

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**First Session — Eighteenth Legislature**  
**43rd Day**

**Friday, January 23, 1976.**

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

**STATEMENT**

**RESOLUTION OUT OF ORDER**

**Mr. Speaker:** — Before the Orders of the Day I have a statement I should like to make.

I wish to draw your attention to Resolution No. 46 standing on the Order Paper under the name of the Hon. Member for Regina Wascana (Mr. Merchant). This resolution proposes a discussion on the policies of the Department of Mineral Resources with special regard to confidence of the oil and gas industry.

I refer all Hon. Members to Resolution No. 22, and the proposed amendment thereto. Resolution No. 22 deals with incentive in the oil industry. The proposed amendment of Resolution No. 22 broadens the scope of the debate to cover government policy on incentives in the oil industry. Since the debate on Resolution No. 22 and the proposed amendment is concurrent, the Assembly has had and still can have full debate of the Government policies in relationship to the oil industry.

I refer all Hon. Members to Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, Fourth Edition, Cit. 131, p. 116.

The anticipation rule, which forbids discussion of a matter standing on the Paper being forestalled, is dependent on the same principle as that which forbids the same question being twice raised in the same session.

I find that Resolution No. 46 deals with the same topic as is covered by Resolution No. 22 and the proposed amendment. I therefore rule Resolution No. 46 out of order on the Anticipation rule.

**QUESTIONS**

**DNS LOANS IN ARREARS**

**Mr. R.L. Collver** (Leader of the Progressive Conservatives): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I would direct a question to the Minister responsible for the Department of Northern Saskatchewan (Mr. Bowerman). Is the Minister aware that of approximately \$3.5 million of loans put out by DNS Economic Development Branch that the vast majority of these loans are in arrears. For example in Area No. 1 being Uranium City, Wollaston, Camsel, totalling \$571,000 approximately 65 per cent are in arrears. Area No. 2, LaLoche, Turner Lake, Buffalo Narrows, Patuanak, Shell Village and so on, of \$725,000 worth of loans, 88 per cent are in arrears. Area No. 3, Beauval etc., of \$849,000 worth of loans, 76 per cent are in arrears. Area No. 4, LaRonge, Stanley Mission and so on,

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about 69 per cent are in arrears, of approximately \$772,000 worth of loans?

**Hon. T. Bowerman** (Minister of Northern Saskatchewan): — Mr. Speaker, yes, the Department is aware that there are rather substantial arrears in the Economic Development Loans program, that was really not foreseen. The Member for Nipawin may know that the normal repayment procedures which we are accustomed to because of our particular means of repayment in the South is not available to the people of the North. Those who have applied for loans in the area of fishing and trapping industries have incomes from those resources of about on an average of \$600 to \$1,000 a year. That prevents payment on schedule as we might desire. But there is no question that the Department is not only concerned about the repayment but will be working with the people who have obtained loans in order that repayment may be brought more in line with what we consider to be acceptable and that will not be, I might advise the House, Mr. Speaker, anywhere in relationship to how loans or the percentage of loans that will be repaid in southern terms.

**Mr. Collver:** — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is the Minister aware then of a memorandum sent out by two Members of the Advisory and Evaluation Team, Economic Development Branch, which memorandum concludes:

The type of loans and payment arrangements the Branch offers makes it difficult to obtain an accurate analysis of the payment history. Nevertheless the work presented in this paper is useful as an indication and warning that “all is not well.”

**Mr. Bowerman:** — I am not aware of that particular memo, Mr. Speaker. But let me suggest one of the kinds of complications that we have. The Member for Nipawin named a number of communities, one of which was Patuanak, another one LaLoche, Camsel Portage and so on. There is absolutely no way in those communities that when a fisherman receives a cheque or when a social aid recipient receives a cheque, he has the traditional banking systems to transfer that cheque, that piece of paper into money. Nor is there any collection agency like there is in the city of Regina, you can walk down the street and almost at every corner you can plus in a repayment program or whatever. There are a number of complications which I am sure all Members of this House, if they don't appreciate, should come to appreciate, that the facilities are not there to receive the repayments in an orderly fashion as we have come to understand and know it here.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order! I think the original question was not sufficiently to the point, but I think the Minister is taking too long with the answer. The supplementary was, was the Minister aware of this? I think the Minister is in fact getting into a debate on it. The Minister is obviously aware of it.

