

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fifth Session — Seventeenth Legislature
40th Day

Wednesday, April 16, 1975.

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

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Mr. E.C. Whelan (Regina North West): — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Hon. Member for Wascana (Mr. Baker) through you and to all Members of the Legislature I should like to introduce 25 Grade Twelve students from Miller High. They are seated in the west gallery and their teacher, Mr. Schuett, is with them.

I am sure all Members of the Legislature welcome this group to the Legislature this morning. We hope that your stay with us will be pleasant and that you will find the proceedings educational and informative.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. C.P. MacDonald (Milestone): — Sorry, Mr. Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources, I can hardly wait to hear you, but if you don't mind I should like to interrupt.

There is a group of students who arrived just after the 10:00 o'clock opening of the Legislature and I didn't have an opportunity to introduce them. I should like to introduce to the Members of the House a group of 18 Grade Twelve students sitting in the opposite gallery from me, from the community of Avonlea in the Milestone constituency. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Dunc. McKellar, and I should like to ask all Members of the House to give them a welcome and hope they have a very enjoyable day.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. A.E. Blakeney (Regina Centre): — Mr. Deputy Speaker and Members of the House, I would like to call to your attention and greet on your behalf a group of students in the Speaker's Gallery from Thompson School. Thompson School is a school in the centre part of Regina, an older school and a school with a fine tradition, a school that some other Members of this House are familiar with. They are Grade Eight students, about 50, and they are with their teachers, Mr. Adair and Mrs. Roach. They have done a tour of the building and will be with us for perhaps a half hour. They will then be meeting with me and will be asking me some questions about how we conduct ourselves in the House. So I know with that comment you will greet them with me and give me every opportunity to give them a good explanation of how we are conducting ourselves.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. H.H.P. Baker (Regina Wascana): — Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is one time I am going to horn

in on the Premier. Thompson School is now back in my constituency, known as Regina Victoria. This is the finest school in Regina and I'll tell you why. My daughter attended this school and completed Grade Eight. I had been president of the Home and School Association for eight years, during her studies in public school.

I want to welcome Mr. Adair and Mrs. Roach this afternoon and all the Grade Eight students. I, too, will take time out to meet with you as well. Seeing that you are in my constituency, hopefully, I will represent you the next time as the Premier has represented you so well these past four years. Welcome this afternoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. J. Wiebe (Morse): — Mr. Speaker, I, too, should like to introduce a group of 65 students sitting in the east gallery, from the Lindale School at Moose Jaw. This is the third year now that I have had the privilege of talking with them and I met with them for a half hour over the lunch period.

I think an interesting part about this school is that there are students attending Lindale School not only from the Morse constituency but from the Gravelbourg, Lumsden and Arm River constituencies. I am very pleased to see you here this afternoon and look forward to meeting with you again next year.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. E.L. Tchorzewski (Humboldt): — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see entering in the west gallery a group of students from Muenster School, a group of 29 Grade Ten students accompanied by their teacher, Miss Margaret Vataman, as well as several other adults from the community and district of Muenster. I should like to extend to them, and I am sure on behalf of the Members of this Assembly, a welcome to the Legislative Assembly. I wish them a very pleasant stay and hope that they will gain something from what they see in the deliberations that will be taking place here in the time that they are here. I wish them a good trip on the way back.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. E.C. Whelan (Regina North West): — Mr. Speaker, a very important group of people are seated in the gallery. They are 70 students from the Al Pickard School in Regina North West. The school is named after a very famous sports figure in the city of Regina. They are with their teachers, Wayne Hazell and Mrs. Henderson. This group of young people hold a public speaking contest in their school and are interested in parliamentary procedure. I am sure they are going to get some excellent examples of good parliamentary procedure this morning. Every Member I am sure welcomes them here and we hope that you have a very pleasant and informative stay with us this morning.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

LAND SPECULATION COMPANIES IN THE USA

Mr. J.G. Lane (Lumsden): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to direct a question to the Attorney General on behalf of the Minister for Consumer Affairs (Mr. Tchorzewski). As the former Minister of Consumer Affairs you may be well advised or may know that the Queen Creek Land and Cattle Company have been forced to suspend activities in the United States through a Cease and Desist Order issued by the United States Government, and in effect can no longer carry on business. I am informed that the Cease and Desist Order applies to all land speculation companies in the United States. Could you assure this House and the people of Saskatchewan that the Saskatchewan investors will be fully protected under the bonding provisions that were applicable to the Queen Creek Land and Cattle Company to make sure that Saskatchewan investors are, as I say, fully protected?

Hon. R. Romanow (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I was personally not aware of the development with respect to the Queen Creek Land and Cattle Company. I can assure the Member and the House that I will certainly communicate this as soon as possible to the Minister in charge of Consumer Affairs and Provincial Secretary for his consideration.

With respect to protection, if that is necessary, if that should prove to be the case with respect to Saskatchewan investors, I am sure that the Department will do all that it can to protect any people who may be involved in Saskatchewan in this regard. Again we will have to check the nature of the order and see what impact, if any, it has on Saskatchewan and advise the Members at a later date.

Mr. Lane: — By way of supplementary, would the Minister be prepared to advise the Consumer Affairs Department to take immediate action on the bond to ensure that the bond is still operative. And that if the bond is not operative that Saskatchewan investors in these land speculation companies will be so advised so they don't waste their money taking action in the United States to try and recover the land because mostly things look hopeless from all reports in the United States.

Mr. Romanow: — Well, at first glance I see no difficulty with advising that course of action if it is open to us. I think the important thing is to find out what the actual situation is with Queen Creek. The Member indicates that there has been a United States court order and I think we will have to take a look and see what the nature of the company is in Saskatchewan or in Canada, the nature of its operations and assets which may affect and may be different from any of the developments in the United States. Once we determine the facts and if in fact the situation as described by the Member is true then I see no difficulty in taking that course of advice to the Minister of Consumer Affairs and the appropriate authorities and I will do so.

Mr. Lane: — I suggest the Minister should give us an assurance that a priority would be placed on this investigation so that it is done immediately.

Mr. Romanow: — I will draw it to the attention of the officials of Consumer Affairs at the earliest convenience this morning.

SPECULATIVE GAIN ON LANDS SOLD

Mr. J.G. Richards (Saskatoon University): — Mr. Speaker, I have a question which in the absence of the Minister in charge of the Housing Corporation, I wish to address to the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Wood).

It concerns a Mr. Harvey Smith who cost the Saskatchewan Government \$65,000 earlier in the month. The question to the Minister is, are there any plans within the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation to attempt to deal with urban speculation. This Mr. Harvey Smith has now made a second \$7,500 speculative gain on land sold to the city of Saskatoon, bought in February, sold in March for the second senior citizens' high rise. These are two small incidents involving one gentleman, Mr. Harvey Smith, a local businessman in Saskatoon. I am sure we are merely talking about the tip of the iceberg in this case. Are there any discussions going on within the Department of Municipal Affairs, within the Housing Corporation as to how to deal with this type of situation?

Hon. E.I. Wood (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — I am afraid, Mr. Speaker, that as far as I am concerned I am not acquainted with this situation. This part of the Government work has been turned over to the Housing Corporation. I have not any connection with the Housing Corporation at the present time. The Hon. Minister is not present and I am afraid I can't answer on that question.

Mr. Richards: — As a supplementary, Mr. Speaker, it was one small piece of land purchased by . . .

Mr. Speaker: — The Member must just ask a question and not attempt to give information because the Minister isn't here.

Mr. Richards: — Well, the question is, Mr. Speaker, how do these people, speculators around the city of Saskatoon have such good information about forthcoming land transactions so that they are in a position to be realizing these speculative gains? Obviously there is something serious wrong with the policies being pursued by the Housing Corporation, Municipal Affairs, local governments, which permit this kind of ready access by speculators to information which permits them to make the purchases on which they can make immediate speculative gains?

