

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fifth Session — Seventeenth Legislature
42nd Day

Friday, April 18, 1975.

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

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

**FINAL REPORT OF THE SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
AND PRINTING**

Mr. D.F. MacDonald (Moose Jaw North) moved, seconded by Mr. J.G. Lane (Lumsden) that the **Final Report of the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Printing be now concurred in.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words before moving that this Report be concurred in.

Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Printing met and held eleven meetings. I think the Committee was a very good Committee and on behalf of the Committee I should like to thank Mr. Lutz, the Provincial Auditor, for his co-operation. Mr. Lutz did a very fine job. I should also like to thank the Comptroller, Mr. Schneider, for the contributions which he made while we were deliberating in the Committee.

For a number of years we have studied the matter of the level of detail which is shown in the Public Accounts text, and we have finally, this year, made a recommendation. Our recommendation is that the detail that will be shown in the Public Accounts will be changed to show only wages and salaries of \$10,000 or more, per employee; and it will be changed to \$5,000 for payments and suppliers; and \$2,000 per person for travel. The only exception that will be made for this is that where the aggregate of any person who may be working in more than one department exceeds the above sum — this sum, also, will be shown. In other words, if he should work in two departments and earns \$6,000 in one department and \$6,000 in another department, this will also be shown, even though each falls below the level of \$10,000. The \$10,000 limit has been raised from the previous limit of \$5,000. With the increase in wages and the number of employees who are earning over \$5,000, it was decided that it is taking far too much paper to show what amounts to nearly every employee of the government under the old regulations.

Some of the other recommendations that we made I think are fairly straightforward and I shall just touch on them very quickly.

Your Committee has noted that on a couple of occasions missing property is recorded, and we felt that the control of public property is not what it should be and so we made some recommendations that procedures to control public property should be developed and followed by agencies and departments in the Government.

Your Committee examined payments made without proper authority, and in particular those payments made without proper authority by the Human Resources Development Agency.

Last year, this House will recall that the Provincial Auditor reported the same thing. This is two years in a row that the same agency has continued to make payments without proper authority and we were certainly concerned about this. We attempted to discover why, and how these payments were being made and continuing to be made. I have to report to the House that this Committee was unable to determine the circumstances which surrounded these payments being made without proper authority. We called witnesses in and were unable to find satisfactory answers. One of the reasons for this was that almost all of the personnel of the agency had been replaced since the year under review, and in fact the Minister had changed, and the witnesses we were able to call before us were unable to give us the answers that we wanted and they were not able to provide any written records which would answer the questions that we put before them. I think we were disappointed in not being able to investigate and find the reasons. However, we are certainly willing to make the recommendation that a more thorough scrutiny of government departments and agencies be enforced by the Comptroller to prevent these recurrences continuing year after year.

We also examined overpayments in the Department of Northern Saskatchewan; overpayments which came to a total of \$580,000, over a four-year period. In the year under review the overpayments amounted to \$160,147. The Committee certainly deplores the fact that these procedures were able to continue as long as they did and we have made a recommendation concerning this particular matter.

Your Committee also reviewed the operations of the Saskatchewan Hog Marketing Commission, and in this situation we found mismanagement; improper handling of records; improper handling of funds. There was a distinct lack of control, a distinct lack of internal control, and the Committee has made recommendations in that regard. We were able to determine that receipts had not been written for cheques that were received. We were able to discover that the producers' bank account had not been reconciled at any time during the period under review, and that at the end of the year under review, the bank was out of balance by approximately \$12,000. We found that bank accounts were opened without Treasury Board approval; we found that one particular bank account was opened and cheques were written on the accounts and yet no deposits were made. This resulted, of course, in a overdraft of approximately \$50,000. Of course the overdraft then resulted in accumulating interest to the amount of \$1,982. In a number of instances cheques were issued for goods and services and no supporting documents were made available for these payments. There was very definite lack of internal control over administrative expenditures, there were no approvals for employee salary rates. We noted that the manager hired by the Commission, was able to set salaries on his own accord, was able to sign union agreements without being responsible to the Commission or to anyone else. And, of course, we recognize that salaries and other forms of remuneration are paid by monies which are obtained through a levy on the producer, and yet there was no control whatsoever on the manager who was hired by the Commission. Certainly the internal controls have been rectified and we have made a recommendation concerning this.

Your Committee also reviewed the Hearing Aid Plan and to say we found serious deficiencies in their accounting system would be putting it very mildly. There was very little control

over inventory, and in fact a great number of hearing aids were unable to be located at all. We, for instance, discovered that when the Auditor became concerned about this particular matter he decided that he should investigate to some extent himself and in fact, reading from the verbatim, the Provincial Auditor said:

We endeavored to verify by direct communication the number of hearing aids that were actually out with people.

Because some 200 or more hearing aids were lost he endeavored to find them by writing letters to people who he thought had some contact with the Hearing Aid Plan. He sent letters to people who had purchased, but not paid for hearing aids; and he sent letters to people who had hearing aids on loan. His reply was:

In some instances a reply to his letter consisted of getting a hearing aid back in the mail.

The hearing aids came back to the Auditor in the mail as a result of his checking into it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — He got one back, the person would say and he quotes:

I got this one first and it wasn't too good, it didn't suit my hearing problem so I got another hearing aid. Here is the extra one — now you can have it back.

And another instance he says he didn't get the hearing aid, but just got confirmation.

Of course, as the Auditor points out, these hearing aids are about \$80 a piece. The Auditor, of course, would then take these hearing aids and have to take them back down to the downtown office and try to get them sorted out. I think that is but one example of the type of accounting and control procedures which took place. Of course, we have made a recommendation concerning this.

In these, and in other circumstances, it has been pointed out to me that to a large extent as new agencies and departments are set up with really very little regard to financial accountability. It is a very lax attitude as new agencies are put into effect and there has been very little effort put in in the past to try and control and protect the taxpayers' money.

I think that as new agencies come on-stream they should certainly have to be looked at in a proper businesslike manner, and have some regard to being accountable as the taxpayers' money of Saskatchewan.

I think there are other speakers who will have more to say in possibly some detail on some of the recommendations, so I would move, Mr. Speaker, that this Report be now concurred in.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. J.G. Lane (Lumsden): — Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments.

Several items, of course, came before the Committee and I think probably one of the more shocking examples — and I am sure that this is one of the new government programs and they misplaced this — one of the more shocking examples is that the Government, time and time and time again over the last four years has implemented new programs without any concern as to the efficiency of operation or reasonable accounting procedures, or without any reasonable concern for the protection of public property and the protection of public funds. We have had example year after year with DNS and HRDA and the Hearing Aid Plan. The Government simply wants to bring in a program without any thought as to the operation of that program.

We in the Committee, of course, feel that that is a practice not to be condoned, but to be condemned. We were disappointed, of course, that the Committee was unable to get the necessary people from the Human Resources Development Agency before the Committee. It's probably the first time in the history of the Public Accounts Committee where people have simply pleaded ignorance of the facts. The Committee in effect was stonewalled and no information was forthcoming from HRDA. Efforts made by the Committee to subpoena the first director of HRDA, the man with the information, the man with the knowledge (although no longer a government employee) were stopped. I say, stonewalled, by the Government opposite! This implies that there were some doubts as to whether the original director would tell the truth and perhaps that very little weight could be given to his statements. The upshot, the results of the Committee's investigation into HRDA was in effect 'nothing'. We could get no information, we could get no information, from people who had first hand knowledge of the facts. Time and time again the people who were brought in from HRDA just threw up their hands and said, we don't know, we weren't around. Of course it becomes very easy to circumvent the efforts and the duties of the Public Accounts Committee, if all that the Government in the future has to do is fire the head of a commission and everybody else comes in and pleads ignorance. The Public Accounts Committee will become a complete waste of time and a complete failure and we will not be able to carry out our legislative duties.

Again the practice of the Government opposite of merely setting up a program without any concern as to how it is going to operate became more and more evident. The Hog Marketing Commission, as I say, it has been passed, DNS and HRDA also. We expect the same in the future on the drug plan and on any other programs that are brought in for political motives. There is a complete lack of self discipline becoming evident on the Government side as they would rather bring in a program with a devil may care attitude as to how it operates — simply get it before the public, don't worry, we will spend the money, we have lots, and in effect showing a complete and utter disdain for the public funds of the people of Saskatchewan.

Again we express concern, we expressed concern in the Committee with regard to the matter in particular of single signature cheques. Although that practice has been in operation for many years and I believe the practices had been in under the previous Liberal Government also. It is a practice that got out of hand and those reading the Committee Report will note that no recommendation was made. However, a reference was made in the Committee that a substantial portion of overpayments in the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan in the North occurred in

the area of non-continuous assistance payments out of a bank account for that purpose. These payments are in the form of cheques which may be issued over the signature of one worker only. Certainly the implication there is that the practice should be stopped or at least brought under much greater control, although no firm recommendation was made.

When the practice got to the point that there was some indication that perhaps cheques were being made for taxes and for certainly non-emergency payments, obviously it is a practice that got out of control, out of hand and some more control is going to have to be placed on the practices, although there may be some flexibility needed.

Again, Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to second the report as introduced by the Member for Moose Jaw North (Mr. MacDonald). I think it evident that certain basic mistakes are being made by the Government. I think they would be well advised on any new programs to start first with a basic solid financial accounting infrastructure before the program is implemented and show some concern for the taxpayers' money and some concern for the management of taxpayers' funds. That is something that has become obvious from the Public Accounts over the last three years. It is a practice, again to be condemned and not to be condoned.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. H. Owens (Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I should first like to congratulate the Member for Moose Jaw North for the chairmanship of the Committee. He did quite an admirable job.

I cannot quite agree with some of the remarks which have been made by some of the Opposition Members in regard to the findings of this Committee. True, there were some areas of concern. The control of property — recommendations have been made by earlier committees, and I am sure that this is progressing as rapidly as it is possible to progress according to the reports I heard from the comptroller.

The overpayments that have been alluded to in Social Services and the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, special reference to single signature cheques, again I don't think it was proven that these overpayments were all the result of single signature cheques. In fact the people in charge of this department feel that there should be a bit of flexibility in order to look after people who are in dire need, then single signature cheques are almost a necessity. If it had been proven that single signature cheques were the cause of overpayments, I might think differently. But I could not believe that that was the case. I think the people operating this department are doing a very admirable job under the circumstances.

With regard to payments made without proper authority this has no doubt been the case but in no case were overpayments made because of improper authority that I can recall. This was a case of laxity on the part of some of the HRDA people.

Hog Marketing Commission was mentioned. Again funds were talked about, but again no funds were misused. As I recall, the comptroller has been satisfied, maybe not in the year under review but since that time that the Hog Marketing Commission is running very well.

I think in the setting up of some of these departments, problems have been encountered possibly due to the shortage of staff in the comptroller's office, so they were not able to go out and check the beginning new departments and the shortage of competent staff put into these new departments. I think it is well to realize, at least that as far as the dollars are concerned, the dollars did not show up as being short.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would emphasize that I believe that all of these departments are doing an admirable job according to the latest reports from the comptroller. As I mentioned the comptroller has been short of staff. Competent staff has been very hard to get. As staff has become available more scrutiny has been carried out in all departments and I feel very sure that this will continue and our auditor will be more than happy with the results he finds in another year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS

TELEGRAM — CROW'S NEST RATES

Mr. E.F. Gardner (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. I wonder if the Minister is aware that this Assembly passed a motion moved by himself regarding Crow's Nest rates about a week ago. I should like to ask him has he or the Government ensured that this motion was sent to the Prime Minister of Canada as directed by his motion?

Hon. J.R. Messer (Minister of Agriculture): — The answer I believe is, Yes. The motion that was passed was in effect sent to the Federal Government at least, that is to the best of my knowledge. I would believe it was within the last two weeks. But I am quite certain that the motion was sent.

Mr. Gardner: — In view of the answer, I wonder if the Minister is aware that the Prime Minister apparently didn't receive this and it never was sent. If the Prime Minister had to obtain this Resolution from press reports and House records, I wonder if the Minister is also aware that the Prime Minister did reply by telegram yesterday and apparently he hasn't seen this reply. I wonder if he does know that in this telegram the Prime Minister of Canada has clearly indicated that the Government of Canada is clearly guaranteeing the continuance of the Crow's Nest rates.

Mr. Messer: — The Hon. Member is quoting a portion of a telegram that I do not have in front of me at this point in time. I assume he will table it. I have some knowledge of a telegram from the Prime Minister. I based my earlier answer on the knowledge of a telegram from the Prime Minister assuming that he was responding to the motion that was passed in this House. I want to make it perfectly clear that when I answered the earlier question that I assumed the telegram had been sent. I felt quite positive about that due to the knowledge of a telegram

April 18, 1975

being received, I believe, by the Premier of Saskatchewan from the Prime Minister making some observations in regard to the motion passed in this Legislature.

Mr. J.G. Lane (Lumsden): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day in the absence of the Minister . . . just about everybody, I should like to direct a question — because he did forward the telegram or did make the motion in the House, to the Minister of Agriculture. He states that a portion was read and with the leave of the House, I should like to read a particular paragraph . . .

Mr. Speaker: — The question period is for information, not attempt to give it.

Mr. Lane: — Well the telegram has been tabled. In light of the sincere request in diplomatic language that the Government of Saskatchewan stop the distortions and the Government of Saskatchewan stop acting to the detriment of the people of Saskatchewan, the Prime Minister of Canada in a telegram dated April 17, to stop acting contrary to Saskatchewan's best interests?

Mr. Messer: — Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan has not nor is presently acting contrary to the best interests of farmers and the people of Saskatchewan when we talk about Crow's Nest rates.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Messer: — But the Member, and I suspect the Federal Government or the Prime Minister is not aware of all of the other circumstances that relate to pressure being put on the Crow's Nest rates and their removal. The Federal Government has chosen not to respond to those pressures and if there is not some interjection at the higher level of Government, the Crow's Nest rates will go regardless of what the Prime Minister says.

Mr. Lane: — By way of supplementary. Does the Government of Saskatchewan in light of the commitment to maintenance of the Crow's Nest rates by the Prime Minister simply intend to continue to disparage the word of the Prime Minister of Canada and to disparage the firm commitment of the Prime Minister of Canada that the Crow's Nest rates will be guaranteed and will be maintained by the Government of Canada.

Mr. Messer: Mr. Speaker, the Members of this House and the Members of Saskatchewan have had commitments from Liberals before.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. A.R. Guy (Athabasca): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the same Minister since he seems to be taking on the responsibility this morning of answering the questions of the Government. I should like to ask him if he is prepared to change his attitude in light of this telegram which has come from the Prime Minister in

reply to a telegram which the Prime Minister became aware of not because the Government of Saskatchewan had made it known to them but because they found out through Saskatchewan Members. Is the Minister, in light of the telegram which says that the Government Members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan are mistaken in their understanding of the policies of the Government of Canada in connection with grain transportation and the Crow's Nest rates, prepared to agree? I believe it is necessary to bring certain key matters of fact to the attention of this Legislative Assembly before its adjournment. Is the Minister prepared . . . If you would keep still, Mr. Attorney General, until I get my question asked. I am in no hurry . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order! We must have questions asking for information, not giving debates.