**Mr. Collver:** — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question then. From what the Minister has said to us this morning, is the Department of Northern Saskatchewan using the loans to residents in northern

Saskatchewan as an extension of the social aid program thereby indicating on the Government of Saskatchewan's books that it has assets in other words, the possibility of receiving loans from these people when in fact these loans are not collectible and are showing on the Government of Saskatchewan's books as assets when in fact the Government of Saskatchewan knows full well that it is not going to be able to collect these loans and should have been added to the social assistance rolls of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Bowerman:** — Mr. Speaker, we believe the loans are collectible. We believe that with some effort on the department's part that these loans will be repaid in large measure according to the way the loans were grants and on the repayment basis although somewhat extended from the repayment basis as prescribed on the loan when it was made. But we believe the loans in majority are collectible.

### **PRESIDENT OF CANASPHERE INDUSTRIES ARRESTED FOR ESPIONAGE**

**Mr. S. Cameron** (Regina South): — Mr. Speaker, if I might direct a question to the Premier. I was going to direct the question to the Minister of Industry or else the Attorney General or both. I appreciate that I may have the Premier at a bit of a disadvantage because the two Ministers are not present. Maybe what I can do is to outline to you the area in respect of which I was going to ask questions. You may have to take notice although you may be aware of the matter as it stands.

On September 3, 1973, SEDCO, you may remember, loaned to Canasphere Industries in Moose Jaw a substantial amount of money to establish a plant. The Government became a 35 per cent owner of that business, and indeed, David Dombowsky is on the Board of Directors. The president and principal shareholder of Canasphere Industries is a name named Manfred Swarovski who is an Austrian businessman. It is my understanding that on April 3, 1975 this man was arrested at Kennedy International Airport and was charged with what has been referred to as espionage in respect apparently of an effort by him to secrete out of the United States a sophisticated gun camera system used in American fighter planes. I wonder if the Government is aware of that and if so, what action is being taken?

**Hon. A.E. Blakeney** (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, the Government is not aware of it and we are not able to answer the Hon. Member's question.

**Mr. Cameron:** — I wonder if I could ask the Premier to check with the Minister in charge of SEDCO to determine whether or not the matter was reported to SEDCO? The person in question has been indicted in respect of that matter. May I ask you to go to the Minister in charge of SEDCO for a response.

**Mr. Blakeney:** — I would ask the Hon. Member to forward to me or to the Minister in charge of SEDCO any information which he might have that might be helpful in pursuing the matter raised by the Member for Regina South.

## SOURCE OF MONEY TO FUND SASKOIL

**Mr. E.F.A. Merchant** (Regina Wascana): — In light of the rather surprising comments by the Attorney general that not only is the Energy Fund legally available for general revenue but he is not sure if it was used to fund Saskoil, could the Minister of Finance indicate where the money to fund Saskoil has come from? Has it in fact come from general revenue, from the money of taxpayers and not from the Energy Fund and secondly, how much money thus far has been advanced from general revenue if that is where it has come from to Saskoil for this gamble of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money and approximately how much?

**Hon. W.E. Smishek** (Minister of Finance): — Mr. Speaker, I think that is a question that could be appropriately asked in the Crown Corporations Committee.

**Mr. Merchant:** — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Hon. Member is referring the question to Crown Corporations because if he is doing that, as Mr. Speaker knows, it is then only possible to get that answer in March or April when Crown Corporations meet. If you are just making a comment on it then we wouldn't be able to get the information until March 1977 because of the current year rule. Are you referring it to Crown Corporations?

**Mr. Smishek:** — No, I am not referring it to Crown Corporations. I am saying that it could be appropriately asked in the Crown Corporations Committee.

**Mr. Merchant:** — Mr. Speaker, the Minister has given me some advice on where these questions should be asked. I wonder however if the Minister is prepared to answer the question today, where is the funding for Saskoil, if it is not from the Energy Fund where is the funding from? Are you refusing to answer that question?

## POINT OF ORDER

### PROPER PROCEDURE FOR ASKING QUESTIONS

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

I think all of us know that in this House there is a procedure for asking question: it is to put written questions on the Order Paper. There is a further procedure which provides that if a question is urgent it may be asked orally. The short Point of Order is whether or not it is urgent that people know where the money for financing Saskoil comes from, i.e., is this a matter that cannot wait 48 hours? That is the turnaround time for a written question. I rise on a Point of Order because I have seen a tendency for people to ask a whole series of questions that have no urgency whatever. They are simple questions that could wait 24 hours, 48 hours or 36 hours. I think that these questions are, with all due respect, out of order.