Mr. Wood: — I'm afraid that again I can't answer that question. If there is a necessity for some investigations into that, I would be very glad to have my people look into the matter and see what the answer is to this.

Mr. Richards: — Bring us back the details of the case.

FLOOD DAMAGE PAYMENTS

Mr. E.C. Malone (Regina Lakeview): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to direct a question to the Minister of the Environment.

It has come to my attention that in the past few months all of the claims for flood damage payments within the Province of Saskatchewan have been approved and paid. I should say with the exception of the city of Regina. Would the Minister tell us if this is indeed the case that the city of Regina has not been paid, and if that is the case why the city hasn't been paid?

Hon. N.E. Byers (Minister of the Environment): — Well the payments for flood compensation resulting from floods of last year are not under my jurisdiction, but are the responsibility of the Minister of the Housing Corporation. The processing of all payments with respect to flood payments, flood damage, was the responsibility of the Minister of the Housing Corporation.

Mr. Malone: — If that Minister had been here I would have asked him, but you are directly involved with the flooding during the year and I was wondering if you had any knowledge about these payments.

Mr. Byers: — I was not the responsible Minister to any of the flood compensation claims, we were directing the water.

Mr. Malone: — I wonder if the Premier would answer the question in view of the fact that the appropriate Minister is not here?

Mr. Blakeney: — I didn't get the question.

Mr. Malone: — Mr. Premier, I asked the question. It is my understanding that as a result of the flooding of last year as you know the Government received many claims for damage. The claims were approved and the payments have been made to all applicants except for the application by the city of Regina for a payment to it. My question was, is this true, has the city of Regina not been paid and if so, why haven't they been paid?

Hon. A.E. Blakeney (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, I do not know the answer for sure. My understanding, without checking it, is that the city of Regina claim is still being processed. I think it is possibly a question of whether or not they qualify on the basis of threshold, a 2 mill threshold as I recall it. As well, the city of Regina had a number of elements in their initial claim which, as I understand it, were the type of charges which were not included in the claims from other places. Accordingly, it required further processing.

Mr. Malone: — A supplementary question. Would the Premier be able to tell me what those other elements were that were claimed by the city of Regina?

Mr. Blakeney: — No, I am not. The best I can do is ask the Hon. Mr. Cody, the Minister responsible to obtain the information and provide it to the Hon. Member.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. R. Romanow that Bill No. 63 — **An Act to amend The Election Act, 1971** be now read a second time.

Mr. C.P. MacDonald (Milestone): — Mr. Speaker, I only want to say a few words to what my colleagues have said. I think the mechanics of the Bill have been discussed very much with the original passage of the Bill. But my comments are twofold, number one, the whole process by which The Election Expenses Act was introduced in this Legislature was a bad method whereby one man, the Attorney General of the Province of Saskatchewan, decided he would determine the rules of the game by which all 61 Members of this House would seek re-election. At the time that the Bill was passed Members of the Opposition criticized very violently the fact that he, personally, made a determination as to what the amount of each individual candidate could spend, about the amount a political party could spend. He, personally, made the determination as to what the rules of the game would be.

It was rather interesting he refused to listen to any Member on this side of the House. However, when he got outside of the House and members of his own party made the decision that it was impossible for them to operate, then he turned around and brought in the amendments to increase the amount for each individual candidate and each individual political party.

My second point, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that no Bill should be introduced by the Government to determine the rules of the Election. I suggest that this would be an improper procedure in the House of Commons or by any federal party. What should have been done for this particular Bill if we are going to control election expenses in the Province of Saskatchewan, is that there should have been a legislative committee, made up of both sides of the House, who should have studied and researched the matter of election expenses and then made a report back to the House. But to have one individual and one party make the determination is a very, very bad process and the fact that this Bill is now in for amendment before it was ever even proclaimed, is an indication that the Attorney General and the NDP took far too much upon themselves.

Third, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to rehash the problems of \$175,000 or \$1 per candidate. First of all I think probably that the \$1 per candidate is a little too much, or the \$1 per voter is a little too much and the \$175,000 for the party is too little. I am not going to discuss that, I am not going to rehash all the things that the NDP have done to circumvent this Bill. And I say it is circumvented by the use of civil servants, by the use of Service Printing, by the use of Government advertising and all the other methods that they have used to take the taxpayers' money and use it to their advantage. I am not going to rehash all that.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the whole concept of election expenses is certainly one that should be welcomed by the people of Saskatchewan and it should be welcomed by all political parties. The method that the Attorney General and the NDP have used to implement this Bill has destroyed the very foundation under which this Bill can be accepted by the general public and by politicians on both sides of the House. Once again I hope there are some questions that the Attorney General can answer in Committee.

I am afraid the interpretation of this Bill is going to make a crook out of everybody who runs for public office in this province. I hope some way that if he has not called the three political parties that are standing for election in the province before the Bill was introduced, that at the conclusion when the Bill is passed, then an opportunity of each individual party which is running candidates in the next election will be given an opportunity to sit down together with the Chief Electoral Office and draw up some rules of the game so that there is some practical understanding about what goes on. For example, are newsletters of MLAs to be charged to the Election Expenses Act? Is information that has been provided or advertising spent by a political party, a month or two months ago or prior to the calling of the election, is it going to be included in election expenses? In other words, I hope that the Government will permit the three or four political parties of Saskatchewan to sit down with the Chief Electoral Officer and clearly understand the rules of the game by which they operate so that there are some clear guidelines before an election is called. Indications are that an election may come sooner than we think. I think all of us will welcome the opportunity to get out and get at it. But I certainly hope that before that opportunity arrives that the whole confusion, the whole misunderstanding, the whole concern of all people involved in seeking re-election in the Province of Saskatchewan will be cleared up by the Attorney General.

Once again I want to say that I am disturbed that one man should bring in this Bill on his own responsibility, without discussion, without consultation. Second, I am disturbed that members of his own political party should be able to tell him to change the terms of reference even before the Bill is proclaimed. Third, I hope that he will explain very clearly the rules of the game before the election is called so that none of the 61 Members in this House or 60 Members and all those seeking election who are not in the House, do not get in serious trouble after the election is complete.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. J.G. Lane (Lumsden): — This Bill, of course, and the principle is extremely one-sided. We have discussed in the past the whole question of election expenses and the position of the MLAs. I have taken the position, for example, that I oppose offices for MLAs because I think it gives an unfair advantage to the incumbent unless there is some compensatory action taken for other candidates. But it is unfortunate that there are only two parties being restricted by the legislation — Conservative Party of Saskatchewan and the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan.

There is in fact no restriction on the NDP in this election. Government advertising, government promotion is not covered. You can do it as an independent, say that you are just giving information, the program is just for the public's benefit, we

are just trying to get across as we have heard in the past what the benefits are that are going to come from a certain type of program.

We have had the assurance in the past from the Attorney General that only emergency advertising in this type of situation would be allowed. Again the discretion as to what constitutes an emergency is done by the Government opposite and not by anyone of any independent position. It is one-sided too because the Government opposite at public expense is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars for employees, public servants, political appointments to campaign, to organize, to promote their particular candidate or the party.

The Hon. Member for Lakeview made it clear the other day that just on the ones that are known, that we have been able to get out of public accounts, rather than run through the total list, I am referring to individuals such as John Burton, Brian Coulter, Clare Powell, Ed Wallace, Cam Cooper, Brenda Hewitt, Doug Archer, Joan Halcro, Jim Eaton, Don Keith, Frank Buck, Gerry Wilson, Jack Kinzel, Bruce Lawson, etc., make more in salaries as individuals working for the Party than is allowed the Liberal Party or the Conservative Party to spend as a party in the election. Certainly that is unfair. I don't think the Premier or the Attorney general would deny that the Bill certainly is one-sided. It certainly brings a degree of unfairness into the election position which should not exist if we are really trying to put restraint and a fair restriction on election expenses.