Mr. Guy: — That is what I am doing. I am asking the Minister of Agriculture, at least I could if I could get above the hubbub across the way. Is he prepared to change his unreasonable stand which borders on deliberate obtuseness, it is unreasonable and it is almost on the verge of lying to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Messer: — Mr. Speaker, clearly the Member and the Members to your left are misinterpreting or are not well informed in regard to the concern of not only the Government Members of this Legislature but the farmers and the citizens of Saskatchewan in regard to the potential loss of the statutory Crow's Nest rates. If the Prime Minister is not well informed on that concern, then I would suggest that they support the position taken by the Government of Saskatchewan in bringing to his attention the Saskatchewan concern in regard to the possible loss of those statutory rates.

Mr. Guy: — A supplementary question to the Minister. Is the Minister prepared in light of this telegram now when he addresses public meetings either of a political nature or as Minister of Agriculture prepared to admit that the Government of Canada, the Prime Minister and the Minister in charge of the Wheat Board have stated categorically that there will be no changes in the Crow's Nest rates.

Mr. Messer: — The answer to that is, No, because it is not factual.

Mr. Guy: — That is what we wanted to know. Would you want to be a liar . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order!

RCMP INTERROGATION MANUAL

Mr. J.G. Richards (Saskatoon-University): — Several weeks ago I introduced into the House the Interrogation Manual of the RCMP being used federally and the Attorney General at that time undertook to report back to the House. This being the last day of the Session, very likely,

would the Minister give a report as to the status of that document within the Saskatchewan police force?

Hon. R. Romanow (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I have had a chance only to glance over the manual. I have not had the opportunity because of the pressures of the House to look at it in detail. I have also had my officials consider it. I am advised that the manual was not used and has not been used in Saskatchewan as a training manual by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police nor have the techniques been used by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Saskatchewan by the RCMP officials. I personally have looked at the manual and I reject it out of hand. I think the suggestions in the manual are really improper because the methods can in no way be justified, regardless of what the end result may be with respect to the manual. So I find the ideas in there as an individual, as a member of society to be repugnant to me and I am pleased to advise that I think the RCMP in Saskatchewan similarly do so and that the manual does not have any use in this province as far as I can ascertain.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 13 — REVISION OF THE ACT TO REGULATE THE OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF AGRICULTURAL LAND IN SASKATCHEWAN

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed Resolution by Mr. D. Steuart (Prince Albert West):

That this Assembly urge the Government of Saskatchewan to revise the Act to Regulate the Ownership and Control of Agricultural Land in Saskatchewan, by removing the restrictions on Canadians owning Saskatchewan farm land and by considering the inclusion of the ownership of recreational land within the scope of this legislation.

Hon. J.R. Messer (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to Resolution No. 13 moved by the Leader of the Opposition pertaining to the ownership and control of agricultural land in Saskatchewan, I think it is perhaps a most timely and appropriate matter to turn our attention to. I don't think that there is a province or for that matter, a region in Canada that is not becoming more and more concerned about the ownership and control of our resources in Canada and at this time, land more than any other. I just happened to have received in the mail yesterday a copy of the Canadian Geographical Journal, April issue, where they have printed the first of a series on foreign use of our Canadian land and resources, foreign demand for our land and resources in Canada by a Maurice Cutler and he begins the article and I want to refer in quote to it.

Who owns Canada? For more than two decades Canadians have become increasingly agitated because their economy is dominated much more by foreigners than are the economies of all other industrialized nations.

We can go to other periodicals for example, the February 20, 1975 issue of the Western Producer which carries an article that notes in our sister province to the West, Alberta, which, Mr. Speaker, does not have legislation controlling ownership, that farm land in the Lethbridge area has been selling for \$1,000 per acre. The article goes on to compare this exorbitant price with the price of \$250 per acre for land here on the Regina plains.

In Saskatchewan we've had sufficient foresight to enact some controls over the ownership of farm land. As a result, foreign money has not gained control. Farm land prices, though high in this boom period are still within the means of farmers.

The article I referred to in the February 20th issue of the Western Producer concludes that land speculation in this stage in history of agriculture in western Canada has indeed, many implications, none of which hold any assurance for the continuation of the industry as we have known it since the homestead days. This is a situation, Mr. Speaker, that we are in and yet the Leader of the Opposition would throw Saskatchewan people to the wolves again with this Resolution No. 13 on the Order Paper.

The Leader of the Opposition would effectively remove the right of the people of Saskatchewan to have any say over who can or who cannot control farm land in this province. He would see to it that we would not be able to defend ourselves against the same foreign interests that are now present in Alberta, paying \$1,000 an acre for land.

I know the Member for Lakeview is mumbling something about foreign interest and certainly he is concerned in that constituency in Regina in regard to agriculture and the continuation of providing a farm land base to those new generations of farmers in Saskatchewan. And I bring to his attention that if farm lands are selling for \$1,000 per acre in around the Regina plains area, it certainly is not going to be farmers purchasing that land under those high prices.

But frankly, Mr. Speaker, I'm quite surprised that the Leader of the Opposition would propose an amendment to The Farm Ownership Act that would make a distinction between ownership of non-Saskatchewan residents and foreigners. The Leader of the Opposition well knows the constitutional problem that would arise in such legislation. He well knows that the whole Act would, in fact, become ultra vires because the courts would rule under the British North America Act and under the Citizenship Act. We are limited in the power to make such rulings and those powers are extended to the Federal Government only.

This was likely the motive of the Leader of the Opposition in proposing the amendment. Is he really so antagonistic towards leaving farm land for Saskatchewan farmers and Saskatchewan residents that he would seek devious ways to spell the effective doom of this Act?

I should point out that in his opposition to legislation restricting ownership by non-residents, the Leader of the Opposition has the unique distinction of being a loner in Canada. The case now before the Supreme Court of Canada brought forward by two Americans contesting the constitutionality of the Prince Edward Island legislation restricting non-resident ownership of land has attracted a great deal of interest in Canada. All provinces, Mr. Speaker, all provinces, without exception,

have presented briefs in that case in defence of and in support of the Prince Edward Island legislation. It appears that if Saskatchewan had been unfortunate enough to have had the Leader of the Opposition occupying the government in the House at this time, that Saskatchewan would have gone down in history with the disgusting distinction of being the only province that would not support Prince Edward Island and the only province with a demonstrated desire to give away its valuable and dwindling agricultural resources.

Undoubtedly no landowner is going to feel unhappy about being paid such enormous prices for land as are being paid in Alberta. But land prices of this magnitude are far beyond the capability of the average farmer. Such prices are far out of reason in terms of the return from the land, the possibility of its economic production level. Clearly those paying such prices are acquiring the land for purposes other than farming or for agricultural use.

You may ask why the government wants to stop land speculation and the takeover of the agricultural industry by non-residents and large corporations. I have provided you with several reasons for this in debate on the legislation in the past but I should like to reiterate that I believe that the control of agricultural resources should be in the hands of local people, the people involved on a day to day basis in agricultural production and who depend upon agriculture for their livelihood; not, Mr. Speaker, in the hands of people from other countries and or from other parts of Canada.

We believe that agriculture, with its 70,000 family farms, has been and will continue to be the backbone of this province. Farmers have been willing to commit their entire working lifetime to the production of food. There have been many years of low income and major problems. The Government of Canada, the general public and consumers have often been unwilling to support farmers in their time of need. We believe that farmers of Saskatchewan and other residents of Saskatchewan are entitled to protection from competition from capital resources accumulated in other industries and in other countries.

We believe that to develop a sound rural economy in this province, it is essential that agricultural assets be controlled by the people who spend a major part of their time in the area where agricultural production takes place and by people who will spend a major portion of the income generated from agricultural production in the towns and the cities of this province.

Yet, despite our clear and logical explanation of the situation which prompted the people of Saskatchewan to elect us to take such matters in hand, and despite our clear and logical explanation to the Hon. Members across the aisle during the previous debate of the Act, the Leader of the Opposition still feigns ignorance and proposes to amend the Act, and in fact, in what is an impossible way. I do not know whether to feel sorry for him or simply be annoyed with him, Mr. Speaker.

Nevertheless, we still have a resolution on the floor of this Assembly and I propose to amend the Resolution so that some worth can still be obtained from it. Let us point the finger at the culprit who really deserves the blame for inaction in controlling foreign investment and takeover in Canada.

Constitutionally, we are in a sad mess when it comes to dealing with alien ownership of our resources. The British North America Act gives the power of control, the power of ownership of land to the provinces. Yet at the same time it makes aliens a federal responsibility and in this respect, Section 24 of the Citizenship and Immigration Act specifically gives aliens the same rights as Canadians in terms of ownership of Canadian resources. The only way, the only way, Mr. Speaker, that provinces can conceivably get around this dilemma is to restrict ownership not on the basis of citizenship but on the basis of residency.

Ottawa should be condemned not only for its lack of action in regard to foreign ownership but also for its obstruction of provincial attempts to fill the gap created by the default in Ottawa. Decades ago federal legislation was passed which prevented provinces from placing restrictions on the ownership privileges of aliens. It is time that this legislation is changed, Mr. Speaker.

Many representations have been made by the provinces in Ottawa for federal umbrella legislation that would require the Federal Government to act out its responsibility for controlling foreign ownership and yet, at the same time, would give the provinces the freedom to make even tighter controls if considered necessary by the provinces and their provincial governments.

Mr. Speaker, Ottawa's answer has consistently been, No! Not only has the Federal Government failed to respond to the representations of the Canadian people on this matter but, as exhibited in the Prince Edward Island case, the Government of Canada would prefer to support the position of Americans rather than Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, this dog in the manger attitude of the Federal Government in disallowing efforts by provincial governments to fill the void left by federal action is exemplified by the Federal Foreign Investment Review Board. Although they gave the Board a nice name, they did not give it any real power and the Board members seem bent on ensuring that the power they do have is, in fact, not used. Such was the case when the Board made its ruling on the takeover of National Grain by Cargill.

Mr. Speaker, Cargill is one of the largest grain companies in the world. It is entirely owned by Americans. It was recently suspended from trading on the Chicago Board of Trade Exchange as a result of some questionable business practices. When Cargill applied to purchase the National Elevator chain, the Board stated that it felt this takeover was in the best interest of Canadians. Mr. Speaker, that's amazing because a good part of the problem that we're concerned and confronted with in the Province of Saskatchewan today is related to the rationalization of the grain-handling and transportation system in this province. Cargill grain is playing a key role in attempting to consolidate and centralize that grain-handling system on the basis of economic return to them rather than the basis of service to farmers and small communities of Saskatchewan who service those farmers.

Besides being generally ineffective when dealing with foreign ownership, the Act establishing the Board ensures that most acquisitions of farm or recreational lands will not even require, Mr. Speaker, the consideration of the Board.

April 18, 1975

I would like to see the Federal Government take appropriate action to limit the ownership of our resources and our production facilities by aliens and such controls are, I'm sure, long overdue. The lack of controls is certainly not in keeping with strict controls in place in many other countries.

I would also like to see provision made to enable individual provincial governments to make additional regulations respecting non-resident control of resources and production facilities within respective provincial boundaries.

The resources belong to the provinces and it should be within provincial powers to prevent the control of these resources from being acquired by corporations or individuals who are not likely to act in the best interest of the province or the country.

This is not to say that if federal legislation had permitted discrimination on the basis of citizenship that we would have brought in legislation much different from the present Farm Ownership Act. To the people of Saskatchewan, the issue has not been so much one of citizenship but one rather of absentee ownership. I suppose if we had had the power to make a distinction between non-resident Canadians and aliens, we would have left the amount of land which non-resident Canadians would acquire approximately as it appears on the present legislation. This is rather, I think, a generous amount. At the same time, we would likely have been much more restrictive on foreign ownership. In essence, what this means is that alien owners were able to ride on the shirt tails of non-resident Canadians because we could not make a legislative distinction.

I have not made reference in my amendment to the Resolution on the matter of recreational lands. The Legislative Committee, whose report was the basis for The Farm Ownership Act, made recommendations that the situation with regard to the ownership of recreational lands receive further study, with the eventual goal that legislation be developed to control this as well.

The Farm Ownership Act was an Act to deal with first priorities. A study had already been undertaken on farm ownership and the parameters of legislation were fairly well defined. No study had been completed at that time for legislation on recreational land ownership and the parameters of legislation to affect control were less well understood and known. Consequently, we went with our first priority and developed legislation to control farm land ownership in Saskatchewan.

Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, I find it amazing that the Leader of the Opposition would propose an amendment to the Act which would make it ultra vires and in the same breath include another area of concern under the umbrella of the Act. This schizophrenic logic is quite fascinating.

It would be most instructive to compare the activity of the Farm Ownership Board with the inactivity of the Government of Canada. All sections of the Act have been proclaimed and the Board is established.

One of the first projects of the Board's staff was to conduct a survey in co-operation with the Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources. This survey in addition to

providing information on land owned by non-residents has also provided an inventory of land suitable for recreational purposes. A land registry based on the results of this survey is now being completed. The Government is examining the need for including land with a potential for recreational use within the scope of the Act but this cannot be achieved merely by adding, 'and recreational land' to the Act. This, then is why I did not make reference to recreational land in the amendment since that matter is already under review.

If legislation restricting the ownership of recreational land eventually comes forth, it strikes me that the Leader of the Opposition will be in the embarrassing position as having gone on record as condemning the Act but at the same time being on record as supporting the inclusion of recreational land. The Board has also undertaken additional tasks including ruling on several requests for exemptions permitted under the Act and receiving declarations from non-agricultural corporations of land they own in excess of 160 acres.

I am proud of the way this province is once again taking the lead in developing legislation that will one day, like medicare and hospitalization, Mr. Speaker, be the model for similar legislation in all provinces across Canada.

Having said those words in regard to Resolution No. 13, Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the Attorney General (Mr. Romanow) that Resolution No. 13 be amended as follows:

That the words 'to revise' in the first line be deleted and the words 'to consider revision of' be substituted therefor and the words 'when action by the Federal Government makes this legally possible' be added after the word 'legislation' in the last line.

The debate continues on the motion and the amendment.

Mr. E.F. Gardner (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, once again we have an example of the Minister of Agriculture using his typical scare tactics to try and get control over farm land in Saskatchewan. He talks about land being sold for \$1,000 an acre around Lethbridge and implying that this is something that he really has to protect the people from in this province. I am sure he is aware that this is probably irrigated land and irrigated land any place would sell for that amount of money. I am sure he is aware also that this may be land around the city of Lethbridge just as it is around any city that someone is buying and I am sure there has been land selling here for \$1,000 an acre. So it is just an example of the way the Minister takes some isolated instance and tries to scare the people of the province.

I am sure the Minister knows what the problem is and the reason for us bringing it up in this Resolution. He knows that if some American wants to buy a large quantity of land in this province all he has got to do is move up near the border and live in the United States, as long as he is within ten miles or so, and then he can go up to Meadow Lake, 400 miles away, and buy 10,000 or 20,000 acres of our farm land. And this is the Bill that the NDP put in and it is absolutely ridiculous and this is what we want changed. You have the other situation in the Bill, where a Canadian living near Virden, Manitoba is

restricted from buying land 30 or 40 miles away in the vicinity of Maryfield, Saskatchewan. A Canadian is restricted but an American, as long as he moves up and lives within a few miles of the border, can retain his American citizenship and he can go 400 miles up into Canada and buy all that he wants. We don't agree with this. We have asked them to bring in some changes that would rectify this situation and change it. We don't agree that an American should be able to come up into this province and buy this amount of land. The Act is ridiculous and this is what we are trying to get changed.