**Mr. Speaker:** — I don't believe I need further guidance on the Point of Order. I think Members, being totally fair, would agree with me that a good number of the questions that have been put forward are not of urgent public concern and have to be answered at this time. They could in fact be put on the Order Paper. A number of the oral questions that have come forward, if the Speaker was to be firmer, would be ruled out of order. I am moving to that position slowly, and giving the Members time to mature with me with regard to the technique of asking proper oral questions. I would agree that that question is one that could be put on the Order Paper, it would appear that it requires some investigation.

**Mr. E.C. Malone** (Regina Lakeview): — Mr. Speaker, may I speak to your ruling. I agree certainly with some of your comments about some of the questions that have been asked in recent days. And perhaps I agree with the Premier to a certain extent.

But on this particular question, Mr. Speaker, I point out to you that it was only last night, and of course you were not in the House while we were in Committee, it was only last night that we discovered that the Energy Fund was being used for purposes other than energy. We were under the impression that the Energy Fund would be used for such things as Saskoil and energy related matters. It was last night only that we found out this was not the case. In view of that we feel it is of public urgency to determine where that money is going and also how Saskoil is indeed being funded. We were certainly left with the impression for the last number of months that Saskoil is being funded through the Energy Fund, now we find out that is not the case. So I suggest to you that the question is of important public matter and that the Member is well within his rights to ask it on the daily question period before the Orders of the Day.

**Mr. Speaker:** — The Minister is within his rights to refer the question somewhere else or not to answer the question. I dealt with that matter before and in fact made a ruling on it. The Member was debating the issue with me, in fact, asking me to make a judgment whether it was in fact of urgent public concern. I don't believe it is and I think the intent of the question period is wasted if it deals with Points of Order rather than short, sharp questions and short, sharp answers. I would — since I have to make a decision on this — say that I don't believe it is a matter of urgent public concern. It is not something of urgency that must be answered in 48 hours.

**Mr. Merchant:** — Mr. Speaker, might I have a couple of seconds to say in speaking to the Point of Order, will the Premier guarantee that he will give us the answer in 48 hours.

**Mr. Blakeney:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to the Point of Order, if I may.

The Member for Lakeview says that he only became aware of this. We can't be responsible for what he is aware of. The facts are that in the last Estimates passed in this House last year there was a provision for the transfer of money from the Energy and Resources Fund to the general revenue. If he wasn't

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aware of that it's not our fault. It has been public property now for about 11 months. Perhaps he just got a grasp of it last night. But that I think is not our fault. It may be an emergency for him.

I want to answer the question from the Member for Wascana.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order! I think the Member has proved that he is debating the point. The Member for Lakeview was also debating the point and the Member for Wascana. I think it is a draw right now.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## QUESTIONS

### MONEY FOR HANDICAPPED PEOPLE IN SASKATCHEWAN

**Mr. R.E. Nelson** (Assiniboia-Gravelbourg): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of the Government. The Department of Industry and Commerce turned down an industry in Limerick that was to be run by handicapped people. In Regina last night on television we saw where 127 handicapped people needed housing in Regina. I was wondering if the Government would tell this Assembly and in both cases when we were told yesterday by the Attorney General, there were hundreds of millions of dollars available in the Energy Fund to buy potash mines and the Government believed this fund could be used for other than energy, why is it that there is not money available to help these handicapped people in our province?

**Mr. Blakeney:** — Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is asking about a particular industry. The Minister in charge is not here. He is out of the province on government business. I would ask the Hon. Member to put the question on the Order Paper with respect to the reasons why the loan or grant was not provided for the industry to which he referred.

**Mr. Nelson:** — That is one of the instances. What about the housing one, Mr. Speaker, that wasn't answered?

**Mr. Blakeney:** — I'll be happy to answer the question on housing and why we believe the Energy Fund should be used for capital purposes. But any answer I would give will be a debating answer. I have said on many occasions that in my judgment the Energy and Resources Fund should be used for capital purposes, for projects which are likely to continue to provide revenue for this province for decades to come and are likely, over a period of years, to carry themselves. I have said that, therefore the fund ought not to be used for hospitals and the like.

I don't want to venture into this because the explanation would be long and it might be thought to be controversial. But at the appropriate occasion I would be very happy to contest with Hon. Members the proposition that we ought to use the money from this diminishing and depleting resource for our day to day expenses.