Surely the Opposition Party should be allowed at least as much — restrict the Government side to the \$175,000, allow the Opposition Members to match the total salaries that these party appointments have made over the last four years working, promoting which are not covered under the Bill. Then you would have a fairer Bill. But that is not done. In effect, the Opposition and the Conservatives are being allowed \$175,000, the NDP are being allowed \$175,000 plus roughly \$324,850 that we have been able to calculate out of Public Accounts. This means that while the other parties are limited to \$175,000 the NDP are in effect spending in this campaign, not counting government promotional information, \$500,000, practically two and one half times more than what the other parties plus having the natural legitimate advantages of being the Government Party.

No doubt that the Attorney General will agree that the Bill is one-sided, that the money is being spent and the monies being allowed in a campaign totally favor the Government Party. I think the Government opposite should be warned that this can come back to haunt you. I think that you will have no argument when that day arises as to the principle of unfair election expenses Bill. The Bill is unfair, it is one-sided and I say it is unfortunate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. R. Romanow (Attorney General): — I will not be long in summing up the amendments of the Bill, or trying to rebut too many of the remarks made by the Members opposite.

I think there are one or two points, however, that should be briefly commented on. One is the question of the Attorney

General personally determining the figures and the nature of the Bill. I am not sure that that is a very serious accusation. I don't believe it because every piece of legislation which does come before the House comes after the preparation by our responsible Minister and after it is approved of course of Government. In this case, the original Bill was certainly in the hands of two or three of my friends opposite prior to introduction, with a view to obtaining their view as to how we should be amending it. In fact, Bill 22 which was now dropped, to a very large extent, was motivated by suggestions from the Members opposite that there should be some specific amendments to the original Bill, that the original Bill had a number of loop-holes in it and the Members of the Opposition felt that this was not quite fair or perhaps unclear and accordingly that the amendments should be made. We agreed and we dropped Bill 22 when it appeared that the amendments which were drafted were not fully able to deal with the various points raised, not only by the Liberals, but by some of the Members on this side of the House.

To say that this Bill was or is a creation of one individual is of course untrue. The Bill has had the benefit of advice and experience gained in other jurisdictions with respect to election laws and other provinces where election laws have not been long passed. In that sense, as well, there has been a form of consultation, albeit very indirect, but a form of consultation to make what I think is a very good Bill.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Milestone says that the Bill does have loop-holes. Yes, I acknowledge the fact that there may very well be some loop-holes. I think there are probably laws that are written where if there is not a will, there is not a way to get around them. This law may have more of those opportunities open to it. That shouldn't be surprising to the Members because after all we are dealing in Saskatchewan with something that is a first ever law. It is a law which will take one or two or three elections to work out all the bugs.

I agree with the suggestion from the Member for Milestone, that the Chief Electoral Officer convene a meeting of all the interested political parties and discuss how the Bill could be interpreted and try and understand some of the informal ground rules in this regard. I will undertake to so suggest to the Chief Electoral Officer, although I think he is planning this himself already. I think a lot of the loop-hole difficulty and a lot of the uncertainty which can come about as a result of this first ever law being applied will be remedied once the Members have had a chance to sit down and see how it actually applies.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, on the question of Government advertising. I do believe that the Member for Lumsden was incorrect on this point. Members will know that a session previous to this one, an amendment was passed to The Election Act which specifically curtails government advertising during the election period, acknowledging the Member's argument, with the exception in cases of emergency. This is also a very potentially loose definition. I think it would be a very brave government, a very unwise government that used a non-emergency situation, or what in the minds of many people would not be an emergency situation, to put across any type of advertising, that even had the smell of being political in its nature. They would be making a mistake in two areas: (1) that it would be an emergency, and (2) that it would be political during the course of the election

period.

I can tell the Members opposite that one of the things that worked to a very great advantage to the people of Saskatchewan and to our part in the last election was in fact this type of an abuse which though when you were a government conducted in advertising during the election period. I think we have learned the lesson as politicians and it is in the Bill in any event. I don't see this as any very real danger with respect to the Government advertising.

I might say that I am not totally committed to that point of view that I have just enunciated because there are very many programs which are unrelated to political efforts. For example, I can think of the Reach Program of the Department of Social Services with respect to adoption of children, the former Adopt Indian Metis program. I don't know anybody, who could say that that type of advertisement has got a political flavour to it or much of the institutional advertising of Saskatchewan Power Corporation, Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office. I think that many people watching the TV and listening to the radio and seeing the institutional ads of SGIO, the buy insurance ads divorce them from the minds of association with one side or the other side. It is a business enterprise. Frankly I am sorry to see what I think that type of advertising very likely to be eliminated during the election period. But we have accommodated the Opposition. This was one of the very big areas of concern that you had the last time when the Bill came up. We gave in on this, and we put in that section, I think, to the detriment of the Crown corporations, regardless of the government in power, and probably to the detriment of the people who make use of these various government programs and government services. The point that I make is that it has been done and the advertising statements made by the Members opposite is just simply not true.

Mr. Speaker, before I do take my seat. Again I am sorely tempted to — if it wasn't coming to the tail end of the Session to make a rather lengthy speech about civil servants in politics, during the period 1964-71. Some of them now have rather graduated to famous, bigger and better things than when they were in the capacity of executive assistants and so forth. I don't think that helps the debate. I don't think it is a credible argument. I don't think it is a credible argument by the Liberals opposite to say that an individual who is involved in government is not able to take part in political activity off hours or to take part in political activity by seeking political office. This is of course to fly in the very face of what is happening right now in the Province of Saskatchewan, where there are indeed candidates who are directly or indirectly employees of government or government agencies who are running and running against the Government of the day, according to the rules of the Government. The Liberals in their minds can say that that's different than a man who wants to take time out to go and do some door to door canvassing. The Liberals can say that there is a distinction between the man who takes leave of absence to run for office and the man who decides to take time off to assist a candidate in an election campaign. I don't see that distinction whatever. It is political activity, it is a democratic right of any person in this province, civil servant or otherwise, to take leave of absence without pay to go ahead and do the type of activity he or she wants to involve himself or herself in. But in any event, the public ought not to be

confused or ought to believe that this is some form of a widespread phenomena. It certainly is not, it is not in the Saskatchewan Government, has not been in the Saskatchewan Government since 1971.

The point anyway, Mr. Speaker, is that it is of such minor consequence to the principles of the Bill that I hardly believe that it should be made a major point of objection by the Members opposite.

I want to close by saying, we are dealing with a principle, Mr. Speaker, in second reading. The principle of this Bill in second reading basically is twofold: (1) To put a ceiling on expenditures by candidates and provincial parties in elections. Make no mistake about that. That is a principle of this Bill. Whether the ceilings are to \$125,000 or \$175,000 or whatever, is a detail of the Bill rather than the principle.

The second principle of the Bill deals with a question of revelation of campaign contributions, donors. This is an attempt to get electioneering and financing out into the open. I believe that all political parties should stand for this. This is an attempt to say, over \$100, the campaign donor must be identified and listed. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this also is a very positive reform. Those are the two basic fundamentals of this Bill.

There is a third feature, and that is the mail-in privilege for the physically handicapped. I want to remind the Members opposite that while there may be loop-holes in that provision, up to now, Saskatchewan has not had a mail-in ballot provision for physically handicapped. That's in this Bill. That's a principle of the Bill. Do we or do we not allow physically handicapped people an easier way in which to exercise their democratic right, their democratic right to vote for the candidate of their choosing. That's what this Bill provides.