We have seen, of course, a variety of Acts, the Minister gets up and makes a long speech and makes them sound fairly good, but we all know that he is not going to be satisfied until he has complete control over the farm land and the farmers of this province. A Saskatchewan farmer as far as the Minister of Agriculture is concerned, should be completely under the yoke of the NDP Government. He gets up and talks about multinational corporations, or Cargill or somebody else, trying to scare the people and then he brings in legislation that gives him control.

I also note that he said very little about recreational land and he referred to the fact that it wasn't legal or something to do with the Federal Government. You know it is typical of the attitude of the NDP Government here towards the Federal Government. We had an instance here today where a motion came up, the Minister moves it and it was passed by the House, his people, where we requested the Prime Minister to do something and the telegram was sent. Then the Attorney General said, why doesn't the Prime Minister mind his own business. After they had put in the motion, they had passed it requesting that it be sent to the Prime Minister and when he wants to reply . . .

Mr. Romanow: — On a Point of Order. The Member is in error. The motion was to send a telegram to the Saskatchewan Members of Parliament and it called on the Prime Minister to do nothing. May I say that the telegram still shows that the Prime Minister intends to do nothing about the Crow's Nest rates.

Mr. Gardner: — Well, the resolution that I have proposed by Mr. Messer:

That this Assembly send the following message to the Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. Romanow: — Oh, no.

Mr. Gardner: — Well, I have it on the Blue here and this is your motion that your Minister put in and I have it right here. So when it was sent to him, then when he replied, you are suggesting that he shouldn't have anything to do with it. So I think the Attorney General should have looked up the Blue as I did before he got up and objected. I realize he's been busy lately but he should still watch what he is doing.

Mr. Messer: — I thought you were on land ownership.

Mr. Gardner: — Well if we were on land ownership it wasn't very evident when the Minister of Agriculture got up and spoke for an hour about Cargill and multinational corporations and everything else under the sun.

You know he was very keen on not mentioning recreational land. He just waited until the last and he discarded this part which is a very important part of this motion. We are concerned about recreational land. They haven't said anything about it in their Bill and this is the type of amendment we wanted in. Because the time is running out and if we don't have some control over recreational land we may find out, as British Columbia and Nova Scotia and some of these other places have, that Americans are going to come up or people from other areas and buy up this recreational land and we are going to find all of the land around our lakes and rivers and in our parks is owned by people outside of our area. So we suggested some amendments and that was the intent of this Resolution. The Minister ignored this very important part. I think the amendment that he put in really destroyed the intent of the Resolution. I haven't had a chance to look at the amendment because I realize it was just put in to destroy the fact that we wanted changes as far as Americans who were living close to the border and with reference to recreation land. So we will not be supporting the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. T.L. Hanson (Qu'Appelle-Wolseley): — I am kind of interested in the Liberal Party's stand on this Resolution that would remove the restrictions on Canadians. I know that it is totally unconstitutional to legislate the way that they would infer would be their choice in this Resolution. I am sure that they know that it is totally within the scope only of the Federal Government to make the necessary changes needed.

But I should like them to let us know just exactly how they would do it to accommodate the views that they have and spelled out clearly, for the people of the province just who they would like to exempt from the legislation and who they would like to let in.

The most interesting part of this Resolution is that they consider inclusion of ownership of recreational lands within the scope of the legislation. In the first part of the Resolution they want to remove all of the controls or all the meat of the legislation that does now exist but then they would like the recreational land to be covered by it. I should like to point out that in Saskatchewan at the present time under the present Government all the Crown lands and the lakes, etc., in the North are protected by the Government and are not being sold to private individuals. This Government only leases the lake frontage and doesn't sell it. So what exactly is he talking about when he is considering recreational land being covered by the Bill. I suggest that they don't know what they are talking about and they don't know what their stand really is going to be. I am wondering if the Leader of the Opposition is saying that this Government should be taking legislative action to start controlling the lake frontages and the cottage areas around B-Say-Tah or around Kenosee which are now presently held in private hands. I wish they would be a little bit more

April 18, 1975

specific on this, because right now they put a general position forward in this Resolution which really doesn't spell out anything.

Now I was a member of the Foreign Ownership Committee as set up by the Legislature, the Special Intersessional Committee and we did an in-depth study of the foreign ownership and the implications of it on agricultural land. One of our recommendations at the end of that report is that a further study follow concerning recreational land. Now it is interesting to note that many of our recommendations were followed to a great extent in the legislation that followed. I am proud to have been part of that Committee. I really don't think that the legislation that is referred to in this Resolution really has any hardship on the people of Canada or the United States. It simply says that any individual may own land up to an assessed value of \$15,000 which in most of the parts of Saskatchewan would be a section and a half or a section and three-quarters of farm land. Now who can quarrel with this? I don't think any of the Members opposite would want someone from Florida who has never set foot in Saskatchewan owning a section and three-quarters of land next to theirs, and having it farmed by some hired outfit from a major city or some independent corporate farm operation.

The most interesting part of the Bill which I think they have misrepresented to the greatest extent is the provision whereby any person who has been a resident farmer for five years or his spouse can transfer to their children or their grandchildren or their nieces or nephews any amount of property that they now hold in Saskatchewan. They can transfer any amount of land that they now own or have held through either a will or through a gift without any restrictions by this Provincial Government in the legislation that we presented. And I think the Liberal Party has deliberately been lying to the people out in the province by posing the question that you can't sell your land and you can't give your land away. I have had three inquiries in the last month from individuals in my constituency who have been told this by representatives of the Liberal Party, not necessarily candidates, but by representatives of the Liberal Party. So I would urge the Members opposite if they are going to proceed with submitting resolutions of this nature to the Legislature let's try and be specific for once in your life and tell the people of the province exactly what your stand would be.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D. Boldt (Rosthern): — Well, Mr. Speaker, a lot of new material has been brought into this debate and I certainly can't agree with what has been said. The original motion was moved by Mr. Steuart, the Leader of the Opposition who is not in the House today and I am sure that he would like to make some comments on the amendment. I, therefore, beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

SECOND READINGS

Mr. J.G. Richards (Saskatoon University) moved second reading of Bill No. 64 — **An Act to amend The Residential Tenancies Act, 1973.**

He said: Well, I trust, Mr. Speaker, that we can dispense with this Bill as quickly as we have done with the previous Bill. That we can pass through the various stages of the Bill, second reading, clause by clause, third reading and passed under its title, and we will have on the Statutes of Saskatchewan some decent rent control legislation on this dying day, which must rate as the dullest of the Session of this 17th Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, rents — I should like to cite some very simple examples from my constituency in Saskatoon. Thirty per cent rise from January 1974 to January 1975. A typical one bedroom furnished suite in January 1974, rented for \$115 and in January 1975 rented for \$150. According to the large management real estate company from which I got this information, they are expecting a further 10 per cent increase in rent by this fall to make it \$165. A 40 per cent increase in rent in a period of 18 months. Not bad. Obviously what exists in Saskatchewan at the moment is an excruciatingly tight housing market. According to the latest CMHC statistics on vacancies, and unfortunately that only applies to new dwellings, there are no vacancies in apartments in either Saskatoon or Regina, there are eight houses in Saskatoon, 17 in Regina that are vacant. There is virtually no vacant housing in Saskatchewan, the demand far exceeds the supply and in such a situation, inevitably the owners of property scramble to up the prices to make more.

Who is doing it? The speculators are doing it on land prices. I have cited in the last couple of weeks particular examples with respect to profits having been made at the expense of the Government both municipal and provincial with speculation in land purchased for new construction. Apartment owners are doing it and ultimately to be comprehensive about it, let's appreciate the fact that the private home owner is in effect the beneficiary of speculation inasmuch as the capital value of his home increases, although what he gains with one hand he loses with the other, in that he has to pay a higher price for a new home if he sells his original home. This is a prima facie case for control on rent, and I am glad to have ideological support on this subject from no less than Premier Blakeney. Premier Blakeney, when down in Ottawa speaking with Prime Minister Trudeau made the following statements on the whole question of inflation. Mr. Blakeney said, Saskatchewan urged an addition to the consensus approach being attempted by the Federal Government. The Federal Government should embark on a plan of selective price controls, a plan of selective price controls said Premier Blakeney on the 11th of April. And if there is one price which affects the ordinary person in 1975 it is housing prices. In the Consumer Price Index the weight given to housing and shelter is higher even than that accorded to food. Over 30 per cent of the Consumer Price Index is accorded to housing compared with approximately 25 per cent for food.

It's hardly an earthshaking precedent for an NDP Government to involve itself in rent control legislation. I have before me Chapter 81, on residential premises, the Interim Rent Stabilization Act assented to May 3, 1974, by the

April 18, 1975

Legislature of British Columbia. Section 2 reads in part:

No landlord shall on or after the 1st day of January, 1974, charge in respect of a rental period an amount of rent for residential premises that is more than eight per cent higher than the amount of rent charged in respect of the last rental period during 1973 for the residential premises.

Mr. Speaker, relative to the Bill which is law in the Province of British Columbia, relative to that piece of legislation I am merely proposing a very conservative piece. All I am arguing is that we include enabling legislation in The Landlord and Tenant Act which would permit the Provincial Government to establish what it deems fit as a rent control provision.

There are problems. There are undeniably real problems with any rent control legislation any doubtless the substance of the attack which will come forward from the Government in an attempt to justify its total inactivity in this area will concentrate on these problems.

First there are administrative problems. A Bill passed with respect to rent control could encourage, prior to its implementation a pre-control across the board hike in rents. That's a problem. But I would submit that the administrative problems of implementing and introducing rent control is not the real problem. And both the Government and I know that those problems could be easily handled. The essence of the question is whether or not the price mechanism, the increase in rents is to be used as a mechanism to bring forth an increased supply of new housing. The argument which the Ministers will doubtless come forward with is, impose rent controls, you remove the incentive to build more new, needing housing. That's a valid argument to be debated. I don't think ultimately it's a valid argument, but it's an argument which must be dealt with and must be debated.

Obviously if my Bill were to be enacted and were we to introduce rent controls, we would have to concern ourselves with a supply situation and assure that the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation did far more than it has in the immediate past to increase the supply of housing in the province.

Let us return to this essential argument. Is it a valid argument in opposition to the concept of rent control? Is it a valid argument to argue that it is self-defeating because it prevents the building of new housing? Well, Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of my speech I made reference to the fact that there had been a 30 per cent increase in rents in the last 12 months and an additional 10 per cent rent increase is expected during the next three or four months. If that 30 per cent rent increase is not a sufficient price incentive to the private building industry to get its stuff together and to actually do some building, I don't know what further price incentive they could possibly be afforded.

But let's look at the facts. What are the facts of actual building in Saskatchewan given that kind of increase? Well, from January to February, 1974 total housing starts were 554. In the same two months in 1975 there were 279, approximately half. Given that the worst problem is being felt in rental accommodation and that rents are going up faster than any other form of

housing and given that renters don't benefit in any way from increases in capital value of housing, you would expect that there would be a lot of rental accommodation being built, but in Saskatoon during the entire 1974 period there were merely 42 units started, 42 units, not 42 complete apartment blocks. Mr. Speaker, 42 units works out at approximately three and a half 12-suite apartment blocks. That is only a drop in a bucket for what is needed in terms of rental accommodation.

Mr. Speaker, in the housing industry and in the housing squeeze and in the increased rents the poor and the ordinary working people of Saskatchewan are paying one of the consequences for the irrational boom and concentration of our capital, of our construction manpower in Alberta's petrochemical Tar Sands at Fort McMurray, steel mills, etc.

The available labor force is going to Alberta, attracted by government subsidies, attracted by big money, attracted by high profits and the housing industry is the Johnny-come-lately. It's residual, it's what is at the end of the line, if there is something left over in terms of capital, in terms of construction labor. And clearly in the last year there's been nothing left over. The priorities of our society are that it's far more important to get Tar Sands plants built in Fort McMurray than to get decent housing built in Saskatoon. Accordingly there's nobody here to build decent housing and there's no money available to build decent housing. The mortgage money is not there. All the manpower studies which have been done by this Government and elsewhere have for the last 12 months pointed to that crisis situation and have discussed the lack of availability of construction manpower to do that kind of building.

Clearly the price mechanism, 40 per cent increase in 18 months has not done the job of bringing new housing stock on the market.

The Government is going to have to undertake that responsibility via the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation admittedly built 519 rental units during 1974, a good but excruciatingly small beginning. I can't introduce a Bill which forces the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation to spend more money and to build more. Private Members are not allowed to bring forward Bills that cost the Government money. But there is no reason that we can't introduce now by enabling legislation in the dying day of this Session the ability for the Government to introduce rent controls. There is no reason why landlords should continue to be able to be the ones who profit from this high market situation. There is an obvious need for equity, there is an obvious need to act, act on the one hand to control rents and on the other hand to greatly increase the housing supply in order to relieve the pressure on the housing market.

I have nothing further to say, Mr. Speaker. I think the argument is self-explanatory and I trust that the Government will not take some devious attempt to distort the issues and prevent the passage of very simple enabling legislation which would permit the introduction of rent controls.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. R. Romanow (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, the Member I think summed up the Bill in the attempt that he made in his very last words, very accurately. He said that it was a very simple legislation and to that I agree. And for that very reason, Mr. Speaker, among other reasons because of the absolutely simplicity of the solution advanced by the Member to a very complex problem, the Government at this time cannot accept this type of a resolution. I don't think the Members of the House can accept this type of resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the Member makes a point respecting housing shortages and I agree that there is a housing shortage. The vacancy rate in Saskatoon and Regina is very low indeed. The economy is buoyant, things are prosperous, there are a lot of people coming to Saskatchewan and there is a housing crisis. The question really is: will rent controls ease housing shortages? How can rent controls be expected to make more houses available or be expected to make more apartments or suites available. That is the central issue. Do rent controls in fact do that? Have they done it where they have been applied, for example, in the Province of British Columbia. Well, I say, Mr. Speaker, the answer obviously to alleviate the housing shortage is to have more and better housing programs. Not necessarily to have rent controls or government controls in this matter but to have a government sponsored and promoted program of housing, apartments, rental accommodation in order to ease the shortage. Now in that regard, Mr. Speaker, we should be directing our efforts to mounting that type of a housing program. I can tell the Members of the House that I am convinced that as far as the record of this Government is concerned and in particular the record of the Minister in charge of housing, that we have to take a second seat to no one in this country of ours.

For example, last year alone there were over 7,700 starts on new houses in the Province of Saskatchewan. That was up from 6,300 in 1973. Mr. Speaker, we are the only province in the Dominion of Canada to increase housing starts in the year 1974.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And there are other additional programs that we are endeavoring to launch in co-operation with the federal authorities for low income groups and for senior citizens. One that has been successfully launched in Saskatoon as a senior citizens' low rental housing project involving 127 suites, I believe it is called McNaughton Place. Now that's our example. Now the Hon. Member opposite gets up and says only 127 suites. Well, I agree with him, it is not enough. He says 7,700 housing starts should be 10,000. We agree, it should be 10,000 but the point is that we are doing all we can to get the housing shortage alleviated. It is an unique situation due to the prosperous and the buoyant economy in our province that we are facing at this particular time. The point that I want to make is that the housing activities of this Government are second to none.

The question though is: do rent controls help to alleviate that housing shortage? Quite obviously, from my remarks, the Members will know that the real solution to the problem is not necessarily rent controls but the real solution is the housing. I suggest, in fact strongly suggest, that rent controls may indeed add to the housing shortage; that they may create or add more to the crisis than the problem that we are trying to solve.