**Mr. Nelson:** — A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the real reason you are not using the Energy Fund to assist the handicapped and the other necessary services in the province because if the money was put into the general revenue fund that we would become a 'have' province and you wouldn't be able to draw on the federal equalization grants?

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order! I think the Member is making a debate speech. He is quite within his rights to make a question but he is making it into a statement and I can't permit that.

**Mr. Blakeney:** — Let me make one answer. Whether or not the money is moved into or out of the Energy Fund for any purpose does not affect our equalization payments in any way.

## **MOTIONS FOR RETURN**

### **RETURN NO. 68**

**Mr. G.J. Lane** (Qu'Appelle) moved that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 68 showing:

(a) The number of buildings in Regina in which the Government of Saskatchewan or any of its Departments, Boards, Agencies and Commissions lease space; (b) the total number of square feet leased; (c) the highest rental cost and location of space leased; (f) the lowest rental cost and location of space leased.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in the closing of my remarks I will move a motion of the Assembly for Return No. 68 showing.

It is a very simply question that we are asking the Government first of all to give us the number of buildings in which the Government has office space in the city of Regina. Secondly, the total of square feet leased. We want the estimate of range of cost of leasing this property. So we have asked the sub-questions, the highest rental cost paid, the particular building where that high rental cost is paid and, secondly, we asked for the lowest rental cost in the particular building in which that is paid. I am assuming that it was made debatable to give the Government some time because the information, I am assuming, is readily available. I so move, seconded by Mrs. E.G. Edwards.

**Mr. Blakeney:** — Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is correct in saying that it was made debatable in order to permit us to check out and I think the information is appropriate and I will support the motion.

Motion agreed to.

### **RETURN NO. 69**

**Mr. Lane** (Qu'Appelle) moved that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 69 showing:

(1) Whether the Government of Saskatchewan or any Crown

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corporation purchased lands from the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation in 1975. (2) If so (a) the total acreage purchased; (b) the legal description of the lands purchased; (c) the cost per acre of the above purchases; (d) copies of any agreements evidencing such purchases.

He said: Mr. Speaker, before I move the motion, I am informed in particular the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation has purchased lands from the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the so-called Land Banking policy and they will run into a series of questions. I haven't restricted this particular motion to the city of Regina. I must plead ignorance on any other purchases from CMHC. Seemingly what has happened, and I am certainly not being argumentative, is that the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation has purchased the urban Land Banking lands from Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the question originally asked was, basically what lands had been purchased in the year 1975. I therefore move, seconded by Mrs. Edwards, for Return No. 69.

**Hon. G. MacMurchy** (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, I don't have the information with respect to whether the Government of Saskatchewan or any Crown corporation has purchased land from Central Mortgage and Housing. I want to see if there is any kind of purchase and I would want to look at whether it would be possible, under the terms of the purchase, to in fact provide copies of the agreement. If there isn't any kind of problem certainly on our part we are willing to answer the question.

I therefore beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### **RETURN NO. 70**

**Mr. Lane** (Qu'Appelle) moved that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 70 showing:

(1) Whether the Government entered into any agreement with Cairns Homes Ltd. to maintain a certain level of housing or lot cost in the City of Regina. (2) If so, (a) the date of the said agreement; (b) copies of the said agreement.

He said: Last summer, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation entered into an agreement for the development of lands in the city of Regina. The agreement was entered into with Cairns Homes Limited and I would hope that the Minister, if there is a technical question, whether it is Cairns Homes (1972) Limited or whatever, would not take that as being a substantive criticism of the question.

It could possibly be, and it was indicated at that time that that was a very unique agreement between a government agency and a private developer or development of urban property, which said development would maintain a certain level of housing costs and lot costs. And the original question was simply for the date of the agreement and copies of the said agreement. With those few words, I so move, seconded by Mrs. Edwards.