Mr. Speaker, I remind the Members opposite, the House and the people of Saskatchewan that when we vote for this Bill, we will be voting for (1) A ceiling on election expenditures, so that election campaigns are decided on issues and not in favor of the political party that has the most money to spend on advertising. (2) Revelation of campaign contributions. (3) The addition of mail-in ballots for physically handicapped. Is there anybody in this House who can argue against those principles? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. Therefore I am pleased to move the amendments to The Election Act.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. C.P. MacDonald (Milestone): — Before the Minister takes his seat, I should like to direct a question. It is not a controversial one. I have discussed with several lawyers and I can't find one that agrees on the interpretation of the Bill. This bothers me, because I would hate — I'm trying to be as brief as I can, Mr. Speaker — to see any Members of the House go out and fight a legitimate election, try to live by the spirit of the Bill and lose by 50 votes and have his opponent controvert the election because of a misinterpretation. Will the legal people within the Department of the Attorney general outline in simple form a basic interpretation of each individual clause as they see it and how it will apply to an individual candidate? Thus the kind of

difficulty that I am referring to which is a real one and we have never gone through an election in Saskatchewan without controverted elections. Some of them have been on very, very minute points. But if they are a point of law, it could certainly occur.

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I realize that too, that it was a long one, but I do think the point made was a very important one, by the Member for Milestone. We do operate in elections and it is not only in Saskatchewan, but Saskatchewan is my experience, this can happen that a candidate can fight the election and do the best that he or she can according to the ground rules and according to the law, then the activity of somebody below him, around him or even himself, by pure negligence confuses the problem and could conceivably land that person into lots of trouble with respect to this Bill. That concerns me and I think it should concern every Member. The question was, would we consider the preparation of a laymen's handbook to this Bill. I don't want to commit myself to that because I believe that that should be the function of the Chief Electoral Office. My information is that the Chief Electoral Office is indeed now in the course of preparing something like this with the assistance of the Department of the Attorney General. While that handbook will not be the law, of course, it is always subject to overruling by any law, I think we can settle many of the differences and many of the potential pitfalls which many of us see with respect to this Bill.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Kowalchuk that Bill No. 33 — **An Act to amend The Provincial Parks, Protected Areas, Recreation Sites and Antiquities Act** be now read a second time.

Hon. R. Romanow (Attorney General): — The last time around when this Bill was in second reading, this is The Provincial Parks, Protected Areas, Recreation Sites and Antiquities Act, some objections were made about the relatively wide wording of the proposed amendments. At the conclusion of my remarks, I indicated that I would have the Department of the Attorney General people and the . . .

Mr. C.P. MacDonald: — On a Point of Order, Mr. Speaker, is the Attorney General closing debate?

Mr. Romanow: — No, I had it adjourned. It stands in my name — adjourned.

I promised the Members to discuss this with the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources and his officials and we have now done so. I should like to move — not move, but have the second reading of this Bill given approval with this explanation. There will be a House amendment introduced to the Bill. The House amendment, unfortunately, I have only one copy of it with me. I was thinking I had an extra one. I will just give it to you in half a second. It would, in effect, strike out all of Section 21(a) of Bill 33.

If you take a look at Bill 33 printed, 21(a) I believe is really the section which potentially creates some of the

difficulty. What the amendment will do is that first of all in the third and fourth lines of 21(a), which presently reads:

Who finds a person violating clause (a), (b), (c) or (d) of sub-section (i) of Section 22.

This is the section that we had a great deal of discussion about. It will knock out (a) and (b), limiting the powers of the RCMP or the officer to (c) or (d) only of Section 22, and that brings it down more particularly to the type of noisome and noxious activity which the Bill seeks to deal with. (a) and (b) will no longer be capable of interpretation in such a fashion as to allow an officer of the department, or a member of the RCMP to act.

Now we are going to leave in (a) — “without warrant arrest that person”. Now, Mr. Speaker, on this one, this is really a power which the Department of the Attorney General’s people feel is needed.

On the basis of the problem which is before us, eviction of an individual, or a group of individuals, simply has not been enough. Either the persons refuse to go or if they go, they soon return. Even more important I suppose is that it’s difficult and often impossible for park authorities to obtain any identification. The person will simply say ‘I’m John Doe’ and you can do nothing to make the eviction or the identification stick. The power of arrest is needed to ensure the positive identification of particular individuals and to ensure that these persons discontinue the actual wilful or malicious destruction of property.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I won’t talk about the destruction of property. I think the Minister of Tourism has done that and can do it in wrapping up this debate, much better than I can., but on the documentation that I have seen before me it certainly seems like a very, very serious problem in our provincial park system.

So we are going to leave in that power with respect to ‘arrest and warrant’ but it will be limited only to (c) and (d) of Section 22, by virtue of the proposed amendments.

Now the next part of the Bill which will be amended relates to (b) of 21A — ‘seize any permit, etc’. We are changing that to limit its scope. It’s too wide where it says ‘any permit’, and now it will be changed to read:

basically any camping permit, daily park user permit, or season park user permit.

That relates basically to the park usage permits, as opposed to other Tourism and Renewable Resources types of permits or other permits which may be issued under this Bill or Department.

Now the next amendment, Mr. Speaker, which we will be proposing relates to the (c) which will be eliminated and rewritten. This allows “the seizure of any implement or thing, vehicle or boat”, which the Opposition and some of us felt perhaps maybe was a little bit too wide — any implement or thing, etc. We will have an amendment which simply says:

May seize any article which is being used, or has been

used in connection with the violation of, or the offence believed to have been committed against clauses (a), (b), (c) and (d), excluding a motorboat, or a motor vehicle.

So you will see this House amendment. I have a copy here and I will send it over to the Member for Milestone and the Member for Lakeview who are sitting side by side to look at it. You will see that the seizure of any implement, or thing, or vehicle has been limited and it will be only those which are used in connection with the offence, and the evidence may be used at trial and shall be disposed of by the Minister as may be directed.

The rest of the sections, I think, are necessary in terms of just the ordinary police power which attaches.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe with these amendments the scope of the Bill has been very much curtailed and more specifically hones in on the problem which we are dealing with here. I want to close my remarks in this part of the debate by simply saying that this is a very serious problem that we do have in our provincial parks, problems in some cases of gangs of young people who have been drinking, causing disturbances which sometimes result in wilful, malicious damage, broken bottles, ransacking, defacing walls and bathrooms and so forth, and this is very much of concern to the people of Saskatchewan and to the Department. The Department apparently has a large file of letters of complaint from the public.

I might say, that since this Bill hit the House, I have received four or five communications myself, and all of them have been from the public and all of them have been in favor of going with the Bill as originally drafted, rather than the amendments. I simply say there is a need, and there is a need that the public supports, even with the original Bill, but in order to make sure that we are not using a shotgun approach to this thing we have proposed these amendments which will zero in on the specific offences involved, and, Mr. Speaker, I think that this Bill can therefore move into second reading and get passage of the House.

Mr. J.G. Lane (Lumsden): — I wish the Opposition could join the Attorney General in the optimistic approach he has taken with regard to the proposed amendments.

We still object very strongly in principle to the new proposed 21B under clause (2) of the original Bill. By that particular clause a member of the RCMP may search without warrant any person, any building, vehicle or boat from, or in which he believes that evidence may be found. Now to paraphrase the rather famous comment — the Government of Saskatchewan has no business in the sleeping blankets of the people in the parks of the Province of Saskatchewan; because certainly the powers given under this Bill allow that search.