The British Columbia Provincial Government example which I will not dwell on in length, is a specific point where the housing rental controls have created confusion and difficulty.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to belabor the point about incentives to builders. I think the point has been made that government programs are still the most important aspect of this. But while government can be tooled up, we will still need the private development industry in this area. That is the simple fact of the matter if we are going to meet the housing demands in the province. Whether one philosophically agrees with that or philosophically rejects that, that is a simple bald fact of trying to provide enough houses for the people of the Province of Saskatchewan. The question simply is: do rent controls provide the type of necessary incentive, economic and other to give that degree of private development which may be necessary to overcome the shortage at this point? Again if you look at any experience elsewhere it certainly is not very optimistic.

Now, finally, Mr. Speaker, my remarks will be with respect to the Bill itself. I said when I started off, and I will now close, that the difficulty with the Bill is the simplicity of the solution. The simplicity of the solution not only in terms of economics, not only in terms of housing and building costs, the fact that this is a federal and a provincial operation, but in the actual black and white wording of the Bill itself. This is a two-paragraph Bill, Mr. Speaker, which simply calls on the Government, the Cabinet by regulations to pass orders-in-council relating to the question of enforcement. Two paragraphs! All the power vested in the Cabinet. Mr. Speaker, I don't think that any Cabinet should have that type of power. If we were to move on rent controls we should have a Bill which at least specifies the ground rules on which the government is to be bound, the ground rules in which all the developers know what they are bound by. With this type of legislation, Mr. Speaker, it just simply — while perhaps an admirable attempt — is too simplistic an attempt to solve this very complex problem.

Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

Mr. Richards (Saskatoon-University) moved second reading of Bill No. 67 — **An Act to repeal The Department of Industry and Commerce Act.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with some considerable pleasure that I rise to move second reading of this creative piece of legislation.

The Department of Industry and Commerce is one of the hardest government agencies for any socialist to attempt to rationalize. Clearly its purpose is in no way to advance socialism, in fact it is highly questionable whether it even advances the interests of the small businessman whom it is intended to help. In the last two weeks I have received complaints from two businessmen, even in the last two weeks, which is since I have made my intent known about this Bill. Two businessmen who have complained bitterly about the type of treatment that they have had from this department. Also I could have moved in this Bill

April 18, 1975

for the abolition of the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation which is a sister agency, another of the ugly sisters involved in the whole process of government there in the Power Corporation Building.

The Industry and Commerce Department and SEDCO are intimately intertwined, the Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce sits on the board of directors of SEDCO. The basic operations of SEDCO have not served to support rural communities particularly, nor particularly to go for the small business enterprise. It is worth noting that in the portfolio as it existed in December 1974, the 14 loans of over \$1 million constituted 62 per cent of the value of the portfolio of SEDCO. It is worth nothing . . .

Mr. Speaker: — I think the debate must be kept on the Bill and not on SEDCO, because that is a different debate.

Mr. Richards: — All right, Mr. Speaker, I shall restrict my remarks to the abolition of the Department of Industry and Commerce.

I should like to introduce for the edification of the House some figures about the evolution over the last decade of this Department of Industry and Commerce. In 1965, the last year of the CCF Government, the budget for the industry division of Industry and Information was \$500,000. The number of personnel 46. During the period that the Liberals were in power that department actually declined in personnel. Ross Thatcher's support of the private businessman was not as strong as his district in the growth of government bureaucracy. By the time the last Estimates were brought before this House in 1971, the personnel had dropped to 39.

Meanwhile back in 1964, let's have a look at what was happening to the Department of Co-operation, which is a department which might be assumed to embody more the spirit of some alternative to the encouragement of private business. At that time, the Budget of the Department of Co-ops was almost identical at \$540,000 to the industry division of the so-called Department of Industry and Information that existed at the time. Mr. Thatcher decimated of course the Department of Co-ops. By the time we came to 1972, its budget was down, personnel was down, it was a shambles.

Let's look at what has happened since then. Since 1971, the personnel in the Department of Industry and Commerce has grown more than twice, 47 to 117. The budget was nearly trebled from \$2.6 million to \$6.3 million, whereas the Department of Co-ops has continued to stagnate with less than a doubling in its budget in the four years. The pattern is clear. The Department of Industry and Commerce and its ugly sister, about which we are not supposed to discuss at the moment, SEDCO, these two twin agencies carry along bureaucratically growing like a cancer. What have they got to show for themselves?

These agencies act as financial agencies, they act as subsidy agencies, their senior officials change constantly. We go through on deputy minister after another. In the Department of Industry, we have had Webster, we have had Saddlemeier, we have had Gartner — I'm missing somebody in there — Dombowsky has also served as deputy minister in the

Department of Industry and Commerce; a department which doesn't know its priorities. I think that quite seriously we would find ourselves in a better position if we salvaged the remnants of what are valuable programs in that department, if we took the economic development programs in that department, if we took the economic development program for the disadvantaged and put it back in HRDA, if we took operation re-cycle and replace it somewhere else, abolish the department, abolish that repository of bad and festering ideas about regional development in Saskatchewan and start in anew.

In all seriousness, Mr. Speaker, I would like at this time to move second reading of a Bill to repeal The Industry and Commerce Act.

Mr. D. Boldt (Rosthern): — Mr. Speaker, I really didn't want to say this today, but we have a Member for Saskatoon Riversdale — I am sorry, I apologize, Saskatoon University, who got elected under the NDP ticket and then he got hoisted, he is so far out in left field he shouldn't even be in the House here. He brings in two Bills, he could have plastered this Blue Paper with dozens of Bills. If I was aware of it, I would have brought in a Bill asking this Chamber to remove this Member from this House. Maybe two per cent of the people in his constituency support him now, and yet he takes up all this time putting in two Bills, one is Bill 64, which certainly will not improve the housing situation, it will worsen it. Then he wants to do away with the Department of Industry and Commerce. I don't know what he wants.

Several years ago I made an offer for him that I would buy him a one-way ticket to Communist Russia. If he wants to take me up on that, I will still do it.

This Bill has wide implications. I am going to take the Government off the hook, I am going to ask leave to adjourn this debate.

Debate adjourned.

STATEMENT

MLAs RETIRING

Hon. R. Romanow (Attorney General): — Mr. Chairman, I would beg the indulgence and the agreement of the Committee of Finance to stand the normal routine of arranging for the debate of the Committee of Finance Estimates for the balance of the morning. Sort of information bending of the rules for the purpose of giving a few moments to the Members of the Legislative Assembly who have served the people of Saskatchewan for quite some time and who have said now before the election that they are retiring, a few words about their experiences in the House and about how they feel the problems of the future relate to the Provincial Legislature.

Mr. Chairman, we have never done this in the past. I think it is a good tradition to begin. While one or two of our retirees are not veterans in the normal sense of the political term, none the less, I do believe that their contributions, their experiences and their views as to how the role of an MLA fits in the future would be of benefit to all of us. Some of them of course have been long time veterans who have given a great

deal of service to their constituents who elected them and to the people of the Province of Saskatchewan. This will be followed at 12:30 with an informal luncheon that the Executive Council and the Premier is hosting for the retirees and for the rest of us MLAs, some of us, who may be involuntarily retiring after the next election.

The Members of the Assembly who are retiring, Mr. Chairman, are as follows: In alphabetical order, not necessarily in seniority of course, Messrs. — Dave Boldt, MLA for Rosthern constituency; Irving W. Carlson, MLA for Yorkton; the Hon. Fred A. Dewhurst, Speaker, of Wadena constituency (and I think acknowledged to be the Dean of the House); Messrs. Mike Feduniak, Turtleford constituency; Gordon Grant, MLA Regina Whitmore Park constituency; Frank Meakes, MLA Touchwood constituency; Don. F. MacDonald, MLA Moose Jaw North constituency; Dick W. Michayluk, MLA Redberry constituency; the Hon. Everett I. Wood, MLA Swift Current constituency and Mr. George F. Loken, MLA Rosetown constituency — and the alphabet somewhere went wrong — it must be a Ukrainian alphabet, George. That gives us a total of 10 retirees which — I don't know if that is a big turnover or not, perhaps the Premier or others who are more experienced could comment on that.

Mr. Chairman, I won't make any comments on this other than to say that I have been associated with all of these people in one way or other as an Opposition Member or as a Government Member, while we have disagreed in the House from time to time I am happy to say that personally we never have carried our disagreements outside the Assembly. Each one of them to the best of my knowledge has served his constituency and the province very faithfully. In a way I am sorry to see all of them voluntarily retiring. Mr. Chairman, with your approval we could now move into that procedure.

Mr. D. Boldt (Rosthern): — Mr. Chairman, Attorney General, Mr. Premier and Members of the Government and Opposition. I want to thank the House Leader, the Attorney General, for giving retiring Members a few minutes each to bid farewell to this Chamber and our colleagues.

An experience as MLA for the constituency for 15 years, a Member of this Legislature and member of the Executive Council during those terms is something that cannot be bought nor acquired through the normal channels of education. I would not want to sell this kind of an experience for a million dollars, nor would I want to pick up another 15 years for a nickel.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Boldt: — If someone asked if I was sorry I had entered public life, the answer is definitely, No. If somebody would ask me whether I would want to re-enter public life, no answer is also definitely, No.

I do believe I have served as best I knew how and I hope that I have left a mark. I have made mistakes, no doubt, but it was not intended that way. I hope I have made a contribution to my constituents and to the people of Saskatchewan and this Legislature.

In the early part of the winter of 1959, as president of the Rosthern Liberal Association, I was asked to call a nominating convention. I had no intentions of being a candidate. In short, I was drafted. I worked almost day and night for six months and got elected, it is part of my nature to be a winner. After the 1964 election I was asked by Ross Thatcher to be a member of the Executive Council. This was indeed a very great honor for myself, my immediate family and for the Rosthern constituents. I worked hard as a Minister and I am confident that I did leave a mark in government during those seven years.

I must first thank the people of Rosthern constituency for making it possible to be their representative. Secondly, I am indebted to the former Premier Ross Thatcher for appointing me to one of the highest positions in provincial public life. And thirdly, I want to thank all my colleagues during the last 15 years on both sides of the House; and to all the public employees who made my stay in public life so rewarding. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. F. Meakes (Touchwood): — Mr. Chairman, a couple of weeks ago I already made by ‘swan song’. I called it my swan song when I had no idea this would come about. My remarks are going to be short.

It has been a rare privilege to come to this Legislature. Through the years I have come to love this room. After all, the whole thing is part of the democratic process that has taken 900 years to develop. I am one who can criticize the parliamentary system in a good many ways. There are still lots of things that I can find to be critical of. Having said this, Winston Churchill at one time spent about five minutes criticizing the parliamentary process and then said, “But we have never been able to evolve to anything better.”

I as a Member of this Legislature served first as a government backbencher and I enjoyed the role of government backbencher. From that, like the previous speaker, I was chosen by Mr. Lloyd to serve as a Cabinet Minister. This was a rare privilege, something that I really enjoyed. I was defeated unlike my predecessor. I remember the evening of the defeat. The next morning I was kind of a sick person. I felt pretty sick. But looking back on that defeat, philosophically, it didn’t hurt me. I think that is part and proof of the democratic process and of the right of the people to retire me involuntarily.

I came back to this Legislature and sat on the left side of this House, from where Mr. Speaker sits and I was a member of Her Majesty’s Loyal Opposition. That too was a great experience for me, there were frustrations in it. Because I had been in the other position I really realized that the role of the Opposition was one of endeavoring to be an alternative to the Government. That role as I say, I enjoyed immensely. Although I am like my predecessor, I wouldn’t wish to go back to that side. I will admit I have enjoyed being on the Government side more than the Opposition. But I do believe there is a real role for the Opposition, a real role investigating legislation and more so, a real role investigating the Estimates. One of the things that has troubled and I am not talking about this year in particular, it always seems to me that the Estimates are piled up at the last of the Session when everybody is wanting to get out. I have seen, many times, giant sums

April 18, 1975

of money passed and voted with no question or one question. The reason is basically that everybody is trying to get out. But nevertheless I think it is an extremely important part of the role.

One other thing that I have enjoyed in the House was being on the Public Accounts Committee, especially since it has been changed; under the old method it was a frustrating and useless performance, but since we have a new type of Public Accounts procedure I think it has been a worthwhile and a good experience.

I have known through the past 20 years a number of people who came to this House and who did not enjoy being in the House. I really feel sorry for those people. I realize it isn't everybody who can be Members of this House. First of all, I think the most important thing for the role of an MLA is to like people and I think that's a very necessary thing to become an MLA. I have been fortunate to be born with that bit in me, I like people and so it has been a great pleasure to serve. I look at all the people that I have sat with, and I'm going to name a few in particular, people I have associated with, whichever side of the House they sat.

I think many of you people know that Mr. Speaker and I have been very close friends. Of those who have been in this House since I was first elected there are only two who were here prior to my coming to this House and that was Mr. Speaker and Mr. Kramer. Mr. Kramer, I believe, was elected four years ahead of me. I then think of the only person who remains in this House who came in on the 1956 election, was the man who sits next to me, across the aisle, Everett Wood. Everett and I sat way at the back in 1956, we sat together, and Premier Douglas came by one day and he put his arms around us from behind and he leaned forward and he said, "You know the CCF have never had such solid backing!" There's no doubt we were fairly solid, wide shouldered. Everett Wood then went to the Cabinet. A year or so later I went and again I sat next to him. It seems fitting that he and I should sit side by side at the end.

Then I think of Dick Michayluk, who came in in 1960, and Ed Whelan who came in in 1960. I think of Auburn Pepper who when I came back in 1967 was here. I have developed close friendships with these people. And then I think of the people who sat opposite to me. I think I can say that I leave here with no enemies. And so in closing, many of my friends have heard me say this before, about two Scotsmen separating and they had a wish. I'll say it is Gaelic and then I'll translate it into English. I think it is very appropriate. Said in Gaelic it says, "Lang may your lum reek." Translated into English, "Long may your chimney smoke."

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. G.B. Grant (Regina Whitmore Park): — Mr. Chairman, today reminds me of the day about 15 years ago when I had the undesirable job of doing away with a Labrador dog that I had had for about 15 years. I'm not quite as crippled up as he was, but I recall a friend of mine suggesting that eh would take the dog to the vet to have him put away and I said, "Oh no, I'm not a sissy, I can do that." Well I must admit when I did it I had a great big lump in my throat. And I think some of us may be in that position today. Possibly a little more so for me since I am not only drawing my political career to an end, I'm leaving the province that I have lived in for 65 years.

One thing I do regret is to see the younger fellows not being able to continue on in politics, and I refer to Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Carlson particularly, because I think this is the hope for our province in the future that we can interest young fellows with ability to carry on from the old crocks.

I'm sorry also that some Members feel disillusioned in what takes place in the House. I think maybe we all border on that when we first come. I can think of the Member for Saskatoon Nutana (Mr. Robbins) being disillusioned or frustrated and I would rather use the word 'frustrated' because I have experienced it many times, because I don't think we should be disillusioned, we should be going into this business with our eyes open and knowing what we will be facing.

With the passage of time there are changes that take place. I dare say if you look at the procedure of this House today compared to 25 years ago it is quite different. The change is slow and I think this is desirable. I would hate to see things change too quickly because it has taken so long to evolve our system of government that changes done in haste could be repented at our leisure.