**Mr. MacMurchy:** — Mr. Speaker, as with question 3, there is an agreement with Cairns Homes. Certainly we can provide the date of the agreement. I think I would want the housing corporation to contact the Cairns people with respect to the tabling of the document and tabling of the agreement and in light of this I would beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

### **RETURN NO. 71**

**Mr. Lane** (Qu' Appelle) moved that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 71 showing:

(1) Whether the Government of Saskatchewan or any of its Departments, Agencies, Boards, Commissions or Crown Corporations leased premises from Parkview Properties Ltd. or property described as Parkview Place. (2) If so, (a), the date of such lease (b) copies of the said lease.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I believe, prefacing my motion that some government agencies have leased property from the Parkview Place or Parkview Properties Ltd. This particular building will probably be very unique in Regina in that it will be probably one of the prestige office building by reason of its location on College Avenue and my original question was simply to get the information on that particular lease if the Government has rented space in that particular building or have entered into a lease agreement with the building that is not yet completed. I so move, seconded by Mrs. Edwards.

**Hon. A.E. Blakeney** (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether space has been leased but it either has or there is some intention to lease it. I don't know whether a lease has been entered into, but it is difficult to think of the terms of a lease, where the landlord could take any reasonable objection to our filing the copy of the lease. It is not the same as some of the other agreements which may have other things in them.

So while we don't have the full information, we think the information ought to be provided and I will be voting for the motion.

Motion agreed to.

### **ADJOURNED DEBATES**

#### **RESOLUTIONS**

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 33 – COMMISSION TO STUDY THE FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH A VIEW TO CHANGING TRADITIONAL TAXING PATTERNS**

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed resolution by Mrs. E.G. Edwards (Saskatoon-Sutherland):

That this Assembly urges the Government of Saskatchewan to appoint a Commission to study the financial relationship between the Provincial Government and municipalities in this Province with the view to changing

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traditional taxing patterns and allowing municipalities to enter into definite tax sharing agreements with the Provincial Government.

**Mr. MacMurchy:** — Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to enter the debate on the resolution of the Hon. Member for Saskatoon-Sutherland (Mrs. Edwards).

As I indicated when I spoke on the resolution some time ago I do so with a great deal of pride because I want to put before the Assembly the record of our NDP Government with respect to municipal financing.

The major expansion of the conditional grant programs, the introduction of new grants where necessary, the introduction of the unconditional grant programs of the last four years has given local government in Saskatchewan more money to work with than at any time in their history. I am sure that the Member for Saskatoon-Sutherland realizes that because she is familiar with municipal work.

Let me just begin with the conditional grants. These programs, as you know, are designed to assist communities in specific areas of their development. In some cases such programs are in response to specific requests that we receive from the urban municipalities, in some cases these programs are to assist municipalities to make improvements well beyond their normal tax level would allow, but they are improvements that are necessary in each community.

Let me give a couple of instances. For instance, every community wants and needs an adequate sanitary water system. They appreciate money being set aside of the Government to assist specifically with that kind of work when that community is ready to undertake it. Every community needs and wants adequate police protection. They appreciate the senior government assisting particularly with those kinds of costs. The increase in assistance to municipalities in such conditional grants in the last four years has been dramatic.

Mr. Speaker, in the last year of the Liberal Government budget they had in that budget \$500,000 to assist urban communities with their police costs. In 1975 this Government paid out over \$2.5 million in police assistance grants, an increase of 500 per cent. This Government introduced a Street Improvement Program, which has paid out \$1.6 million to assist communities to hard-surface their streets as compared to no dollars by the previous government.

This really, Mr. Speaker, is only the beginning. A municipal grant program is better known in all of our Saskatchewan communities as the Winter Works Program. One would be hard-pressed to find a single community in Saskatchewan which has not done something under the Winter Works Program — skating rinks, curling rinks, schools, community halls, a new administration building, all with assistance of Winter Works money.

There was no such program when we came into office in 1971, but in 1975 \$4 million was committed in this province toward Winter Works; this year we have already committed \$3.6 million. That was our target budget. We are checking now with communities because requests are continuing to flow in to see if all those

dollars will be spent, to see if we can help meet some of the requests that are coming to us.

