which we see fit. And if a person wishes to donate money to that political party and remain anonymous, I would suggest that that is his right, at least, under the British heritage that we all have.

I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that for these reasons I feel

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that the Act should be given further consideration. I must say that in my own mind I have some difficulty in bringing myself to support it for the reasons that I have given to you already. If the Act was amended further and the amount of money that was allowed to be donated to a political party without disclosure was increased, and if there was some other provision in the Act as well to permit further advertising in political campaigns, I may bring myself to support it.

These are the remarks that I have to make now, Mr. Speaker, and I regret that I didn't realize that this was coming up so quickly because I wish that I could have said a few more things.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:— Hear, hear!

HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the arguments that have been advanced by the Members of the Opposition on the other side. I don't know where one draws the line with respect to ceilings or where one draws the line as to the limit beyond which a person must reveal and below which he does not have to reveal.

In response to the Member for Lakeview, he will know that when we initially moved the Bill about a year or so ago, the figure arbitrarily chosen was \$50 and under as the non-reporting figure. We have upped this in the printed Bill to \$100 and perhaps that is still not enough, I don't know. It just seems to me that on balance a \$100 contribution given by an individual to a political party or to a candidate is a contribution which achieves both objectives, high enough to satisfy the arguments advanced by the Member for Lakeview, while at the same time, low enough to avoid individual revelation and disclosure, which is the thrust of the Bill.

So, we may be in error as \$100 may be too low, but I don't know. But on balance I think that this figure is still an acceptable one.

Mr. Speaker, just a word or two about the questions and other points raised by Members opposite. One of the major thrusts of their argument has been that the Government will somehow have an unfair advantage by virtue of its position as government, and by virtue of its position by this Bill. Mr. Speaker, I reject that particular point of view. I reject that particular point of view because it assumes that those in Government somehow get more free publicity by virtue of them being in government than those who are in opposition. That is a two-edged sword.

Publicity can be good and it can be bad. And while the government may receive a certain amount of publicity in the announcement of policies and programs, the fact of the matter is that those programs and policies are also subject to a great degree of criticism, because of the publicity given to them.

I say, with all respect, that the Opposition parties in our province get good publicity attacking the position of the Government. They get good publicity by virtue of their status in the Legislature and that the argument that we get somehow an unfair advantage, simply does not wash.

Now a second point raised by the Members opposite is the one made by the Member for Milestone (Mr. MacDonald). It is about the Government, just before an election, pumping in a massive

expenditure program for publicity by the Government. But I don't accept that as a reason to argue against this Bill. I don't believe that any government in today's society in Saskatchewan would be credible by pumping in massive sums of obviously patent political advertising, 30 days before the election campaign, the people of Saskatchewan knowing full well what the 30-day provision is.

I don't believe that situation would be tolerated. Parties may try it but I say that it won't work politically. The consumer here is the electorate and I believe that he is sensitive any knowledgeable to the provisions of the law that apply to him and will be particularly in this case.

I want also to say to the Hon. Member for Milestone that if 1971 proved anything, in my mind, it proved that no amount of paid television or radio, purchased by a political party or purchased by a government in power, can forestall the judgment of the people. I don't mean that in any general sense and I don't mean that in any accusatory sense. I think it is generally accepted that the amount spent during the last provincial general election in terms of television and radio publicity, the Liberal Party versus the NDP, was certainly massively weighted on the side of the Liberals.

It may have had some impact. I don't think that it forestalled the judgment of the public. My personal view is that in these situations publicity cannot do anything that isn't existent already. Publicity might be able to fan some flames but it can't spark the flames. The spark of public opinion is lit, I think, by the debates that we have here in the Legislature and the reporting which is the consequence of it.

Now a third point raised, Mr. Speaker, is the question of the ceiling for the provincial parties. It is alleged by the Opposition that the ceiling is too low. Well, again, I don't know if \$125,000 is too low or too high. I just personally don't have the knowledge of the extent of campaigning. I say that we partly met the argument by increasing it from \$75,000 as it appeared in the printed Bill to \$125,00, and by the time a general election rolls around I am sure that the Government would be receptive to submissions that this is a matter which has to be considered again.