I think it would be quite proper if the matter had been as important as the Attorney General says to have brought in amendments some time ago, or earlier by this House, which specifically deal with those problems. Now I realize the House amendments proposed by the Attorney General are an effort to take this approach. It's strange how on one side we can be told how important this, and how necessary this is, and yet when the

amendments are brought in originally they go too far and they don't specifically deal with the problems as set out by the Minister introducing the Bill. That only indicates one thing, that I think the Government opposite is so caught up in every piece of legislation brought in that they've got to have every bit of control and every bit of power, far beyond what is legitimately necessary, far beyond which can be reasonably called for, and far beyond what is reasonably justified. I think that this Bill is just one more example of the lack of restraint on the Government opposite when it comes to the matter of legislative control or government control.

Why the Government doesn't take the more reasonable approach and say, here are the problems that we know of, or that have been brought to our attention, and we will make the specific amendments to deal with those problems . . . very justifiable, very reasonable and very acceptable.

But no, we have to go far beyond that in this Bill.

The House amendments brought in or proposed by the Attorney General really don't go to the substantive opposition that we on your left, Mr. Speaker, have and that is: that this Bill goes too far, gives too much power, and certainly it is not necessary. Mr. Speaker, I'm a little surprised at some of the backbenchers who occasionally talk about principle, all of a sudden see it going out the window when they back off after all the flowery phrases on the Bill of Rights and how they were going to do this and that and the other thing, and what a great thing it is and then when the political pressure builds up they back off and the principle goes out the window. They did it on Conflict of Interest legislation, they backed off when the public . . .

You can rest assured, Mr. Attorney General, that this particular provision will be amended in the future when somebody gets caught up in the heat of problems at a park on a long weekend, which can very easily happen and which in fact is one of the reasons for the Bill in the first place, when some arresting officer who is legitimately frustrated and has been under an awful lot of pressure, very easily over-extends the powers given to him, and I think it would be natural action and I think it is going to be an inevitable action. He is going to overstep the bounds and he is going to have the legal justification to be able to take the actions and he will not be restricted in any way.

The proposed amendments give more powers in our parks to the arresting officer than is given to an arresting officer under the Narcotics Control Act of Canada. Far, far and away. The hon. misguided guidance counsellor for Saskatoon can't make a distinction in his own mind between the problems with hard drugs and vandalism in the parks, and for some reason that's typical. That's typical of the Member, the Member opposite, he can't understand what the problems are because he is so caught up himself. He is so caught up himself on blanket legislation that assuming his frontbenches will do something, will act reasonably, but he hasn't read the Bill, he probably hasn't understood the Bill, he hasn't obviously checked into the Bill and it's typical of the approach of the Member for the last four years as he desk thumps and just simply agrees with what the Government offers and probably has never questioned one Bill that has come before this House, and has done specifically as he

is told, pounds at the right time and does simply what he is told and which is not really any constructive approach for the Government opposite.

Now again, Mr. Speaker, this Bill goes too far. The powers are too great. The powers that are given are unnecessary. When we have a matter of provincial jurisdiction that we have to give powers greater than what are given to one of the national problems in the matter of control of hard drugs, then something is wrong with the thinking of the Government. Something is wrong that they are caught up with this idea that they have to have blanket powers to do everything, as we also throw the 'Cease and Desist' order in Consumer Affairs — totally unnecessary.

Mr. Speaker, we oppose this in principle — it goes too far. It goes much farther than probably the Minister who introduced the Bill intended. As a matter of principle, we cannot agree with giving the Government this absolute power to go into tents, campgrounds and just arrest and search without warrants. We think that's wrong, we oppose it on that principle.

Hon. J.R. Kowalchuk (Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources): — Mr. Speaker, I had intended to make my comments brief, but after hearing the Member for Milestone say that he is anxious to hear what I have to say, and after hearing the Member for Lumsden speak, I am going to have to reply to some of those statements.

I think the Attorney General has stated very specifically and clearly some of the amendments that we are going to propose. I think those are good amendments. A couple of them are omissions that were inadvertently omitted and some of these are specifically stated so that powers that are given to the people to control the parks are so stated that nobody can accuse us of saying that we are giving broad powers on an overall basis. These are some of the reasons for the amendment.

But, I think, Mr. Speaker, that the basic principle of better measures of control have been retained to which the Member for Lumsden is very much in opposition. To control vandalism and to control the many difficult acts of rowdyism that occur and have occurred and are going to continue to occur if we don't do something about, better controls had to be introduced.

I'm going to reply a little more to what the Hon. Member for Lumsden has said as well as to the remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition and some of the other Opposition Members as well. I'm going to include in the replies answers to what he has said, as well as answers to what other Opposition Members have said. Of course, always the thing comes up that we object very strongly to and that's the opposition shown to the principle of this Bill. The principle of this Bill is what I consider to be very important.

Search without warrant, he said, is unforgivable. It should never be. As I go on into my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I want these people to take note as to what is going on in other areas of control in other parks, in other jurisdictions, provincial and federal. Mr. Speaker, I do want to make a few remarks to this House in regard to the amendments to The Parks Act that we are proposing.

Now, the Leader of the Opposition the other day tried to imply motives that we are out for a 'power grab'. Well, the Member for Lakeview who is a lawyer, badly misinterpreted the legislation and forwarded arguments which I think were narrow and at times irrelevant. The Member for Prince Albert West tried to be persuasive in his argument that the power granted in this Bill is something unusual, something out of the ordinary. He wanted everyone to believe that we were setting precedents by bringing forward these amendments. However, I am confident that when I conclude my remarks this morning, that this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan will know the fact that there is nothing sinister about these amendments, that there is nothing unusual about these powers which this Act outlines, and the power grab to which he alleges, is only a fixation in his own mind.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, I should now like to turn directly to the criticisms which have been levelled against this legislation and hopefully clear the air of misconceptions and misunderstandings which were undoubtedly left following the remarks of the Members opposite when they participated in this debate.

Firstly, I would categorize as totally, without foundation the wild charge by the Member for Lakeview that our personnel receive no special training to better equip them in the administration of law at the field level. For the edification of the Members opposite, I would advise you again that the officers from my Department, the Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources who are specifically referred to in this Bill, that is the park superintendent and the conservation officers, are indeed trained in law enforcement. These staff members are provided with not only formal but also informal training in such matters. Such training is provided through the assistance of both the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Department of the Attorney General, Mr. Speaker. In addition to this, periodic training courses of a more informal nature are also given by senior experienced staff members.

So, Mr. Speaker, the charges by Members opposite that our staff is untrained is untrue and given the opportunity, I'd hope that the Member from Lakeview would retract that statement.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to turn to an allegation which the Leader of the Opposition made when he spoke against these amendments. It is truly remarkable that the Hon. Member can always see things that are not there and not so surprising to hear the Hon. Member for Prince Albert West say, a few years ago that he told a Manitoba Liberal audience that if they were good Liberals, they would simply have to rely on blind fate. We don't do that, we don't rely on blind fate. We rely on facts. As far as he is concerned, that is the Leader of the Opposition, almost every initiative that this Government is concerned with is conceived with the view of asserting a stranglehold on the people of this province. I feel that he should be cautioned, however, because the people of Saskatchewan are no longer susceptible to such ridiculous tripe. We are no longer living in the '30s when members of the Liberal party did succeed in utilizing scare tactics and innuendoes to slander and impune motives of our predecessors, the early CCF.

To the Leader of the Opposition I can only say, get off the narrow track, I think a little honesty wouldn't hurt, be

objective and be sincere and only after you have approached these issues more openly and honestly, will the people of Saskatchewan really give you credit and a degree of credibility.