The Property Improvement Grant is an equally well respected program with urban government, by returning money directly to the property owner, the Property Improvement Grant has reduced the property tax for school purposes from an average of 45 mills to an average of 22 mills. We have replaced the inequalities of the Homeowner Grant with sound equalities of the program which shifts the burden of school costs from the property tax to ability to pay. Mr. Speaker, payments under the Property Improvement Grant program jumped to \$34 million in 1975, in 1976 it has jumped to \$40 million. In the four years we have been in office we have spent \$125 million through the Property Improvement Grant program. I challenge any government to do away with the Property Improvement Grant program.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, most of all this Government has expressed its faith in local government ability to best determine their own priorities. This faith has not been expressed in words but it has been expressed through cold dollar commitments. Never before have we seen unconditional grants to municipalities in Saskatchewan, not until this Government came into office.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacMurchy:** — Mr. Speaker, in 1975, this Government paid out \$3 million to municipalities from the Unconditional Community Capital Fund and we have committed another \$25 million. Mr. Speaker, \$6 million were paid out in Unconditional Operation Grants; \$4.5 million were paid out in Equalization Grants to the urban municipalities which is an unconditional grant as well. In the last few years we have seen new life in our Saskatchewan communities, we have seen new life and new vigour in our municipal governments. New subdivisions are going up and they are going up not just in Regina and Saskatoon and Prince Albert and Moose Jaw, they are going up in the smaller communities as well. Streets are being paved, recreation facilities are being constructed, new schools, senior citizen projects, all of these things are becoming a source of pride for Saskatchewan people. A good deal of this expansion has been made possible by the major increases of money available to the municipal administrations. Money available, Mr. Speaker, because of increased input from the Provincial Government and I am proud of that we have been able to accomplish this in this province working with this municipal government.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacMurchy:** — The work has to continue, yes, there is lots to be done. Saskatchewan has participated in two national tri-level conferences of federal, provincial and municipal governments. There needs to be discussion and consultation and debate at that level. Our previous Minister, the Hon. Mr. Wood, was chairman of the committee, assisting a federal Minister of State for Urban Affairs, the chairman of the Council of Provincial Municipal Affairs Ministers and the President of the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities. This group gave leadership, gave leadership to the tri-level conferences. We were

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happy to participate in these conferences and we will continue to do so and we will be participating in any discussions of municipal financing that may arise in this context.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me pride, therefore, to amend the resolution and I ask all Members to support the amendment. I move, seconded by Mr. Kowalchuk (Melville):

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

commends the Government of Saskatchewan for its grant programs to municipal governments, and further that this Assembly supports the Government's participation in national tri-level discussions.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. J.G. Lane** (Qu'Appelle): — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order, I question whether the amendment is in order in that it has absolutely no bearing on the original motion. The original motion asks for a commission to study the financial relationship between the Provincial Government and municipalities. It just asks for a commission, it is not critical of the Government or anything else, it simply asks for the establishment of a commission. This new amendment is totally different altogether and in fact the proper thing for this Government to do would be to bring a motion to this effect because it commends the Government for its grant program and then supports the Government's participation in tri-level discussion, which is totally at variance with the original motion. They are not related in any way shape or form, with respect, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. MacMurchy:** — Mr. Speaker, if I may comment on the Point of Order. It seems to me that there is a direct relationship between the amendment as I put forward with respect to the resolution put forward by the Member for Saskatoon-Sutherland (Mrs. Edwards). The resolution talks about financial relationship between the Provincial Government and the municipalities. It talks about tax sharing agreements with discussion on tax sharing agreements as I indicated it is being dealt with on a national level. I think the Member for Saskatoon-Sutherland is well aware of this and it seems to me in light of this the amendment does provide a broader view of the resolution but still in order and in keeping with the resolution put forward.

**Mr. Speaker:** — From the reading of the resolution and the amendment offered thereto, it would appear that the discussion could go along the basis of the financial relationship of the Provincial Government and the municipalities in both the motion and the amendment. The motion asks for a commission, whereas the amendment appears to commend the Government for what it is doing now. In effect, it suggest that a commission is not necessary. The amendment does broaden the resolution to the extent that it discusses tri-level participation to be endorsed. I think I would go with my original comment that the motion is in order and debate continues concurrently on the motion and the amendment.

**Mrs. E.G. Edwards** (Saskatoon-Sutherland): — Mr. Speaker, may I speak to the Point of Order? It seems

to me, as the mover of the motion, that any amendment which changes it to commend the Government is a different meaning altogether. In my original motion I was not condemning the Government nor was I speaking about their grants. I was speaking about setting up a commission and studying taxing patterns, that's not grants.

**Mr. Speaker:** — What is before me is something that will be straightened out in the debate that is to follow at this point, whether in fact a commission is necessary to study the taxing patterns or whether in fact the Government should be commended for what it is doing at this point and a commission is irrelevant. I think that is something that has to be sorted out in debate and I think that we should get on with the debate.

**Mr. Lane:** — Just as a point of clarification, if we accept your ruling by implication the amendment means that the Government is saying that a commission is not necessary.