In any event it is an increase of \$50,000 according to my calculations by the House amendment. Is it too low? I don't know, but one thing I do know, is that the ceiling applies to all political parties, Liberals, Conservatives or NDP. And that the advantage there will be marginal to any of them.

A fourth point I should like to make, Mr. Speaker, has to do with the role of the media with respect to elections. I think that there is one danger with this publicity feature and revelation of campaign funds of the Elections Act and vis-a-vis the media and that danger is this. With the low ceilings — and I admit them to be low at \$125,000 or \$100 or whatever the ceiling happens to be — of necessity a greater portion of the issues and the decision of the issues and the burden of carrying the debate on the issues, falls on the media in the Province of Saskatchewan, because we are limited by ceilings.

I admit that this is a danger. I think that this is one of the difficulties with the Bill because when we put the low

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ceilings on we don't have the full access, as political parties, to put our side on the issue and we are dependent upon the reporters and the news media, given their biases, their inadequacies, their own views and I don't mean that as any specific accusation. Quite frankly, I have spoken to the media people. I spoke to the radio and television people of Saskatchewan and I tried to convey to them that they were, in my judgment, the trustees of our airwaves and as such they had a duty to comply with similar provincial provisions as exist federally with respect to free time.

I think if we could get the radio and television people to say to political parties, that there will be four hours across the province, for example, free time available to you ; that being our responsibility as trustees of the airwaves, you can package the messages you want then and we could still live within the ceiling of \$125,000, plus have the additional radio and television time.

One of the unfortunate things, however, of this whole election process, in my judgment, with the media is that they have capitalized on elections as a source of income revenue for them and they have adopted the attitude that free time is no responsibility of theirs basically. There are exceptions to this and the result is that political parties like us and the Conservatives and others now represented in this House, are frustrated by the tremendous expense to get the message across. The danger in this Bill, as I have outlined, is about putting too much of our cause in the hands of journalists. That, I think, is a worry in the Bill that certainly I would express and I don't think that I am talking out of order when I say that a lot of politicians would feel the same.

I tell you that we are not letting the matter rest with the word by the radio and television people, that they will consider this at their will. I have written to the chairman of the Canadian Radio Television Commission, Mr. Pierre Juneau at Ottawa, asking him for the beginning of negotiations between the Province of Saskatchewan and the CRTC with a view to seeing what provisions can apply to radio and television stations in our province, to get them to hook onto federal broadcasting provisions which do provide for a certain amount of free time.

We will see how the negotiations progress and what success we can get. I think this will help all the political parties and help the democratic process.

Mr. Speaker, a fifth argument is the question of the degree of control that lies in the hands of the leader and the party. It is alleged that this Bill places too much powers in the hands of the leader. It certainly does increase the authority of the leader because he has to endorse, as a legitimate candidate, the person who runs in the individual riding and without his endorsement, that person is not an official candidate of the party. So this criticism is true to a certain extent. I think our Party is as much concerned with individual autonomy and independence of Members as any.

MR. STEUART: — . . . Mr. Richards.

MR. ROMANOW: — Well, John Richards, the Member for Saskatoon University, of course, left voluntarily. All I can say is that

the tradition certainly of this Party is as good in this area as there is on any party in the Province of Saskatchewan. But let's not get into that issue.

The point is, do we need this degree of control? And the answer is, that it is absolutely necessary if we are going to introduce limits and revelation. There is no other practical way to audit, to check reimbursements, the payments of reimbursements other than by the designation of who the official Liberal candidate happens to be in a particular riding.

Once we as politicians decide that we are going to place limits and that there are certain rules to play by, we don't want some person running in Milestone and putting the tag Liberal behind his name and wilfully flaunting the provisions of the Bill and thereby getting into difficulty with the Leader of the Liberal Party and the candidate in Milestone without any knowledge or consent for that action. There has to be some form of audit and some form of control. This is the way to do it.

But, again, I say to the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Milestone, that the real practice in this case answers any quarrels about the fear of the power of the Leader. I can't imagine, not even in the Liberal Party where at a Liberal convention a candidate duly nominated would not be endorsed by the Leader of the Party, even if the Leader of the Party found that there was some reason for him not to endorse that particular candidate.