The Member for Prince Albert West said by forwarding this legislation we were, in essence, “using a sledge hammer to kill a fly.” He said these powers were unusual and unnecessary. Mr. Speaker, simply stated, that allegation is not true. The same officers, and I refer to the parks superintendent and conservation offices, now have similar authority to enforce various other Acts both inside and outside the parks. He claims we are proposing a precedent. What about The Game Act, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, what about The Fur Act or The Forestry Act and The Fisheries Act and the Federal Migratory Bird Convention Act? The powers we seek in this Parks and Antiquities Act are all there in those other Acts for use by the conservation offices and game wardens including the powers to search, which we are not asking. He went on to allege that we are equipping these officers with some extraordinary powers. Again, not true, Mr. Speaker. In the case of each of the various pieces of legislation I have just mentioned, these officers have the powers of arrest without warrant, to seize any article or thing in connection with a violation and they also have the power to search without a warrant, that is the RCMP have the power to search. If the Members opposite had taken the time and had shown enough initiative, they could have easily avoided the contradiction of their remarks, rather than waste the time of this Assembly by making the charges which really bear no relationship to the facts.

The Member for Lakeview was also extremely concerned about a possible erosion of basic civil rights. He very clearly put forth the argument that we were in some way trampling on these rights with some devious legislation aimed to harass and suppress the individual and his freedoms. He argued that if these powers were granted to our officers it will mean that “a person must give up his basic civil rights upon entering a provincial park.” Those were his words. I ask the Member for Lakeview, when you enter a national park, do you feel that you are giving up your basic civil rights by doing so? When you travel to the Prince Albert National Park to holiday and camp with your family, as soon as you enter the Park, do you get that ‘queasy’ feeling that your rights are being suppressed and your individual freedoms are being eroded? You must be, because we’re talking about the one and the same thing. There is no difference between the powers in effect in national parks and that which we are proposing by forwarding these amendments. That is right and I can read them to you if you want them.

Mr. Speaker, the National Parks Act does, in fact, give very broad powers to the national park wardens or in fact to any park officer, specifically the National Parks Act provides and I quote in part only:

Any constable or person having the powers of a constable under the provisions of this Act or Regulations may (a) on view arrest any person, (b) without a warrant or other legal process at any time enter and search any building, premise, structure, camp, boat, vehicle, (c) on view seize any article.

Mr. Speaker, from what I have just quoted from the Federal Statute which relates to National Parks, does the Leader of the

Opposition and the Member for Lakeview and the Member for Lumsden think these powers should be stricken as well? Do they feel that their Federal Liberal Government is superseding their responsibility in eroding basic human rights or is it just this Provincial New Democratic Government which is guilty of the charge?

Mr. Speaker, I have no quarrel with a view that these powers are fairly broad in scope, however, they are necessary. The proposed amendments provide these powers to the park superintendent and the conservation officer only. Those who are trained in enforcement, Mr. Speaker, with the powers to arrest can seize evidence, powers which they already have under other legislation and leaving the more serious aspect of searching without a warrant to an RCMP officer. Again I stress the fact that these powers are not unusual, they are not sinister and they are not examples of an attempt to erode and trample human rights.

As my colleague, the Hon. Attorney General said before and again today, when he observed when he participated in this debate the officers who will be vested with this power and responsible, mature and dedicated employees who have every capability positively and responsibly to handle the powers which are delegated to them.

Mr. Speaker, I apologize for taking so much time. I'll apologize to the Attorney General, too, in going over earlier remarks which were given in this debate, however, the Opposition deliberately or otherwise, misconstrues (and I can see the need for them to misconstrue) not only the facts but also the intent of these proposed amendments and I feel that it is necessary to set the record straight.

On that point, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to comment briefly on the allegation made by the Member for Lakeview that the Criminal Code provides the necessary authority to control vandalism and rowdiness in the parks and our amendments, therefore, are unnecessary. Again, Mr. Speaker, that is not true. The powers under the Criminal Code are not transferred. This legislation must specify, and I want to repeat, must specify the powers granted to the officers necessary to enforce this provincial legislation in the provincial parks. Only under this Act, as this Act states and no other. Mr. Speaker, under the existing legislation our parks officer can only ask an offending individual, as already indicated by the Attorney General, to leave the park. Even if he does, he can immediately return to start the problem all over again.

The Member for Lakeview said and we quote: "can proceed the usual way and issue summons." Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously that position is ludicrous. The officials would be fortunate to get one out of fifty offenders by using this method. How effective would it be for an official after witnessing an offence to be forced to travel 20 or 30 miles to rouse a magistrate in the middle of the night to swear out a warrant and so on? After wasting two or three hours getting the necessary authority from the magistrate, do you really feel that we would succeed in our efforts to catch either the culprit or a couple of culprits? Not on your life. It is obvious that similar powers have been granted to all our enforcement staff for administration for Renewable Resources for over 30 years and to my

knowledge there have been few, if any abuses of that authority and as pointed out by the Attorney General, if abuses do occur and with the human element involved, there will probably be a few, there is the Ombudsman and the Human Rights Commission to follow up on any misdoings.

Mr. Speaker, the powers, which I have mentioned, have been effective for 30 years under the Renewable Resources section of the Department that are not being proposed for enforcement of The Parks Act and regulations. We're doing so because we've found on many occasions it is impossible to control the new wave of vandalism and rowdyism within our parks.

I should also briefly refer to the statement of the Leader of the Opposition when he went on before television cameras to give his version of what these amendments were all about. He didn't say it once but he said it some three times that we are solely out of control littering and that is not so, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is also a great one for wanting to refer things to committees. When he participated in this debate he urged us to refer this entire question to a committee which could then take these amendments to the public to see their reaction, what the reaction would be. He claims we are acting without the general support of the public. I say we have made representation to the public and let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, we have hundreds of letters on file which urge us to do something to better control the vandalism and the rowdyism which appear to be intensifying within the confines of our parks. We need this legislation approved now, Mr. Speaker, not next year. By referring this question to a committee we would go through another entire season without adequate legislation to better control the adverse actions of hooligans and vandals. Mr. Speaker, the public is demanding that something be done and our parks must have the supporting legislation to carry out the public wishes.

I have some correspondence which has been received by my Department complaining about this rowdyism and vandalism in our parks and campgrounds and in addition, we have received innumerable complaints by personal contact and telephone. Even this last week when this thing was introduced and not being acted upon. I won't spend but a moment quoting just a few to give you an example of the concerns which are being raised and the need for action. We received a letter from a captain in the Canadian Armed Forces who spent a night in one of our provincial parks and he says an uncontrolled party raged until 3:00 a.m. and he wrote to me of what took place and I quote:

Saskatchewan has beautiful parks but if this type of affairs can happen every weekend and the taxpayers, who enjoy camping and who support your department's work have no choice but to stay at home and let these other people take over these areas for their own selfish purposes.

Another letter from a family in Saskatoon who attempted to enjoy the long weekend at Murray Lake, that 25 people, younger people literally took over the campsite and wreaked havoc and destruction in the area by cutting down trees, littering the roadway with bottles and so on. He listed the damage which was done and went on to state:

April 16, 1975

These incidents and damages took place in both the afternoon and at night. Your personnel were helpful in trying to alleviate this problem and a concentrated effort by your staff helped to a certain extent.

And so, as I said before, I have numerous other letters. I could read a great many of them, good people who have indicated how much they like our parks, how much they appreciate them with the exception of this one problem area, rowdyism.

The superintendent personally patrolled the area late in the night but was the receiver of profanity, verbal abuse and general lack of respect and co-operation.

And he goes on to say:

I hope it will be possible in the future to introduce legislation extending the enforcement powers of your personnel and thus, enabling them to demand if need be the co-operation and the respect they deserve or if necessary to eject these hoodlums from the aforementioned public facilities.

And they're not all hoodlums. Sometimes just a bunch of young kids who get together, sometimes not so young, but control must be asserted, Mr. Speaker.

I have other correspondence as well, as I have said a moment ago and they all say the same thing. Parks are provided, Mr. Speaker, for the people of this province to enjoy their leisure time, to holiday with their family. Our parks should not be a place where excessively noisy revellers, rowdies and vandals are allowed to ruin a family holiday.