**Mr. Speaker:** — I will leave that to the speakers to put their points forward. They may wish to say that a commission is unnecessary or they may say that it is down their list of priorities by the wayside. I don't know what they are going to say.

**Mr. Lane:** — Mr. Speaker, speaking to the resolution and the amendment. It is interesting to note that the mover of the resolution didn't condemn the Government opposite for its record and I at the same time do not criticize the Minister of Municipal Affairs for bringing that record and tabling that record in the House. It is without question the record of the Government opposite is certainly better than the record of any previous government in the history of this province when it deals with municipal and local governments. But there are two things that the Minister seemingly forgets, that, notwithstanding the tremendous increase in grants by the Government opposite to local governments, those grant increases have not kept pace with the demands on local government and secondly, have not kept pace with the local government's share of the total revenue that comes into the province of Saskatchewan. I can't think of any major urban areas whose direct spending budgets have not nearly tripled in the last four years. (I am wondering if we could get the basketball game over with, before I continue?)

The relative position and I am sure that the Minister of Municipal Affairs will not disagree with me, the relative position of local government has fallen behind for the very reasons, the same problems apply to provincial governments, the demand for services and the demand for the supply of services and government assistance to individuals is increasing at a much faster rate over the last few years than it has probably in any period in our history. So they are faced with basically the same problem as provincial governments, a tremendous increase in demand for services. I say that the relative position of local governments today and of local governments five, six or seven years ago, they are certainly no further ahead in a relative position. But again I preface my remarks by saying that the Government opposite's record with assistance to local governments is better than any government in the history of this province.

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The problem being, faced with the realities of the situation, the Government opposite is now caught in somewhat of a bind because the Government opposite is the same one that is presently downgrading the Local Government Board. For the first time the Local Government Board has been publicly criticized by the Premier of this province at a meeting, I believe in Yorkton but I stand to be corrected, where he said that the Local Government Board is too restrictive. Secondly, the former chairman of the Local Government Board, whose contract wasn't renewed was in effect let go. Now it may be a proper policy decision for the Government to make to say that the Local Government Board is too restrictive in which case I say the proper thing to do is change the legislation and make it more open, not criticize the Local Government Board which has been done publicly by at least one Member of the Treasury Bench opposite. I don't think that is fair, and I don't think it is proper.

If we are saying that the Local Government Board is too restrictive, we are impliedly recognizing the capabilities of elected local government officials. We are saying that they are becoming or are considerably more responsible, more learned than they were in years past and I agree with that. If we then recognize the greater ability of local government officials, then surely the next logical step is to give them the responsibility. The only way we feel that the responsibility can be given or recognized is by a direct, unfettered share of provincial government revenues, whatever that figure might be arrived at. Why we suggest a commission is for the simple fact that what the Minister said today and he used the word 'requests' on several different occasions, that in our opinion is the root of the problem, that local governments are still required to go hat in hand to the Provincial Government to get money. Now, the Minister, for example today, made reference to the increased police branch (certainly welcome) but at the same time there was a rider attached to that and basically local governments had to accept a Provincial Police Commission which most of them didn't want. So there was a rider attached, you know it wasn't an unconditional grant recognizing responsibilities. Your argument with increased unconditional grants is proper and we agree, but the other grants by the large are all tied to certain rules and regulations as imposed upon local governments by the Provincial Government.

I have the feeling that most or at least the major urban governments could make their own decisions as to recreational programs. You know, what weight they want to put on recreation is their question of priorities, that is something that they should make. They are restricted by reason of a grant system where they have to go to the Provincial Government to get moneys.

Now I have a situation when we talk about the demands on local governments. It is interesting to note that satellite communities of which I have several in my constituency are the ones that are really getting the short end of the stick because people are moving out to these satellite communities to get lower taxes and cheaper houses and cheaper living and are demanding the same services from these local governments that they got in the city of Regina. And if they don't get the same services what they do is they keep their social contacts in Regina and make no contribution whatsoever in the community to which they have moved and the fact is that we have people living in these satellite communities who make no contribution to the social or community life because they maintain their social ties in

Regina. The reason they make no contribution is because they don't have the social facilities there, they are still in Regina. These people are being caught in a tremendous bind or tremendous squeeze. I say to the Members opposite that the local government officials in those communities are just as responsible as local government officials anywhere, if not more responsible. They can't cope with the problem, they don't have the source of funds. I think it would be proper for governments of that nature to have a set share of Provincial Government funds that they can tap and then make the decisions in the best interests of their community.