I am sure there are people who don't believe that some person should be nominated but the situation will dictate the realities. A duly nominated candidate, even if he is a rebel, would be endorsed undoubtedly by the Party leader.

Now, Mr. Speaker, another point raised by the Member for Milestone is the question of the role of the volunteer. He raised the spectre of the volunteer and he argued that somehow this would be weighted towards the Party in power because of volunteers who come from Trade Unions.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the Member for Milestone that if it is true for Trade Unions and the offering of volunteers, and that's a benefit that accrues to us, so too, it is true for the Liberal and any other party, when they receive volunteers from corporations, business or any other field of activity.

This is not an argument that can be said is weighted on one side or the other. This is an advantage which accrues equally to all. And the success or the lack thereof, of political parties in recruiting volunteer time, really lies on the shoulders of the political parties.

Mr. Speaker, the question has been raised about civil servants and their role in elections. What is the role of civil servants in elections? Should we say that their democratic rights should somehow be impaired or denied? I believe that throughout the Liberal argument in the course of this Bill that without saying so specifically, that is clearly implied. Let's make it clear, civil servants, like anybody else in our society have a full and complete right to political activity. A full range of political activity.

The Member for Lakeview (Mr. Malone) talked about the Bill

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of Rights, a full range of political freedom of activity. If he wants to be a scrutineer, if he wants to be a poll captain, if he wants to run for the nomination, if he wants to run as a candidate, whether he is working for the Government or whether he is working for the school board of Regina, whether he is working for Kramer Tractor, whoever he works for. If, for example, the school board of Saskatoon, Saskatoon East, should give a leave of absence, to pick a name out of the air, Mr. Glen Penner, to run as a candidate for the political party in question, why could it be argued, how could it be argued that somehow that employer should give that freedom to the individual employee, but the Government of Saskatchewan which is supposed to set the trend and the level can't do this.

Mr. Speaker, I can't buy that argument. I don't believe that is the case. I don't want to get into any type of unfortunate comments. The Member for Albert Park got into that the other day when he went to the length of reciting names. This is a game that we can all lose if you want. We can give you recitation of names . . .

MR. STEUART: — Harrington!

MR. ROMANOW: — That's right. The Leader of the Opposition knows them by rote. People who receive leaves of absences the day after the election is called and right back to the day the election is over. In 1967, people who received leaves of absence the day that the federal election was called and got back to their jobs as Deputy of Co-operatives, right after the federal election was over in 1968.

MR. STEUART: — That was a tragic mistake.

MR. ROMANOW: — Well, maybe that was a tragic mistake. I don't know. But these are examples that one could go through. I am sorely tempted, sorely tempted to talk about the present Member for Lumsden who is not in his seat who was an executive assistant. I am not quarrelling with that. He got the nomination. He campaigned for it. The leave of absence came about on May 26, the day after the election in 1971 was called. All that I say is that in my judgment this is something which the Hon. Member for Albert Park made a very bad mistake in arguing. He errs in this area. He errs because the Liberal Party, if it is a sin, was a much sinning in this area as the NDP or any other government that will follow the NDP in the Province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I say that any civil servant who takes a leave of absence without pay and his services can be so surrendered, has every right to take part in the democratic process in the Province of Saskatchewan. That is what the Bill of Rights is all about and we are not going to do anything to impair it and I don't think that you people will do anything about it either.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that I have discussed several matters that have been raised by the Members opposite on factual points. I believe that the major concern of the Liberals I have set out here and I hope I have answered them. I say to the Liberals opposite, you are being asked to decide when the vote comes in a few minutes whether or not in principle you support the concept of limitation of campaign expenses and their

revelation with certain exceptions of where campaign funds come from and whether or not you support the principle that elections are the business of all the public and the principle of partial reimbursement.

While this Bill is not identical to the Federal Liberal Bill, it is close and similar.

MR. MacLEOD: — I wonder.

MR. ROMANOW: — Yes, it is. And those principles are maintained in the Federal Liberal legislation. They are, limitation, revelation and partial reimbursement. The Member for Albert Park says that it doesn't come in until July 15. It is true it doesn't come in until July 15, but the fact is that is what your Federal Liberal Party counterpart passed. When we studied this Bill we followed it as closely as we could. There are some difficulties in this area but the principles remain the way they are.