I state again, Mr. Speaker, the purpose of these amendments is to provide the necessary authority to control these undesirable activities and once again to provide the park users an enjoyable vacation experience. I had hoped that we would all be supporting these amendments. I still hope that we will all be supporting these amendments to The Parks Antiquities Act because it is not that this Government and this Department wants excess powers. It only wants some control to see that vandalism and such goings on be controlled so the people can enjoy the parks.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time on the following recorded division:

YEAS — 37
Messieurs

Blakeney
Dyck
Meakes
Wood
Romanow
Bowerman
Kramer
Thibault
Larson
Kowalchuk
MacMurchy
Pepper
Michayluk

Byers
Thorson
Kwasnica
Carlson
Engel
Robbins
Tchorzewski
Cowley
Taylor
Matsalla
Owens
Mostoway

Gross
Feduniak
Comer
Rolfes
Lange
Hanson
Feschuk
Kaeding
Flasch
Boldt
Grant
Richards

NAYS — 9
Messieurs

Coupland
Loken
Guy

Loken
Lane
Wiebe

MacDonald (M.J.N.)
Malone
MacDonald (Milestone)

SECOND READINGS

Hon. E.I. Wood (Minister of Municipal Affairs) moved second reading of Bill No. 59 — **An Act to amend The Property Improvement Grant Act, 1972.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, this Bill, as can be plainly seen is an increase in the amounts of the Property Improvement Grant. I'm quite proud of this Bill, I'm quite proud of the program which is operated along these lines. We have on March 31, just closed out the program for 1974-75 and on March 31st, it was shown that there were 238,591 applications authorized for payments and the total authorized expenditures are shown to be \$34,112,692.54. I think, Mr. Speaker, when you compare this with what was paid out in 1971-72, the first year which we were the Government and we were operating under the program of the former government, we paid out \$12,330,746. In other words this year we were paying out, coming towards three times as much as what was paid out under this program under the former government and I think this has meant a great deal to the taxpayers of this province.

We've heard quite a bit lately about mill rates and increasing costs for municipal governments and I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that I have a good deal of sympathy for them but I don't think that we can forget that this program has put well over \$22 million more into the pockets of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan in this last year than what was done under the last year of the Liberal regime.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that this money is not only being paid out to homeowners as you well know, but it is much different from the old homeowner grant program in that the Property Improvement Grant program is paid out to a good many other classes of individuals other than homeowners. It is true that for the principal residences only, we have paid out in this last year some \$18,818,000, that is to the principal residence holders only. In that regard itself we have paid out half as much again as what we paid under the whole program to farmers and everyone under the old program.

Here's another important item, Mr. Speaker. So far as business buildings are concerned and the business buildings themselves and the business buildings which contain a principal residence, we have paid out \$1,174,000, which I think, would be found to be quite an asset and quite a help to some of these small businesses that are struggling along in some places.

Besides this we are paying to the farmers in total, in regard to where the farmer lives on the land, some \$8,345,000 plus \$2.3 million in regard to where the applicant operates the farm and resides elsewhere and \$1.1 million to farms leased to another person. In total, \$12,383,000 to co-op farm shareholders

April 16, 1975

and \$144,863 to corporations engaged in farming, where the applicant is a shareholder. As well as \$93,684 to manse and rectories. I think that this money, paid out over this wide spectrum of different applicants is a real benefit to the taxpayers of the Province of Saskatchewan.

Now the Bill we have before us, Mr. Speaker, increases this amount. Last year we paid half the taxes up to a total of \$160, a maximum of \$160. This year this is being increased. We are paying half the taxes up to a total of \$200, on principal residences and in business premises we will be paying 22 mills on the assessment up to \$10,000 and on farms we will be paying 22 mills on assessments up to \$15,000 or a maximum of \$200 in regard to residences, \$220 in regard to business premises and \$330 in regard to farms.

Mr. Speaker, when the Budget was brought down a few weeks ago, it was estimated that the cost this year will be some \$40,052,000 which is well over three times the amount that was paid out in 1971-72.

I'm very proud of this Bill this morning, Mr. Speaker, and I am very proud that the Government is able to do this at this time for the taxpayers of the Province of Saskatchewan.

I would therefore move second reading of this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. J.G. Lane (Lumsden): — Mr. Speaker, the Minister has said that the Property Improvement Grant program is considerably different than the Homeowner Grant program. One major difference is, of course, the Homeowner Grant program was at least keeping up with the inflation which didn't exist and the taxpayers were in effect, better off under the Homeowner Grant program, although less monies were paid. The Property Improvement Grant program is falling behind. The massive increases in expenditures by local governments which have become necessary mainly through either new programs or inflation.

I'm going to take the time of the House and I know the Member for Gravelbourg (Mr. Gross) will be interested in knowing some of these things, it's nothing to do with railroads, he knows nothing about that, perhaps we can educate him a bit. But I'm just going to refer to the Leader-Post of April 8th and some of the problems of local government that have arisen. The headline on the third page is "Earlier Cuts Wiped Out; Regina Preliminary Estimates Keep Rising". Now I'm also prefacing my remarks with the defence that the Minister responsible for Municipal Affairs tried to propose and that is that the Property Improvement Grant program was never intended to keep up with municipal increases as opposed to education cost increases. He's sympathetic with perhaps our argument except that that doesn't solve the problem. The average taxpayer does not understand the difference and the fact is that notwithstanding the increase in grants under the Property Improvement program, that costs of local government to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan is increasing far faster, far more rapidly than are the grants that are coming out of the Government.

As matters now stand the Regina municipal rate is about 21.42 mills over last year. Schools 7.33 mills more

than 1974 and libraries are about a mill higher. Total increase at the time (I realize this is an estimate except that the estimate seemingly has gone up) an increase of 29.75 mills from 126.5 mills in 1974, roughly a 25 per cent increase in one year in Regina.

And I can refer to other major urban centres, Moose Jaw Times Herald of April 11th:

The Public School Board seeks a 7 mill increase.

Saskatoon; same thing. Moose Jaw again:

The Separate School Board asks for an 8 mill increase.

In Regina:

Catholic School tax increasing 5.9 mills.

Mr. Speaker, I'm assuming that the public is quite aware of the proposed major tax increases that local governments will have to implement in this fiscal year.

Somewhere there is a failure in what we're doing, when we have a program such as the Property Improvement Grant program, which simply does not keep up with the increase in taxes, the increase in the heavier increasing burden on a municipal taxpayer in the Province of Saskatchewan.

I think part of the reason that the taxpayers are falling farther and farther behind is because the Government chooses other priorities. It thinks nothing of spending \$6.65 million on CanDel Oil properties. That's a minor expenditure. It's a big production to give an amount to the taxpayer. That \$6.5 million would have been better spent on the people of Saskatchewan by giving it to the taxpayer. IPSCO, \$4.5 million, no trouble spending that and coming up with that money. That would have taken some of the terrible burden off the taxpayers of the Province of Saskatchewan. We spend the money, we get no new jobs out of it, the same with CanDel.

We've got no problem coming up with \$10.2 million into the Fred Mendel retirement fund which was given by the Government opposite. While every other local government body is forced to raise taxes and put an increasingly heavy burden on the taxpayer of Saskatchewan, the Government is spending millions and millions and millions of dollars into industries by buying up property, not creating one new job but simply diverting needed revenues from the taxpayer to Crown corporations or government properties.

We simply say, Mr. Minister, that we think that the monies could be better spent. We would urge the Government to sell out its holdings in CanDel Oil, \$6.5 million and turn that back to the local taxpayer. Sell that \$4.5 million in IPSCO shares and turn that back over to the local taxpayer. Get out of Intercontinental Packers, because no new jobs and the return on the investment is a complete waste of money. You could have put it in guaranteed savings certificates and got an extra three per cent, 50 per cent more than you're getting. And turn that over too, to the local taxpayers.