I look at two highlights in my life — one was when I was elected mayor of Regina, being the first native born mayor. It gave me a lot of satisfaction. As I have often said, even if the job didn't pay anything (and it didn't pay very much in those days) the reward was there in the fact that I had been named.

The other thing was being named to the Cabinet. I think that this is where I got my eyes opened a little bit. I thought Cabinet Ministers didn't really work very hard, all they did was enjoy the better things in life. The Premier will recall that I had learned that by 1971 because I wrote him a note of congratulation saying, 'while we disagree politically, one thing I am sure we do agree on, you have taken on a heck of a big job, and good luck to you'. The same applies to the Leader of the Opposition. I think that it's even more frustrating than being the Premier of the province. In that eleven-year period that I have been in the House I have learned to recognize the work and the dedication that leaders give, particularly. I also recognize the Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers probably work just a little bit harder than anyone else in the civil service.

I think that covers my 'swan song', Mr. Chairman. I want to thank everyone for the courtesies they have extended to me over the years. We have disagreed, I don't think there are any bitter feelings left between us, and I know we can all fraternize outside the House and find that we have a lot of things in common. I have found it a most rewarding experience and like Mr. Boldt, I would certainly hesitate to start all over again, but I can tell you if I was 20 years younger I would have no hesitancy at all.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. I.W. Carlson (Yorkton): — Mr. Chairman, I thought originally that the House Leader wanted us to follow his Ukrainian alphabet, but I see we are just taking our turns as we get in here.

April 18, 1975

I should like to start off by saying that I certainly appreciate the opportunity I have had to serve in this Legislature. It has indeed been a pleasure serving the people of the Yorkton constituency, and to some extent the people of the entire Province of Saskatchewan.

I should like officially to thank my constituents in the Yorkton area for allowing me this opportunity to serve them and I hope that my endeavors have been successful from their point of view.

From my point of view, the experiences in the Legislature have indeed been rewarding. I just want to take a moment or two to mention some of them that impressed me that I certainly didn't anticipate prior to being elected.

The Legislative Committee that I served on served a very useful role as far as I was concerned in learning to work with Members of the Opposition. It is very easy sitting in the House here debating and being critical, but I think what I personally got out of that Committee more than anything was to appreciate that Members of the Opposition are just plain, ordinary human beings, as we are on this side of the House. They have their points of view, we have ours, but on that kind of a Committee I think we really learned to work together in a co-operative manner.

Another aspect of being an MLA that I never fully imagined what it would be like was the dealings in our caucus. To a large extent caucus is where the party makes a lot of the decisions, and where in the caucus a lot of the quarrelling goes on among Members of our side, but I certainly enjoyed that. I feel that's a very important role for a Member and an experience that I'll certainly never forget.

The political aspects of being an MLA is another field that I enjoy very much. I enjoy being involved in election campaigns of working in the constituency, serving individual constituent's needs. It gives me a great deal of pleasure when I am able to be helpful. There are many occasions, as we all know, when constituents come with complaints that we cannot help them with, but nevertheless, that has indeed been a rewarding part of my career.

I must say that the decision not to run again was a very difficult one. I think also, it would be more difficult for those Members who have been around here for a long period of time. It is a decision that I cannot say I regret — it was the only decision I could make. I know I am going to miss the activities in the Legislature. I have enjoyed it very much these past four years. I'm trying to keep my options open so that if the opportunity arises at some later point in time when my family has grown up, at least to the age of the late teens, that I would certainly be prepared to look at the possibility of returning here.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I just want to say thank you to all Members of the House for the courtesy they have extended to me and the co-operation in the dealings these past four years.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. M. Feduniak (Turtleford): — Mr. Chairman, it certainly gives me a great deal of pleasure and it is a privilege to be able to stand up and say a few words on my retirement from the Legislature.

I haven't been here very long so my speech is going to be likewise.

I certainly enjoyed being in the four sessions. I have obtained a lot of experience and the experience is very rewarding to me. I have learned a lot about the procedures and all that goes with it. I enjoyed being on the Liquor Review Committee and the Highway Traffic and Safety Committee. I learned that we can work with the Opposition very well. I am glad that I have had some part in participating in a government which believes in equality, and makes it possible for everybody to share the fruits of our land, which are so abundant. I may say that we can consider ourselves very fortunate to be living in a land where there is an abundance of everything, if it were distributed properly.

A long time ago I saw a publication and I think I could relate it to the present day concept of the thinking of the people today, and this was the picture of two prominent persons standing at the head of the road. One was the devil, the other one was Christ. Multitudes of people were walking towards them. Christ held a loaf of bread in his hand and the devil held a lump of shining gold. I think this still exists up to this day — in view of the fact that in this world we see riots and wars and problems; hunger and starvation. I can't seem to grasp that there are people in the world today who still prefer to take the route of grasping and going for that shiny piece of gold, and denying themselves the decency and what really means something in our lives today, ultimately, and at the end all we require is the bread. The day comes when we all have to, regardless of how much earthly possessions we acquire, we have to leave them all behind.

I will continue to support and preserve this great humanitarian movement of our government, and I would like to congratulate all of those who have decided to carry on this important responsibility.

I should like to thank our Premier, Members of the Legislative Assembly on both sides, visitors, for everything that they have contributed to the Legislature. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D.W. Michayluk (Redberry): — Mr. Chairman, first I want to thank the Premier and the Deputy Leader for according the retiring Members this honor on this day.

You know, this is the end of my fourth term as a Member, and there have been three elections in the interim. Many Members have made retirement of their own volition; others were retired by the electorate, but this gives me, as a Member, an opportunity to say a few words when I am ending my political career, actively, in this Legislature.

April 18, 1975

Mr. Chairman, I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere and deep thanks to the constituents of Redberry. It was indeed a rare honor and a privilege to serve them. The 15 years have been the most rewarding years of my life. Someone said that to retire is a difficult decision to make, once you have been closely associated with your constituents over a period of 15 years. Mr. Chairman, there were two hard decisions to make, the first hard decision for me was to enter politics. I turned down that opportunity twice, once in 1948 and once in 1952. Ultimately I made a decision in 1959 to undertake this task.

In the 15 years I have made friends, friends that will remain with me for the balance of my life. I know that deep within me and I know how these other gentlemen who have risen prior to me and those who are still to rise, feel now that they are retiring. I could not say that I took this position lightly. I can go back 15 years when I first marched in through the door into this Chamber. We were on this side of the House, I was elected at the time when the Hon. T.C. Douglas was Premier. When I took a chair in the back row, as all beginners do, I looked around and it was then, and only then that I realized what a task I was given by the constituents who sent me here. I am sure that many of us who are here today went through the same process.

It is true that we have had over the last 15 years many disagreements, particularly with some of the Members of the opposite side of the House. But just because we differ in our philosophies I think that whenever an opportunity was accorded me to meet with the Members of the Opposition, they were always my friends. This is the way I regard them and always will. I know that each and every one of us who are here has in mind the service of his fellow man, the betterment of social economic conditions for the people of this province and the welfare of those who are to come.

In retiring, I want to wish those of you who are going into this coming election, success. It is with regret that I know that all of you will not be back, but I will be following with keen anticipation your progress as the election progresses. Once again, I want to thank the Premier, this House and my constituents for giving me this honored privilege to be here and to speak here this afternoon. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D.F. MacDonald (Moose Jaw North): — Mr. Chairman, like Mr. Feduniak, I will be rather brief. I think that my views on this Legislature have been made known through the Press. I think that certain Members of the Legislature were a little disappointed with my views as were expressed in the Press and they have made this known to me. I think what was reported in the Press is accurate, it possible doesn't contain the whole feeling that is within me but I think it is basically accurate.

I should like to say that the suggestion that I didn't like being in this House, taken in the context that I wasn't proud to be here, is wrong, because I am very proud to be in this Legislature and to be representing the city of Moose Jaw. I indeed am very proud in that respect. In the respect that I didn't enjoy the Legislature, enjoy the session, as it were,

that I didn't enjoy the posturing that goes on and the lack of compromise and this type of thing. I think that is evident and is honest. I remember when I was first elected, it wasn't very long until I developed this feeling. I wasn't alone in this feeling and I think that Members in this Legislature will likely be aware that there was quite a group of us who were disillusioned, if I can use that word, on both sides of this House and it was a feeling that was so strong that it beat a group of us. I can't remember how many met together to discuss this very problem that all of us felt, we kicked it around as to what the solutions might be, how we might help to have a different attitude go on in the House. I can honestly say that the group of us that did discuss it didn't change anything. I think the group of us that discussed it and were slightly disillusioned have all adopted the procedures and posturing that we objected to. We were not very successful.

I certainly don't regret having met together and discussed it and attempted, although I am not sure that we ever formulated any way of trying to overcome what we didn't like.

I also would like to say as has possibly been indicated and some Members may feel that I am bitter, certainly I am not bitter for the experience that I have had, far from it. Maybe disappointed is the word, but certainly not bitter. I don't leave the Legislature with any scars or wounds or anything like this. I have enjoyed many, many parts of being an MLA. Possibly not being a very combative person is one of the reasons that I haven't enjoyed the Legislature as much as some others.

I certainly don't object to the traditions and the formalities that take place in this House. Being a conservatively minded person I respect very much the institution of this Legislature. The other thing that I should like to say is that it has been suggested that I am leaving politics because of my disappointment with the proceedings that took place in this House. That of course is absolutely wrong. It certainly is not a disappointment that would be of that magnitude. I leave politics strictly because of personal reasons, family reasons, reasons of having to make a choice between my profession and politics, certainly the only reason that I am leaving politics. And like the Member for Yorkton (Mr. Carlson) I hope that the time will come when I can consider re-entering politics with a clear conscience as far as my profession and my family goes.

I don't leave with any great sense of remorse. I feel that there are many, many other just as capable people in Moose Jaw who are able to represent the constituency of Moose Jaw and I don't feel that I leave letting anybody down or anything like this. I hope that I have made a contribution that the people of Moose Jaw will respect and I will return to their community as a private citizen.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. G.F. Loken (Rosetown): — Mr. Chairman, in rising to speak in the Assembly for the last time, my first thoughts are naturally one of gratitude. I should like to express my sincere appreciation to the electorate of Rosetown constituency allowing me to represent them for the past 11 years. It is an honor to be chosen as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, particularly on behalf of an area of the province which means so much to me, and on behalf of citizens for whom I have the highest regard and respect.

April 18, 1975

I should also like to extend my thanks to you, Mr. Speaker, for the consideration you have shown and the manner in which you have conducted the affairs of the House. Through you I say thank you to all the Members of the Assembly. Although we are of different political persuasions, I have appreciated your friendliness and co-operation and companionship. Members of the Cabinet, past and present also have my gratitude. It would have been impossible for me adequately to represent my constituents without your help.

I am pleased to say problems and requests brought to the attention of the Ministers were never ignored, even if it was impossible to satisfy them all. After fighting three elections and serving as an MLA for 11 years, my departure is not without regrets. However, I also leave with a sense of fulfilment and the knowledge that the time has come for someone else to attempt to represent the many interests of our constituency. To those who will return to become Members of the Eighteenth Legislature, I say good luck in your endeavors on behalf of your constituencies and the province. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. E.I. Wood (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Chairman, I very much appreciate this opportunity to say a few words on the occasion of my retirement from this House. I don't know — I think maybe we were in alphabetical order, I don't know whether it is Ukrainian or otherwise that we have more or less been rising here. Anybody by the name of Wood who comes from Swift Current gets kind of used to being left down to the end of the line. It never bothered me a great deal except that I also hauled my wheat to Success, this meant that some of my good neighbors who hauled their wheat to Cantuar and some of those other places got their money about three weeks before I did. This kind of bothered me a little through the years.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wood: — I am very pleased to have this opportunity here today. It is something that I think is unprecedented that we did have this. I am not at all prepared for it. I think it is rather appropriate possibly that my last speech in the House should be like a good many of the others, I was just not prepared for it.

I am very pleased nevertheless. I have been here as you will know for some 19 years. I believe it was the 23rd June 1956 when I was first elected — after the nomination in the fall of 1955 — that is going back, it soon will be 20 years that I have been involved in politics. I want to say that I have enjoyed it. I think it has been a tremendous experience. Of course at my age one wouldn't be starting over again. But if I were asked if I would do it again, the answer would be an unreserved Yes, I certainly would. I am retiring now, voluntarily, but if it were not for my health, I kind of doubt if I would be retiring voluntarily. I just kind of hate to leave this sphere, it is something that has been part of my life for a good many years.

I have, I think, occupied most of the positions around the Legislature during those 19 years. As Frank has said, we

started out in the back. There were three of us, Kim Thorson, Frank and I, we sat at the back there, the three of us, I think we were behind the back.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wood: — This was back in the Thirteenth Session of the Legislature. Then I was promoted to the position of Speaker of the House which I held for two sessions. This is a tough job, gentlemen, it is not just all that easy being in the Speaker's Chair. It had its moments. I was very pleased to be the Speaker, to represent Saskatchewan at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meeting in London in 1961. I am sure it would have to be the highlight of anyone's life to be able to address that organization in the House of Lords in London. The chairman of the organization at the time at that meeting allowed those Speakers who were present to chair the meeting for 20 minutes. So for 20 minutes I had the opportunity of being chairman of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. This is something that I look back upon with a great deal of pride.

I went from there to the Cabinet, I was Minister of Municipal Affairs for two and one-half years in the Lloyd Government, which was an experience in itself, both times. Then of course we were promoted to the Opposition for seven years and back again into the Cabinet again. I will also say that during those years I was chairman of caucus for four years. I was chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, I was chairman of the Regulations Committee. I have touched bases around this place. The only place that I haven't been and I have some sympathy for the Hon. Member for Moose Jaw, it is the only position that I have not held is being a backbencher on the Opposition side. There may be some frustrations there that maybe we don't get everywhere and it is not a position which I aspire to at this time . . .

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wood: — . . . at any time. Aside from that I have been in most places in this House. Of course, I have sat in the Premier's chair but that was very temporary. I have to say that I have enjoyed it. There have been tough times, don't ever think that there weren't any. There have been times when it has tried your bottom dollar. They weren't so easy. I recall one time back in the Medicare crisis, I was out talking to the rural municipal people at their district meetings throughout the province just a few days before the doctors' strike. The two topics that I had to speak upon were municipal reorganization and Medicare.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wood: — I thought at the time that that was a rather hard way to earn your living.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wood: — But there have been some very happy times. I wouldn't want to take up your time today but there have been some knee-

April 18, 1975

slappers that have happened in this House over those 19 years. Some of them have really tickled my fancy. It is really very enjoyable to look back upon them.

Taking it all together it has been a tremendous experience. I sincerely want to thank the good people of Swift Current for allowing me, Swift Current City and constituency, to represent them during that 19 years. They are a great bunch of people I have to say that. The fact that I have represented them for 19 years makes it very clear that they are very easy to get along with.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wood: — I really love them and I appreciate them allowing me to represent them here. I want to thank particularly the Members of the House whom I have sat with through the years. There are not many here who were here when I first came in. There are Mr. Speaker, Frank, Eiling and Kim who are the only ones here today who were here when I came. There is a fairly high mortality in this business and I don't know how many others who have really gone through the House at that time who are not here. I haven't been here nearly as long as Mr. Speaker or Mr. Kramer.