I urge the Liberals in the Province of Saskatchewan, while they may have misgivings, I have misgivings as to what effect this Bill is going to have on our Party. I don't know what effect it is going to have in terms of elections. Maybe \$125,000 is grossly too low. Maybe the Press will really put us in shackles over these concerns I have talked about. We have concerns as well. But the simple fact of the matter is that all of us should be able to agree on the principles of limitation, revelation and partial reimbursement which are the basic concepts of this Bill.

I say this is positive election reform. I say this is good election law. There are kinks and there are difficulties. I believe that every political party in the Province of Saskatchewan can make this Bill work, will make this Bill work and all of Saskatchewan will be better for it, including the politicians who sit in this office.

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

MR. C.P. MacDONALD: — Would the Hon. Minister permit a question? One of the things that the Minister has explained is his concern that he doesn't know whether \$125,000 is a reasonable limit or not. That is what concerns me. Would he be willing to put in an amendment in the third reading which would set up an all-party committee in this House to assess with members of the Press and political parties throughout Saskatchewan, what is a reasonable limit to election expenses? Not something pulled out of the sky whether it be one television broadcast a day, one a week, one on radio a day, one newspaper ad a day, five people in a central office. So that everybody will know what is a reasonable one, and bring in an all-party report on a reasonable limitation, as to what a reasonable election campaign would cost?

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, I would answer as follows. I may be just a little lengthy but I want to be as full as I can about this.

I believe that an interparty or intersessional committee in this matter certainly has some merit. I am concerned,

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however, about the potential for real politics as we have seen from time to time in some of the committees we have set up which are less contentious than this one. Politics would be involved over a ceiling that high or one that low; Liberals are wealthier than NDP and so forth. Where do you get your money from and the like questions that may degenerate into disagreement.

Frankly, if you want a specific answer, my answer to you would be that I should like to consider this for a day or two. But my first gut reaction is to say, no. Because I should like to see the Bill passed. I should like to see us consider it over the summer months and see where we go from here.

Let me make one other thing clear. We tabled an original Bill a year ago, inviting submissions. We had some, we didn't have too many from political parties; neither from our party or your party. I will be very frank about that. But we did and we waited to see what it is and this is the result. I think the answer for this Session is, no. But I would certainly be prepared to review this matter further with the Leader of the Opposition or the Hon. Member over the next few months.

MR. MacLEOD: — I wonder if I might ask a question of the Minister? I wonder if the Minister would consider referring the various details of the bill that we consider as contentious to an independent commission or to an all-party committee, one or the other? I have no quarrel to either one referring to totally independent and free and fair elections in Saskatchewan.

MR. ROMANOW: — Let me say again, that I don't believe that there is any way that an independent committee can solve this problem. I just don't believe there is. I believe that the House of Commons' route and basically our route, is the way to do it. The only difference between the House of Commons' route and our route is that they have a very highly structured committee system. It is referred to a committee. Perhaps maybe some day we will develop that in the Province of Saskatchewan as well. But to refer it to some independent judicial authority, I simply don't think that will work. I think our best approach is to pass the bill, put it on the books. We will have a time to take a look at it to see what the possible effects will be. As I have said in second reading and as I have said privately and I repeat publicly, we are open to suggestions for change. I am not sure . . .

MR. MacDONALD: — After the next election.

MR. ROMANOW: — Not after the next election. As soon as we can get to this operation. I don't know when the next election is going to be. But certainly assuming that we are going the normal routine, certainly we will take a look at it. We are not infallible, but we want to take a look at it.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time on the following Recorded Division:

YEAS — 31
Messieurs

Blakeney
Dyck

Pepper
Byers

Matsalla
Owens

Meakes
Smishek
Messer
Romanow
Snyder
Thibault
Larson
Baker
Brockelbank

Thorson
Whelan
Kwasnica
Carlson
Engel
Cody
Robbins
Tchorzewski

Feduniak
Comer
Rolfes
Lange
Hanson
Mostoway
Oliver
Kaeding

NAYS — 8
Messieurs

Steuart
Grant
MacDonald (Milestone)

Weatherald
MacLeod
Lane

MacDonald (M. Jaw No)
Malone

The Assembly adjourned at 5:25 o'clock p.m.