Just on those three items alone, we would have had another

\$20 million to be given to the local taxpayers in Saskatchewan which would have increased the Property Improvement Grant program to approximately \$60 million, a 50 per cent increase and that would have gone directly to the heavily taxed taxpayer of Saskatchewan.

Now rather than have any more of these funds being diverted and rather have \$40 million going to whatever else the Government is going to come up with, more to the Land Bank, more to the new nationalization of the potash industry, the backdoor nationalization of Saskatchewan potash companies, Saskatchewan mining companies, the forest industry, we're going to support this legislation because at least here's \$40 million going back to the taxpayer and it is not going in the government corporations of absolutely no redeeming value to the people of Saskatchewan and certainly of no redeeming value to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, who would be more pleased to see new jobs created rather than just retain old jobs.

Mr. A.R. Guy (Athabasca): — Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a few words. I don't know why the Minister should be so proud to introduce this legislation. As was pointed out earlier and during the Estimates, I don't think there has ever been a year when the mill rates for both municipal and education will rise higher than they will this current year. Already the cities have suggested mill rates running from 10 to 20 mills, an almost unheard of increase in one year. I picked up the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix this morning and I find that in addition to these proposed mill rates that they are looking at a hike in the power rate of some 15 per cent. And then on another page it said, "Sewer Service Charge Rising in Saskatoon". So in addition to the mill rates, we're paying an additional sewer charge, we're going to pay increased rates for our electrical power and then the Minister stands up here and says he's proud to be part of a government that's increasing, that is seeing the cost of municipal services to the people of Saskatchewan rising at a rate that has never before been seen in the history of this province. I think the Minister of Municipal Affairs has to be condemned for the attitude and his failure to convince his Cabinet colleagues that a substantially increased grant is necessary to the municipalities, to individuals to meet these high costs.

Mr. Wood: — Yes, there are a few things I should like to say in closing this debate, Mr. Speaker. I want to say in the first place, as I said earlier in the House, I have a good deal of sympathy with the municipalities in the situation in which they find themselves. Costs are rising and it's remarkable you know, that the cost of a combine is only about six times what it was a few years ago. The first combine I bought, I got it for \$800, a brand new combine. The way these costs have increased nobody blames the municipalities for that. This is one of the facts of inflation. It's a certain fact of inflation that costs of operating a city or a town or a village or a rural municipality are going to increase. The costs are not only beyond the provincial control, a lot of these costs are even beyond the national control, it's the international inflation we're caught in and these things are going to come out and I don't think that the Saskatchewan Government is expected to be entirely responsible for all these things. As I've said earlier, I think that you can expect a mill rate increase in the face of the inflation that we have.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the Hon. Members opposite who have been speaking on this just realize how foolish they look. If they look back, I can't, I know, refer to an earlier debate, but I did say some of these things in the Throne Speech Debate. I pointed out how the Members on this side of the House at that time got up and said we are cutting taxes, we are holding down taxes and they made these statements, they came right out and made them, stood up in their place and made these statements that they were holding down taxes and at the same time brought in a piddling \$50 Homeowner Grant which remained the same . . .

Mr. Guy: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order, he is out of order. He suggested before he ever started his remarks that he was going to be out of order, and I think, Mr. Speaker, in the closing days of this House that we want to go out of here being sure that we have obeyed and kept to the rules of the Legislature. He knows he can't bring in new material. That has not been mentioned in this debate, what happened back in 1971, 1969, so I just ask that you call him to order.

Mr. Wood: — I can well understand, Mr. Speaker, how the Members opposite feel. They realize how foolish they do look, and I can understand how they don't want me to go into that. But they are the ones who are talking about holding down mill rates and I am just bringing forward what they did when they were in power. And they did absolutely nothing about it. The taxes were raised year after year and they sat up here and bragged about their \$50 Homeowner Grant and then two or three years later they raised it another \$10. They got up and bragged. Each year the cost of the taxes far exceeded, not only the increase, but the whole thing and they finished off in a pitiful condition so far as making any attempt to endeavor to hold anything. Mr. Speaker, to have these people across there, talking about doing something about assisting municipalities with their taxes, is absolutely so ridiculous that I don't know why we spend the time of the House even listening to them.

This Government by this Bill, will be bringing in close to three and one half times as much in Property Improvement Grants as they gave out under the Homeowner Grant. As was said in the Budget address, we are, this year, paying out to the urban municipalities, close to sixteen times as much as what was paid out under the Liberal Government. And we have also increased our assistance to the rural municipalities substantially. The Provincial Treasurer has just handed me a note which says this year we have increased our grants to schools by \$26,200,000. If the Members opposite think this is not worthwhile assistance to municipalities, I think that they are absolutely wrong and I think they look absolutely ridiculous standing up and talking about what this Government is doing when you compare it to what was done by the former government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wood: — The Hon. Member for Lumsden, talking about how much money could be saved for the taxpayers if certain money for CanDel and IPSCO and so on had been spent for reduction of taxes rather than in these investments. I want to tell him and the Hon. Member should know, that these are non-budgetary expenditures. These are not expenditures from the Budget. These are

April 16, 1975

investments for which money is borrowed on which we expect to make profits. This is an investment by the Government and it has nothing whatsoever to do with the Budget that was brought down a few weeks ago. This is not a matter of money being spent here or money being spent there. We have made a division of the funds in our Budget in regard to our budgetary expenses, but these others are aside from that and there is no comparison and they are not in the same ball game and they should not be mentioned in the same context. I would just like to make this clear to the House before I sit down.

With these calm remarks, I should like to move second reading of this Bill.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time on the following recorded division:

YEAS — 48
Messieurs

Blakeney	Kwasnica	Feschuk
Dyck	Carlson	Kaeding
Meakes	Engel	Coupland
Wood	Robbins	Loken
Romanow	Tchorzewski	Flasch
Snyder	Cowley	Guy
Bowerman	Taylor	Boldt
Thibault	Matsalla	Grant
Larson	Faris	MacDonald (M.J.N.)
Kowalchuk	Owens	
Brockelbank	Mostoway	Gardner
MacMurchy	Gross	Lane
Pepper	Feduniak	Wiebe
Michayluk	Comer	Malone
Thorson	Rolfes	MacDonald (Milestone)
Whelan	Hanson	

NAYS — 1
Messieurs

Richards

Hon. E.I. Wood (Minister of Municipal Affairs) moved second reading of Bill No. 66 — **An Act to amend The Rural Municipality Act, 1972 (No. 2).**

He said: Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago there was a Bill before the Private Bills Committee allowing the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities to provide disability and death benefits. This was approved in the House, but in order for this to become operative there has to be an amendment to The Rural Municipal Act to allow the municipalities to take part in this program. And this is what this proposed amendment does. It is to permit a municipality to enter into an agreement with the SARM to provide disability and death benefits for residents and ratepayers of the municipality. This clause also permits the council to pay any charges levied by the SARM in accordance with the agreement. In order to make the Bill operative, that has already passed the House, I move this amendment to The Rural

Municipal Act. This is the second amendment to the Act this Session, and I will move this second amendment.

Mr. Lane: — Just as a point of clarification, this is the amendment allowing the municipalities to set up the disability fund and sickness and accident plan.

I am wondering if the Minister, in his introductory remarks, couldn't be a little more detailed as to what he foresees, the scope of this, and . . .

Mr. Wood: — I would be very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to go in depth on this, but I do not think it is necessary at this time. The Bill itself, which contained all this, was before the House and has been approved by the Legislature. This is simply an amendment to The Rural Municipality Act to allow the municipalities to take part in the plan that was already approved by the House. I really think it is wasting the time of the House to go into detail on it at this time.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

The Assembly adjourned at 9:37 o'clock p.m.