But the fellowship and the camaraderie and the working together of the people in this House is good. It is something like a rather exclusive club in some ways. You know you just don't get in here all that easily, you have to pay the price to be here. I have found through the years that the people we have to deal with are good people to deal with, irrespective of which side of the House they sit on. I want to thank the Members of the Opposition whom I have been with through the years whether they were on the Government side before, when they were the Government and we were the Opposition. There has been a good relationship between the parties so far as I am concerned. A few clashes have made things a little tough, I have to admit that. There have been some very violent disagreements, we never quite come to blows but there were times when it was getting a little close but by and large it has been a good association.

The people on our side of the House I really have enjoyed working with them. Working with your own people whether it's as a backbencher or working together in caucus as a Cabinet Minister dealing with people on your side of the House, I have found them very good to work with. There is the odd time when the backbenchers give Cabinet Ministers a really bad time and I think mostly they generally (Ministers) have it coming to them. One can't complain upon that, it is all part of the work and I think it is good.

Also, I don't know if this is the place or not but I should also like to go on record as thanking the people of my department for the tremendous loyalty, etc., they have had through the years. I guess at the present time, it's not a very big record, but I think I have represented one department in this House, right now, longer than anyone else in the House. I am a little proud of that and I want to thank the people of that department for their loyalty through the years.

Now with those not too well chosen words, Mr. Chairman, I should like to say good-bye to the House. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. F.A. Dewhurst (Speaker): — Mr. Chairman, I think we have seen something new here today. I left the Chair about ten minutes to twelve, the House Leader said we were going into Committee of Finance, evidently we have gone into ‘Committee of Romance.’ But I see nothing in Beauchesne or May which covers this Committee. So if we are out of order I don’t know what rules you will apply in order to bring the Committee back to order.

I have had the privilege, as all Members are aware of, of being around this Legislature for a few years now. I have seen in my time in this Legislature 216 different Members I have worked with. And out of those 216 I think that I can sincerely and truly say that none of them left hating me or did they leave with me disliking them. Sure, we disagreed, we had our differences of opinion in debate, in committees and so on, but I believe that the work of the Legislature is something unique, one thing that very few people in their lifetime get a chance to do to serve in the Legislature. I think it is a wonderful experience.

I have to thank the constituents of the old Wadena constituency for the support they have given me throughout the years. When I came to this Legislature some years ago I came in as green as grass. There was never a greener Member who entered the Chamber door than I. I feel sorry if any Member doesn’t feel that he likes being a Member or he feels that the Legislature is not what he expected. To me the Legislature is like a ball game. It only going to do what we want it to do. We all can’t be the pitcher and we all can’t be the catcher. We must have umpires, we must have the water boys and we must have others around a ball club. Sometimes we are just called on to be a pinch hitter. That’s the way we are in the Legislature, each of us does not hold the same position or have the same responsibility. But the responsibility that each and every one of us has is equally as sincere and serious as the next one in the next seat.

Now this Legislature to me may hold a different feeling than it did for most Members who have come here. My father came to Canada just after the turn of the century. He was a steam engineer. In those days they didn’t have the type of cranes and hoists that they use in today’s construction but in construction then they had steam hoists which used to hoist all the heavy material for the larger buildings. He was a steam engineer and worked on this Legislative Building for three years. He hoisted more stone that is in this building now than any other two engineers. And after having worked here for three years and when I came into the Legislature some years later he felt quite proud to think that having worked here that one of his sons should appear in the Legislature. And I may say that is how I got my name, the name of Fred. When he was on the steam hoist, his Christian name was Aaron, most of them didn’t know what his name was, and so when they wanted the hoist they would holler, ‘hey, friend.’ After awhile someone else thought they were saying, ‘Fred’. So for the last two years he worked on this building he was always called Fred. So when I was born I got the name of Fred.

It’s been a privilege for me to have been in this Legislature. I believe, I haven’t checked the records too closely, Mr. Chairman, but I believe that I am the first Member to ever

April 18, 1975

sit in this Legislature who was born in the city of Regina and I was born at 1029 Robinson Street in the city of Regina. So I think that could also be another first for this Legislature. It has been my privilege over the past number of years to work with four different Speakers. When I first came Tom Johnston was the Speaker, after him it was Jim Darling from Watrous, then Everett Wood and then after I left the Chair for the first time, I worked under Mr. Snedker and now I am back again for the second round. I'm the only Speaker who has ever been in the Chair twice. I believe in the whole of the Commonwealth, not only in this province.

I have had the privilege, as Everett Wood did, of attending two of the Commonwealth Conferences outside of Canada. The one I remember better was the first one I attended in Nigeria. The same as Everett had in England I had the privilege on that occasion of chairing that CPA Conference not on one but two different occasions. The chairman of the day would call on the different Speakers to chair the committee or the session. I had been called on in the beginning of the week, on toward the end of the week the chairman who was in charge of the Conference, who was from Nigeria, came to me and asked me if I would take the Chair again. I did. There was another Speaker there, Speaker Williams from Southern Rhodesia, who came to me after and was just madder than a wet hen because I had taken the Chair twice. He said, "You had no business to take it the second time, it should have been my turn." I told him I didn't decide, the chairman, the general chairman decides that and if he called on me the third time I would still take it.

But in talking to the people of Africa I know why they didn't call on Williams because it was just shortly before that Southern Rhodesia broke away from the Commonwealth and Smith set up his own white supremacy in Southern Rhodesia. The African people knew that if Williams was in the Chair they wouldn't get a fair shake at the Conference.

Now in the Legislature here many things happen. We have seen a lot of humor, a lot of jest and I want to say that it has been a privilege to work with the different Members on all sides of the House. The role of the Speaker, I think, is the least understood position of any part of our democratic system. I know when I sat on the floor of the Assembly I don't think I was any different than anyone else. We look upon the Speaker as someone who interferes with the things we want to do. If it wasn't for that Speaker and his damned Beauchesne we could get something done, that is the attitude of the Members. But I want to assure you that if it wasn't for the rules of the House we would be in chaos and we couldn't get ourselves out of it.

I must say that when I first came into the Speaker's Chair back in 1962, the Clerk of the day was Mr. Bev. Koester and he was a terrific strength to me. He was a bright, able, capable Clerk and assisted me a lot. When I came back to the Chair four years ago we had another equally capable assistant in Mr. Gordon Barnhart. I have found Gordon very good to work with and very co-operative and at all times we were able to discuss the things that came up and come to agreement on what should be done or shouldn't be done without any disagreements between the two of us. If I wasn't able to put my finger on the rule I wanted, then my Clerk could. Also we had Ms. Merry Harbottle as assistant Clerk, the first lady assistant Clerk in Canada. Saskatchewan had another first by having a lady

as assistant Clerk. As you know she left here last year to take a further course at university and I think that this House can be highly honored with the selection of our assistant Clerk of the day, Mrs. Gwen Ronyk. I think we have got one of the better assistant Clerks in the whole of Canada. I believe that the people here in this Legislature don't really appreciate the type of staff we have compared to other Legislatures.

I have had the privilege of attending Speakers' conferences and Parliamentary conferences, talking to other Speakers on their problems and so on, talking to other Clerks and I believe that Saskatchewan comes out second to none.

I also want to pay tribute to the girls in the office at the back, they have given good service to the people here and they have assisted the Members wherever possible. Other people working in this Chamber who get little consideration at times but do a lot of running around, are our page girls. They sometimes get their feet run off taking messages back and forth but not too many people realize the work that the page girls do. I feel highly satisfied with the calibre of girls that we have had over the past few years and the present ones we have and the work they have done.

In listening to all the different Members this morning while our constitution says we can go five years, one must assume that we are not going to go the fifth year. I think it is safe to assume that we may not all be back together again next year. I can assure you my best wishes go to all of those I have worked with so that we can still remain friends and if you are in my locality don't be afraid to drop in and see me and I hope I shall have the privilege of doing the same with all the rest of them. I hope some time or other to be able to drop in from time to time and renew old acquaintances again and talk over some of the things that have happened in the past or maybe the present and the future. I can assure you that I shall be leaving with very many mixed feelings. Thank you all.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

HEALTH REPORT ON FAMILY PLANNING

Hon. W.E. Smishek (Minister of Health): — Mr. Chairman, during Health Estimates the question was asked when the Report of the Family Planning Advisory Committee might be available. This is not a document required to be tabled but we were able to get copies of the Report and I should like to table a copy of this Report for the information of the Members. It will be distributed in a few minutes, and just a brief word to the Members of the Legislature. No other province has so far undertaken such an extensive study in the field of family planning. It was a very broad committee that was established of 15 members. I want to point out to the Members of the Legislature that the Report does not represent government policy but I think it is a useful document. The Government itself will now be considering the Report as to the extent of it being implemented or in what stages it may be implemented.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

COMMENTS BY VICE PRESIDENT OF PRINCE ALBERT PULPWOOD

Hon. W.A. Robbins (Minister of Finance): — I should like to have leave of the Assembly to answer a question that was raised some time ago. The Member for Saskatoon-University (Mr. Richards) was good enough to send a clipping from the newspaper to me with respect to comments made by a Mr. Thomas Ballantyne, Vice President of Prince Albert Pulpwood and I am quoting directly from this article whereby he made this statement:

I look upon welfare and unemployment insurance payments as social cancer that will ultimately kill the Canadian economy unless the Government acts to introduce such legislation to cure the disease.

I think the Hon. Member for Saskatoon-University wanted comments from me as Minister of Finance with respect to that statement and I am pleased to make this statement.

Mr. Ballantyne is an employee of Prince Albert Pulp Company and the Government of Saskatchewan cannot, of course, take responsibility for statements made by an employee of PAPCO. The Government of Saskatchewan has a minority interest, 30 per cent, and we do not have the controlling interest. I certainly do not agree with Mr. Ballantyne's view that welfare and unemployment insurance is social cancer. The Government is obviously not in a position to prevent and, frankly, we wouldn't wish to because we definitely feel he has a right to express his views in public. And if Mr. Ballantyne is using Saskatchewan as an experience to arrive at his conclusion I think he is doing so most unfairly because we find that unemployed employables in the Prince Albert area totalled 149 persons.

Mr. MacDonald (Milestone): — Point of Order. What's going on if you don't mind?

Mr. Chairman: — Well, the Minister of Finance is answering a question that was given to him during Committee of Finance proceedings and asked leave to reply.

Mr. MacDonald: — Certainly he can table the question but we are not here to have a speech on a question that was asked two weeks ago, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Richards: — If I could speak to the Point of Order. I raised an oral question in the House sometime ago and at that time the Minister gave an undertaking to the House that he had not heard of the matter and that he would report back later to the House. It is my understanding that it is in that context that the Minister has asked leave to speak at this time.

Mr. Chairman: — Is the Minister of Finance finished?

Mr. Robbins: — Yes, I am. It was an oral question and I promised to answer it.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WOLF CUBS FROM DRUMHELLER

Mr. H. Owens (Elrose): — Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce to this Assembly a group of 19 Wolf Cubs, people from the second Drumheller Cub Pack from Drumheller, Alberta. They are visiting our Assembly this afternoon with their leaders, Lee Gleason, Arthur Utter and James Fleming. I happen to be a personal friend of Arthur Utter. He was an Eston boy like myself for a good number of years. He has now settled in Drumheller and I ask you to join with me in welcoming these young people from Alberta to our Legislature this afternoon. I hope they are having a pleasant visit in Saskatchewan. I understand that they are on tour.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Hon. G.R. Bowerman (Shellbrook): — Mr. Chairman, 120 students were to arrive here this day from the Marcelin, Leask and Blaine Lake area and I am not sure that they have arrived. Are any of them in the gallery? Oh, fine.

I then way to say on behalf of the Members of the Legislature how pleased we are to have the students here from that part of Saskatchewan. It's not often, I said this yesterday, but I repeat it again today, it's not often that we have the opportunity to have students from the Shellbrook constituency in the Legislature. Therefore, I certainly wish to bid you welcome and hope that your journey here has been successful although obviously for some reason or another you have left a number of students behind. But I trust that your visit here today will be a pleasant one. I trust that we will have the opportunity later this day to meet you in the rotunda and to visit a bit personally. Mr. Chairman, I want to wish them a good and happy and useful day as well as a safe journey home. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D.W. Michayluk (Redberry): — Mr. Chairman, I was elated when I saw the sign on the bulletin board that some 120 students would be visiting the Legislature this afternoon. But I am given to understand now by the Hon. Member for Shellbrook (Mr. Bowerman) that unfortunately the Marcelin students and the Blaine Lake students are not here this afternoon. I'm glad that Leask was able to get here. Leask is not in the current Redberry constituency, they will be in the new Redberry. I'm sure that among the students that are here, there are students probably who live west of Leask, which happens to be in the Redberry constituency. I want to take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to welcome them here this afternoon and also the teachers. I hope that their stay here this afternoon will be educational and informative and that they have a safe journey home.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

April 18, 1975

Mr. A. Oliver (Shaunavon): — Mr. Chairman, they always say they leave the best for the last. I should like to introduce to you and to this House a group of Grade Eight students from Admiral. They are seated in the west gallery. They are led here by their teacher, Mr. Coderre. You will see that we are in Committee of Finance where the Minister of Industry will be questioned by the Opposition. It is rather an informal setting, it is not as formal as when the Speaker is in the House and he must recognize each speaker.

However, I hope you have a very educational visit and a safe trip home.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. E.L. Tchorzewski (Humboldt): — Mr. Chairman, I want to take this opportunity to introduce to the House and extend a welcome to a group of 30 Grade Six, Seven and Eight students from Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, the school at Meadow Lake. They are accompanied here by their teachers, Mr. Teissing and I believe Mrs. Doepker and on behalf of the Members of the Legislature I extend to all of you a welcome. We hope that you will find the work that is being done here this afternoon interesting and educational and that your trip to Regina has been and will continue to be an interesting one and wish you a very safe trip home.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MOTIONS

SITTING OF THE HOUSE

Hon. R. Romanow (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, one final safety Resolution, which I hope may not be needed. I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Messer) by leave that:

On Friday, April 18, 1973, Rule 3(3) be suspended so that the sitting of the Assembly may be continued from 7:00 o'clock p.m. until 9:30 o'clock p.m.

MOTION FOR FURTHER ESTIMATES

Hon. W.A. Robbins (Minister of Finance): — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by my colleague, the Hon. Minister of Co-operatives, that His Honour's message and the further Estimates be referred to the Committee of Finance.

Motion agreed to.

SECOND AND THIRD READINGS

Mr. Robbins (Minister of Finance) moved second and third reading of Bill No. 71 — **An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal year ending respectively the Thirty-first day of March, 1975, and the Thirty-first day of March, 1976.** (Appropriation Bill)

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have a few

remarks to make with respect to the Appropriation Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — Mr. Speaker, early in the present Session our government brought down its 1975 Budget. I called it the Budget of fulfilment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — It is set against a background of three and one-half years of steadily increasing economic prosperity. It completed in the main, delivery of the election program presented by the New Democratic Party, the June 23, 1971 Election. It was the fourth successive budget which not only contained new economic and social development programs through, which provided that development while continually adding to the fiscal surpluses of this province. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but it was a budget which provided a continued reduction and realignment of taxes both of which were a major stride towards increasing tax equity.

That Budget, Mr. Speaker, was a budget of which this Government can be truly proud. Perhaps that accounts for the fact that we have heard little, if any, constructive criticism from the Members opposite concerning this particular budget. No doubt, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition is aware that they may be soon in the midst of an election campaign and it would be poor politics from their point of view to attack a budget that has gained such favorable reaction from the citizens of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — The Saskatchewan economy continued to improve its economic performance throughout 1974, recording an all time high of personal income for the people of this province.

The strength of our economy can be attributed to an expansion of almost all sectors, particularly in agriculture and primary resource industry, while inflation accompanied by high unemployment has been rampant throughout most of Canada, in Saskatchewan we have enjoyed the lowest level of unemployment in this country.

Mr. Speaker, we expect our rate of unemployment to continue to be the lowest in Canada throughout 1975.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — As I pointed out, Mr. Speaker, this Budget provided the final instalment in the total package for the New Deal for People. It would take a lot of time, Mr. Speaker, to do justice to all of the programs and tax relief provided over the past three and a half years. Let me just highlight a few of the items for 1975.

We have substantially increased the Property Improvement Grant relieving property taxation to a level equivalent to a 22 mill tax reduction. The increase in that amount of expenditure has been from \$12 million to over \$40 million.

April 18, 1975

We have cut 1975 income taxes by \$100 taking some 70,000 of our lower income taxpayers off the provincial tax rolls.

The sales tax on meals and reading materials has been eliminated.

Success Duty exemptions have been increased significantly.

To the National Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement we have added up to \$20 a month for a single person and up to \$36 for a married couple.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — Operating grants to schools are to be increased by an unprecedented \$26.2 million. I am amazed, Mr. Speaker, at the Member for Lumsden, who was on his feet a little while ago, with respect to arguments related to this Budget. One is used to the fact that Lumsden is subject to floods. That's a natural disaster. This Assembly is also familiar with the floods of nonsense which periodically pour forth from the Member for Lumsden.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — A man-made disaster! He can't have it both ways. He says the Budget is too big. When we adjust payments to municipal governments in the light of inflationary trends, he says we're not doing enough. He's likely to meet himself coming back one of these days and knock himself out.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — Operating grants to universities will rise by 25 per cent. We have provided dramatic increases in assistance to urban municipalities including the doubling of the per capita grants to \$20.

We have substantially raised the provincial subsidy to private paying residents in special care homes. The amount of expenditure in that regard now is in the range of \$8 million.

We have provided an increase in assistance to rural municipalities to enable them to meet the costs providing essential services, especially the construction of rural roads.

For the handicapped, a new transit assistance program together with social-recreational grants.

Library grants, Mr. Speaker, have been increased by 40 per cent over last year.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we don't think in terms of ourselves, alone. We have provided \$1.25 million in matching grants for international development projects.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me say that not only have the past four years provided new programs for people but

they have provided a sound economic basis for further development in the next term of this New Democratic Government.

Mr. Speaker, in accordance with rule 48(2) it gives me great pleasure to move second and third reading of the Appropriation Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. E.C. Malone (Regina Lakeview): — Mr. Speaker, I understand it is traditional at this stage of the proceedings to have a few parting shots between the Opposition and the Government Members opposite. This year I suppose it is even more important because there is an election on the horizon so I should like to make a few comments. I am afraid I'm going to find myself being repetitious and I suspect the Members opposite will be the same. Everything has been said, I think, that can be said. However, perhaps it would be in order to review some of the things that have taken place in this Legislature since it was called last December.

I think, perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the main characteristic of this Legislature has been the wish of the Government to avoid talking about their policies, the things that are happening in Saskatchewan and trying to talk about the policies of the Federal Government, things over which they have no control or over which this Legislature has no control. In particular, they keep distorting and telling complete untruths about the statements of the Prime Minister, and Mr. Lang about Crow's Nest rates, rail line retention and inland terminals. In fact, Mr. Speaker, if I wouldn't be ruled out of order and told that it would be unparliamentary, I would suggest that many of the comments of Members opposite have been utter and complete lies. I gather I can't say that, Mr. Speaker because it would be out of order, so of course I won't say it. But the reason they are doing this, Mr. Speaker, the reason they are trying to avoid the issues that are going to be talked about in the next election, the reason that they want to distort matters that are coming out of Ottawa is because they are afraid to talk about their own record. They don't want to talk about such things as the Land Bank, in fact, even the Minister of Agriculture, in his Estimates, tried to avoid the subject time and time again. We still don't have an answer from the Government as to whether the purchaser can buy the land or not if he wishes to do so because they know he can't but they still will not talk about it.

They don't want to talk about things like compulsory marketing commissions, whether it be hogs or in the future, cattle. They want the people in the country not to be concerned about these things, to forget about their record over the past four years. They don't want to talk about the oil industry and its collapse. They don't want to talk about how many companies, not large multinational corporations but small independently owned companies in this province are now out of business because of their policies. They don't want to talk about the drastic reduction in oil exploration in this province at a time when the world price for oil is a record high. They don't want to talk about these things because they know that the people have made their judgement on time and they know what that is.

April 18, 1975

They don't want to talk about the potash industry. They don't want to talk about the fact that there has been no development in this critical industry in this province since they took office because, if there had been a development in potash and if oil had been allowed to be developed in a manner that it should have been, this province would be on the threshold of the greatest economic boom in its history. But they don't want to talk about those things because to do so would be for them to admit their failures.

They don't want to talk about their policies with senior citizens. They come and they brag about \$20 a month. Well, I'm sure the senior citizens of this province are going to look at that \$20 a month and consider it a pretty insignificant piddling amount when they consider the other things that this Government has decided to spend its money on.

They don't want to talk about the Premier's record in his discussions in Ottawa. I remember, was it about a year ago, or 18 months ago, the Premier went down on this tour to Ottawa and eastern Canada and he said how he was going to be tough and how he was going to demand the world price for oil or almost the world price for oil. He was going to bring this money back to Saskatchewan that was going to be used for the benefit of this province and he didn't do that. He came back with nothing.

They don't want to talk about the last conference when the Premier went down to Ottawa with a proposal that was so cockeyed that nobody could understand it and with a proposal that obviously needed the help of the Province of Alberta if it was to be successful and he knew he wouldn't get the support of Alberta. It's very nice, it is very easy for someone from the province to go down to eastern Canada and say we're going to spend Alberta's money because obviously to do so we need the approval of the Province of Alberta and the Members opposite knew we didn't have it.

They know that they can't win on these issues, Mr. Speaker, in this election that's coming along and that's why they don't want to talk about it. So they manufacture issues. They distort, they try and get the attention of the people of Saskatchewan away from the Land Bank, away from the oil industry, away from the potash industry and they talk about the Crow's Nest rates. They misconstrue, they twist, distort the statements that have been made by Mr. Lang and no doubt, they'll misconstrue and distort the statements made today in the telegrams from Mr. Trudeau.

I think, Mr. Speaker, as I have said earlier, almost everything has been said. I don't think it will serve any purpose to continue to say these things. We have now reached the stage where everything that can be said by the Members in this House has been said and we are now going into an election. At that election the people will decide whom they are going to have run their affairs for the next four years. And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, it will not be the Members opposite. The people are going to decide on the NDP's oil policy and Land Bank policy, not the Members opposite.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that nothing will be gained by delaying this election any further. I say to the Attorney General and to his colleague who is sitting beside him, urge the Premier to call the election, not in a month, not in two

weeks, call it today. Call it today! We're ready for it. I hope you can do it and then we'll find out what's going to happen.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. R. Romanow (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, there have been many unconvincing talks, and I think the one that takes the cake is the one by the Member for Lakeview, just completed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — He didn't fool anybody, least of all himself, or any of the people on his side that they were ready for an election. The truth of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that they are scared silly of an election were it called by the Government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — They are scared silly. He criticizes the Premier for his discussions in Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite criticizes the Premier for his discussions with respect to Ottawa! Well, he can do that but I can tell the Members of the House that at the Conference any objective independent observer included that of all the premiers who showed leadership at the Conference, it was Premier Allan Blakeney.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — This is down in all the newspapers, the Ottawa Journal, the Ottawa Citizen, in Vancouver, the Vancouver Sun. The Vancouver Sun said the same thing. In fact, during the course the Vancouver Sun, one of the columnists said as they pointed over to the Liberal Opposition, boy those fellows are heading for the meat grinder when an election is called next time around.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: And I'm not sure if they'll come out pure hamburger or pure 'baloney' after the election is all finished.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Well, I think it's likely going to be a lot of 'baloney'.

Mr. Speaker, this election is really going to be an important one for the people of Saskatchewan because the issue is keeping Saskatchewan ahead. That's what this Appropriation Bill does, keeping Saskatchewan ahead.

Oh, the Members can laugh at the Budget and the Budget that is in the Appropriation Bill. The Member for Lakeview sat down and he says people are leaving the province. Where has he been when the Statistics Canada in its increase said that the population has increased by 6,000 for one year only.

How can he explain that? You know, Mr. Speaker, our economy has been at its healthiest state probably in the history of the Province of Saskatchewan. Since our tenure in office the work force of the province has been up 23,000. Since 1973, the number of jobs went up 8,000. In 1974 they went up another 8,000, a total of 16,000 new jobs. The population has gone up by 6,000 people or more. Housing shortages have come because all the people of Saskatchewan are in a healthy and economic environment and a healthy climate. There's a terrific demand for housing, there's a terrific demand for jobs and for people to fill the jobs. Where has the Member been for the last two years when he said the province is on a decline? He's been like all the Liberals. They don't understand what the politics really are and what is awaiting them come the next election in the next several days or the next several weeks.

Mr. Speaker, this Budget and his Appropriation Bill does a number of things for the people of Saskatchewan. The Star-Phoenix, and I don't use that as my bible in any way, but I think it does sum up the Budget when it says that it's a responsible Budget. It gives a \$100 tax cut across the board. Mr. Speaker, \$100 tax cut!

Now, Mr. Speaker, who would accept the promise by the Liberals opposite? Why in the world should the people of Saskatchewan believe or accept the promises of the Liberals today in light of their record from 1964 to 1971.

Mr. Speaker, our senior citizens' programs is detailed in the Appropriations, I won't talk about it at length, \$224 for the singles, \$425 for the married couples and all of the various other programs, the Drug Plan and the Denticare Plan, all of these issues are before us and have been argued out before. But, Mr. Speaker, if I was a Liberal in Saskatchewan I would also be scared facing this election coming up, not only because of the record. He says we are afraid to talk about the Land Bank. Not so, I talk about the Land Bank everywhere that I go in the country. He says I am afraid to talk about the oil and potash policy, not so. I talk about it everywhere that I go in the Province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Romanow: — I am not afraid to fight this campaign on this document, the Budget Speech and the programs in the Province of Saskatchewan alone. Not at all, but I think there are two big issues which are going to face the electorate coming up in the weeks and the months ahead. One, Mr. Speaker, is this vital aspect of transportation as it relates to rural Saskatchewan. One thing is, bluntly, who can the electors have the most confidence in to protect the people of Saskatchewan in their transportation rights? Is it going to be the Leader of the Opposition standing up to the Liberal Prime Minister Trudeau and saying to Prime Minister Trudeau that he knows what to do with the Crow's Nest rates? I imagine the Member for Morse (Mr. Wiebe) telling the Hon. Otto Lang, standing up to Otto Lang and saying, No to the Crow's Nest rates. Can I imagine any Members of the Liberal Part in Saskatchewan, which is controlled lock, stock and barrel by Otto Lang and Prime Minister Trudeau, saying . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, in one of the most unprecedented moves probably in Canadian politics, the Prime Minister of Canada injects himself directly into one of these provincial legislature deliberations by a telegram. You know what he says, he purports in that telegram a commitment to maintain the Crow's Nest rates. I want to tell the Members of this House that that telegram is far from a commitment to protect the Crow's Nest rate for the people of Saskatchewan.

The Prime Minister says in the telegram that we are going to maintain Crow's Nest rates as long as the farmers themselves want the Crow's Nest rates. The Member for Lumsden (Mr. Lane) says, "Hear, hear." Well, I want to ask the Member for Lumsden who was it that raised the Crow's Nest rates as a debating issue? Did anybody hear the farmers say that they wanted the Crow's Nest rates to go? Did you hear the Palliser Wheat Growers say they wanted the Crow's Nest rates to go? Did you hear the NFU or the Wheat Pool say they wanted the Crow's Nest rates to go? No, sir. But who you hear and who the people of Saskatchewan hear is Otto Lang, Prime Minister Trudeau and the Liberal Party opposite.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Oh, yes, they have an alternative transportation policy. Their alternative transportation policy is to put 6,000 miles of branch lines up for grabs, their alternative to transportation policy is to support the inland terminal. By the way, the inland terminal will mean closing a 45-mile radius to country elevators. That's what it will do. Everything that the Federal Government is doing is promoting the country elevators. That's how they think they are going to get the transference from rail to truck. This is the mechanics of eroding the Crow's Nest rates, this is the commitment that the Prime Minister says. The Prime Minister says so long as the farmers want the Crow's Nest rates. What is he going to do, have a Crow's Nest rate vote like he did on the rapeseed? Is that the choice he is going to give them? Is that how he is going to determine how long the farmers want the Crow's Nest rates? I want to tell, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province and of the West that when the Prime Minister says that he is here to protect the Crow's Nest rates, he is here to protect the Crow's Nest rates as much as the Liberals protected the Canadian Wheat Board when they took the feed grains off the system.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Some national policy, Mr. Speaker, that's a Hobson's choice or a Trudeau's or a Lang's choice. On the one hand the inland terminal operation and the disbandment of all the rail lines and the closure of the country elevators. I want to tell the Member for Whitmore Park that the issue is going to be, who can the people of Saskatchewan trust to defend the Crow's Nest rates and our transportation policies?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Now, Mr. Speaker, before I close I just want to say, the major issue — the Member for Lakeview (Mr. Malone) says that

April 18, 1975

we don't want to talk about our resource policy. I want to talk about it again, now in the one minute remaining to me. I want to tell the Member for Lakeview that Bill 42 is going to be, next to transportation, or the same as transportation, the major issue of this election campaign.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I am glad to see that, because the Liberals say that they are going to do away with Bill 42.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — When they do away with Bill 42 they are going to put \$200 million in the hands of the oil companies and away from the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — That's what they are going to do, they are going to put \$200 million out of our pockets and into the pockets of their friends, the oil companies, and at the same time increase old age pensions. They are going to transfer \$200 million and at the same time they are going to give more assistance to the urban and local governments. Mr. Speaker, who in the world do the Liberals think they are fooling, not the people of Saskatchewan and certainly not the people in this House.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: They say they are going to do away with Bill 42. And when they do away with Bill 42 they are going to give away Saskatchewan's bargaining right with central Canada. They don't understand what Bill 42 does. If we give up \$400 million a year of our Saskatchewan oil to central Canada to keep the oil prices down, as we are doing, what lever are we going to have to negotiate something back for the West and for Saskatchewan? Bill 42 has given us that lever! I want to maintain that we have been negotiating but the Liberals provincially and federally have been putting roadblocks every step of the way.

If we are going to have a policy to try to do something for the West, if we are going to do away with freight rate inequities, how are we going to do it? If I, as a Saskatchewan person, am asked to contribute to my fellow Canadians \$400 million is my price for Confederation which I am prepared to do, is it unfair for me to ask for the rest of Canada to do something back in exchange for me? Am I wrong in saying that I want a Stabilization Bill or a Transportation Bill or an Industrialization Bill. I say that we are not. Members opposite say Bill 42 is going to go. If Bill 42 goes, what will go, Mr. Speaker, is that bargaining lever that we have got right now for those rates for western Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: The Member for Whitmore Park can make all the derogatory signs that he wants towards me or at anybody else in this House,

but that isn't going to change one fact about the issue or one fact that there isn't going to be one Member opposite who is going to return after the next election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — They say whether that is an issue, it is going to be an issue, because the issue is keeping Saskatchewan ahead, not in shallow clichés like Liberals do about freedom and the like. Not by irresponsible opposition like the Liberals have done, not by irresponsible opposition, not by a lack of alternative programs which the Liberals have exhibited, not by that, Mr. Speaker, but by leadership, a philosophy, a program, like the New Deal 1975 and a leader like Premier Allan Blakeney and that's what this Bill does.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. J.G. Richards (Saskatoon University): — Mr. Speaker, as the independent Member of this House I sometimes feel that I am caught between two large stones which are trying to grind me down and out of this battle.

I can't point to my battalions behind me, as can the Members on that side, I can't even point to the people beside me, as can the Members on this side. But I enter this debate with a small and humble plea that the people of Saskatchewan when they do go to the polls when this next election does come up, that the people of Saskatchewan will remember the traditions of the politics of protest of this province and I have tried to live by those traditions in the last four years. Maybe I can't match the levels of rhetoric of the Hon. Attorney General, maybe just perhaps we do need one Member to sit in the Opposition in this Legislature. The Attorney General sweeps his hand that he is going to have the entire 61 Members behind him next time. Maybe just perhaps if I can take a leaf out of the NDP Leader in Alberta, I could serve as the only real Opposition. Maybe just perhaps the people of Saskatchewan understand and appreciate the traditions of real left protest in this province. Even in the year 1975, even with the collapse of the Federal NDP as a credible left force, even with the Provincial NDP straddling the middle of the political spectrum like a wet dishrag, even with all of that, Mr. Speaker, I think that the people of Saskatchewan do understand and appreciate the need for the politics of protest.

As I am going to Cumberland this weekend and to La Ronge and I have been invited to Kamsack, that there are people around this province . . .

Mr. Messer: — Is this your platform?

Mr. Richards: — . . . and that platform, Mr. Minister of Agriculture, smacks just a little too much of the program in 1964 of more and better expansion. Mr. Minister of Agriculture be careful. When it comes to expressing a conservative position, when it comes to expressing a position of consensus, which this essentially is, unfortunately these Charlies can do it as well if not better than you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Richards: — The Attorney General stated that this was an important election in 1975. I wish it were. But it isn't as important in the minds of the people of Saskatchewan as it was in 1971, when we combined forces to get rid of the Thatcher regime. Unfortunately in 1975, many of the people don't care which one of you forms the Government, unfortunately the Attorney General is wrong when he says that the people consider this election to be important in the same sense as the 1971 election was. Agreed, I would rather be sitting here facing you as facing Davy Steuart as Premier.

I certainly trust that when I am returned to this Legislature as the only real Opposition, to borrow Grant Notley's expression again, I trust that I will be facing an NDP Government and not a Liberal Government. That much I will agree with. But, Mr. Minister of Agriculture, I wouldn't go to bed content, I wouldn't be content that your New Deal 1975 does propose a challenge to the people of Saskatchewan that is in the tradition of the politics of protest of this province. If we go back to the 1920s, if we go back to the medicare fights, if we go back to the fights involved in 1971, the CCF and the NDP was important every time that it seriously challenged and proposed change that led. This time, Mr. Speaker, as in 1964, this is not a program that comes forward with a major challenge to the people of Saskatchewan for a new change. Sure there are lots of good particular programs, sure you can interpret them as does the Minister of Health (Mr. Smishek) to imply that there is going to be that dramatic challenge. But that depends on the wording, it depends on the interpretation, and there is nobody more skilful than a politician in interpreting and re-interpreting and re-interpreting. I believe that the people of Saskatchewan feel about this election not the same way that they felt about the election in 1971, and that's dangerous.

The job of the New Democratic Party, if it is to remain the credible force in the Canadian left, is to be prepared to challenge and state the principles on the left. I don't enjoy having to sit here through the Estimates of the Department of Mineral Resources discussing the fine points of taxation policy and the implications of the energy fund. I should like to be able to be on that side of the House supporting the Minister of Mineral Resources nationalizing the provincial oil and gas industry. I don't see that kind of clear commitment here, analogous to the commitment to introduce medicare in 1962 and analogous to the commitments in 1944.

Accordingly, in conclusion, through this House I make an appeal to the people of Saskatchewan openly and clearly. I hope the people of Saskatoon Centre do see fit to return me to this Legislature, I hope the people of Saskatchewan do see fit to elect independent native candidates in the northern ridings of Saskatchewan because this House, this Legislature needs the politics of protest, we need a real opposition.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. J.G. Lane (Lumsden): — Mr. Speaker, at the outset, we had one of the most hysterical defences by the Attorney General of the sad and sorry record of the Government opposite in the last four years. It is interesting to note that the same man who, as I say, made the hysterical cry as he tried to rally his troops as they sat there

sad and woebegone at the back knowing that many of them have sat in this House for the last time and will be voted out by the will of the electorate in addition to those taking their voluntary retirement on that side of the House, the same man who predicted the massive NDP sweep of the Morse constituency in the by-election after 1971. He was proven wrong then, he'll be proven wrong in his predictions of 61 NDP in 1975. The same man predicted a massive NDP victory in the Lakeview by-election, again proven wrong, a failure by the NDP opposite. Obviously the same man who predicted an NDP victory in Athabasca, obviously his political prognosticating is a record of failure, a sad record and certainly one that does not bring heart to the Members opposite. The major Members opposite will remember when they took the phoney issue of the Minister of Agriculture on the freedom of choice given by the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board, Mr. Lang, the phoney vote on the Grain Marketing Board to the people of Saskatchewan back in 1974. They took the worst defeat that the NDP have had in the history of this province. The people of this province proved in 1974, they don't believe you, they don't believe in your agricultural policies, they don't believe you when you say you're not trying to buy up the farm land of Saskatchewan and they are going to prove in 1975 once and for all that they don't believe you when you say that you are really trying to help the farmers when in fact you are trying to take total control of the rural way of life in the Province of Saskatchewan.

We've had some interesting happenings in the last two days of this House. Mr. Speaker, it's been building up, Ottawa has been pulling issue after issue out from under the rug, pulling planks away from the platform of the NDP. Ottawa came down on the side of the Province of Saskatchewan at the Energy Conference when the Prime Minister of Canada argued for a raise in the price of oil, a raise that the Premier of Saskatchewan didn't even have the political fortitude or I say the tenacity to ask for, when he went with a stupid, irrelevant and irrational platform down to that particular conference and failed to represent the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the matter of Crow's Nest rates was pulled out by the Prime Minister of Canada when he said he guaranteed the Crow's Nest rates for the farmers, the people of Saskatchewan, and guaranteed something that the Members opposite cannot guarantee and that is an equality in Confederation and a fair deal in Confederation. This is something that you have tried to sabotage since you got elected in June, 1971, a proposal and a program and an approach that you've taken that is going to defeat you in 1975, your anti-confederation approach and your approach to put the interests of Saskatchewan secondary to the political wellbeing of Members opposite and that is an issue in the coming election, because the people of Saskatchewan know that you have failed. You ran in 1971, saying that you could deal with Ottawa, you failed, you've confronted and done nothing but confront Ottawa since the day you were elected. You have never dealt reasonably, you were blind, you have cheated, you have broken agreements, agreement after agreement and done everything to prejudice Saskatchewan's interests in Confederation, notwithstanding the efforts of a government truly concerned about Confederation. You are a failure in Confederation, you are a failure as a government to try and represent the people of this province.

It's interesting as issue after issue has been brought

forward. The Government for some reason has tried to fight this on federal issues but the planks are being removed. And it's interesting we had a great deal of foresight shown in the Leader-Post of yesterday or today when it says in the editorial headline, "NDP Government Displays an Amazing Nervousness." Not amazing to the people of Saskatchewan. They've made up their minds. They know you are just trying to control rural Saskatchewan, and you don't care about coming up with reasonable policies in Confederation. No nervousness that should be amazing, certainly a nervousness that's there, certainly a nervousness that became evident today, when the Government in their panic approach tried to do something good for the municipal governments of Saskatchewan. Obviously something that fell far short of the mark and fell far short of the necessity.

The Attorney General said we will repeal Bill 42 and we will repeal Bill 42 and we will replace it with \$400 million in potash expansion, that you have destroyed and that you have kicked out by Bill 42. We'll repeal Bill 42 and we'll replace it with 500 jobs in Estevan that you have kicked out and destroyed by the implementation of Bill 42. We'll repeal Bill 42 and we will put new jobs in and restore industry to Kindersley and we'll do it proudly and the people of Saskatchewan will take our position on Bill 42, because yours has failed, you know it's dragging down Cabinet Minister after Cabinet Minister after Cabinet Minister who won't be back in this House. That's what Bill 42 has done. You want to fight on it, we want to fight on it and our issue has already been made clear in some of the seats and I refer to Weyburn and Estevan and Swift Current and Kindersley, what the people of Saskatchewan really feel about Bill 42.

Mr. Speaker, the control of agriculture, of course, for the first time we've got vertical integration through Government control of agriculture in Saskatchewan. Total controls for the Natural Products Marketing Act which will be an issue in this campaign. We in the Liberal Party will return the control of agriculture back to the farmers of Saskatchewan and away from the Government, such government as given by the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, the issues are clear, the issues are very clear. We've had four years of policy failures by the Government opposite. Nothing to do with establishing a firm economic base for our farm community and a firm income base, you destroyed the only effort made, that's something that's going to be an issue. Farm machinery equipment costs, nothing done; high cost of food, nothing done; time after time this Government has stood up and tried to bury issues and color up issues and yet the real gut issues for the people of this province have not been effectively touched and not dealt with by the Government opposite.

Sixty-six cents a day is an insult to the senior citizens. That's what you promised. The real issues have not been dealt with, have not been touched. The people are falling farther and farther behind the inflationary spiral. They can't match the cost of inflation. You've made no effort, no real gut effort to try and solve that problem.

You've taken control of agriculture to the detriment of the farmer and they are going to vote on that and you have destroyed any growth potential we had in our natural resource industry and natural resource base and those are going to be the issues. I would urge the Members opposite not to get too

caught up in the prognostications of the Attorney General because he's been wrong in Morse and Athabasca; he was wrong in Lakeview and he was wrong in the federal election in 1974 and he'll be totally wrong in 1975.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — I'll be brief, Mr. Speaker, in concluding the debate. The remarks of the Member who has just taken his seat are not worthy of comment with respect to reply and I'd like to deal, therefore, briefly if I may, with the remarks of the Member for Lakeview (Mr. Malone).

He raised the question of the Government on this side taking off on Otto Lang, etc. It was Otto Lang who raised the Crow's Nest rates initially and he's familiar with that fact. It was Otto Lang who initiated the LIFT program in Saskatchewan, a program which when speaking to a person in Ottawa — and I'm willing to give the name if that's necessary — he made the comment, and this was a person on the Government side, that that was an economic and social disaster and it was. It cost this province \$376 million in terms of lost grain production and it cost us some 225 million bushels of grain.

The Member for Lakeview says that we're not willing to talk about the Land Bank. I will go into any rural constituency in this province and talk about the Land Bank. No one has to sell to the Land Bank. The individual who wishes to sell to the Land Bank makes that choice himself. The Land Bank has put 1,066 young farmers on the land, their average age is 28, in the last two years. The Liberals say they will use a loan program, they said the same thing in 1964. They did not loan a single dollar to a young farmer to get on the land in that period.

The Member for Lakeview says we're not willing to talk about the Hog Commission. We are. The Hog Commission brought reasonable stability and order into the hog industry.

He says we're not willing to talk about the oil industry. We are. We're willing to talk about Bill 42 at any time, in the oil constituencies. I am willing to debate with Members opposite if they wish with respect to the oil revenues. We had \$27 million in oil revenues in 1971 when the previous administration was in charge of the Treasury Benches. We estimate \$74,708,000 in regular royalties in the current year.

They say that the potash industry has been put in a bind. When they were in power potash production was at 50 per cent of its capability. The potash industry in gross returns brought in \$70 million and they got \$2 million in royalties and that left \$68 million. Currently they are at full production, approaching 7 million tons, with a return this year in the range of some \$400 million and despite the fact we will take some \$118 million in terms of taxes, that still leaves them with \$282 million.

They say we haven't done enough for senior citizens. We are paying out \$8 million in subsidies to nursing homes, they paid \$56,000. We are paying some \$7 million in supplemental payments to senior citizens. They paid nothing. We are paying some \$6 million to senior citizens in home repair programs and grants. They didn't have such a program.

April 18, 1975

The Member for Lakeview says that the Premier came back from Ottawa with nothing. We have \$172 million in an energy fund outside of the consolidated revenue fund. Strange, if you term that nothing. The fact of the matter is that the Premier of this province is the outstanding Premier in Canada today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: And that is not my remarks, that is the remark of the Minister of Finance for the Government of Canada, the Hon. John Turner.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Robbins: — I notice the independent Member for Saskatoon University (Mr. Richards) said that he would rather face a Blakeney Government and not one headed by Mr. Dave Steuart. I'm sure he'll have his wish if he's fortunate enough to be back in this House after the next election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

ROYAL ASSENT AND PROROGATION

At 5:53 o'clock p.m. His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor having entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the Throne and gave Royal Assent to the Bills presented to him.

His Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor was pleased to deliver the following speech:

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly:

It is my duty to relieve you of further attendance at the Legislative Assembly. In doing so, I wish to thank you and congratulate you on the work you have done.

You have taken important steps to soften the impact of inflation on Saskatchewan people through a guaranteed income supplement for senior citizens — through a general income tax reduction — through increasing Property Improvement Grants — through authorizing rebates to farmers on farm fuels and through other measures.

You have removed Education and Health tax from all meals and reading material.

In the fact of rapidly rising local government costs, you have doubled unconditional operating grants to cities, towns and villages and increased grants to rural municipalities.

You have increased exemptions under The Succession Duties Act.

You have enacted legislation to establish Saskatchewan's first Science Council.

In education, you have provided funds to extend the Community College system to all parts of the province.

You have taken steps to preserve for the future the record of Saskatchewan's past through a Heritage Act.

You have provided funds to launch a designated system of oiled surface grid roads throughout the province.

As an interim measure to protect the interests of women, you have enabled the courts to determine a fair division of property between husband and wife.

To provide a more sensitive judicial framework to deal with all family matters you have established a system of Family Courts.

You have amended The Election Act to enable handicapped persons and others confined to their homes to vote in provincial elections by mail.

You have passed legislation which will enable the province to work with the Federal Government to stabilize returns to farmers.

I thank you for the provision you have made to meet the further requirements of the Public Service, and I assure you that this sum of money will be used economically, prudently and in the public interest.

In taking leave of you, I thank you for the manner in which you have devoted your energies to the activities of the Session and wish you the full blessing of Providence.

The Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski, Provincial Secretary, then said:

Mr. Speaker, and Members of the Legislative Assembly:

It is the will and pleasure of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor that this Legislative Assembly be prorogued until it pleases His Honour to summon the same for the dispatch of business and the Legislative Assembly is accordingly prorogued.