What we disagree with basically with the Government opposite is on the one side the Government says that local government officials have attained a degree of responsibility and capability, probably unmatched in the previous history of the province. At the same time every new grant program except for the unconditional grants is tied to standards and guidelines determined on a broad provincial basis and probably don't reflect the particular and individual needs of each local government.

I was disappointed frankly that the Minister made the amendment to the extent that a commission wouldn't be considered by the Government. I think the suggestion by the Hon. Member for Saskatoon-Sutherland was a proper one, and a responsible and positive suggestion for the Government opposite. I don't think you need it, although I don't criticize you for doing it, to bring your record before this Assembly, it is good. The fact is that we now must recognize the new capabilities of local government officials. We now must break the ties of the paternalistic approach of allotting funds and developing the projects from the provincial level and not the local government level. It was in that spirit that the motion was made. As I say, I am disappointed that the Government would see fit to totally destroy the intent of the motion with an amendment. I believe, Mr. Speaker, with those few words, other Members of our party may wish to speak, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 32 – TWO-YEAR MORATORIUM ON GOVERNMENT LOANS**

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. E. Anderson (Shaunavon):

That this Assembly urges the Government of Saskatchewan to impose a two-year moratorium on the principal and interest payments of government loans that were given to encourage young farmers into beef production.

**Hon. E. Kaeding** (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to say just a few words in regard to this resolution and I shall be proposing an amendment at the conclusion of my remarks.

Probably the most severe problem facing rural Saskatchewan is the trend to rural depopulation and the resulting detrimental effects on the rural way of life. Unless this trend is counteracted there will be little significance to the rural option which Saskatchewan people have historically enjoyed. The

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FarmStart program was developed to help deal with this problem by encouraging expansion of our agricultural industry through intensified farming, rather than expansion through increased farm size.

Intensive farming through livestock production results in an increased output per acre of land which in turn means a smaller land base will support a viable mixed farm unit than a straight grain operation. Development of this type promises a program warrants the support of all those interested in the province's rural areas.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Kaeding:** — Already the program has moved a long way toward achieving this objective. Since it was implemented just over two years ago, more than 2,500 applicants have been given financing. Almost \$76 million has gone out on the program with an average of \$26,000 per applicant. Both the grant and the low interest rate aspects of the program have been well accepted by the clients. The favourable long-term prospects for livestock production in the province have maintained the popularity of the program in spite of periods of low prices in some aspects of our livestock industry.

One of the most encouraging aspects of the program is the number of begging farmers who are receiving assistance. Approximately 28 per cent of all farmers receiving assistance under the program have never managed to own farms previous to their involvement under the FarmStart program and another 28 per cent have managed their own operations for less than two years. The average age of these new farmers is less than 24 years. Certainly such statistics bear out at once the success of this program in the brief period since it has begun.

The resolution before us urges the Government of Saskatchewan to impose a two-year moratorium on principal and interest on these loans. Well, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that many of the young farmers who took FarmStart loans, particularly those who went into the cow-calf business are experiencing a very trying and frustrating time. Many of them purchased their livestock just at the time when prices for breeding stock were at a premium because of a period of very satisfactory farm prices.

However, in the past two years as you well know, prices have gone to disastrously low levels and many of them are finding it very hard to meet their loan commitments. It would be a mistake, however, to simply declare a two-year moratorium on all FarmStart loans, since loans are made by FarmStart to many forms of intensified units; for hog producers, for sheep producers, broiler and egg units, PMU units (pregnant mare's urine), for beekeepers, for many other farm operations, most of which have enjoyed a reasonable return in the last couple of years.

Most of these new farmers will be quite capable of making their regular payments on time and should be encouraged to do so. In recognition of the problem in the cattle industry the FarmStart division has instituted a new policy for flexible repayments which will permit these producers who are in trouble, through no fault of their own, to make reduced payments until



returns from livestock reach more profitable levels.

It should be pointed out that this is not a reduction of the outstanding debt, but simply a reduction of payments. It is expected when returns become more normal that the borrower will return to his regular repayment schedule. The shortfall of repayments will be carried forward on his account and he will be expected to recoup his shortfall as soon as returns reach more normal proportions.

It would be a mistake to encourage young farmers who in some cases have other sources of income besides beef cattle and whose returns may have been good from those enterprises to fall behind in their repayment schedules, since it is always harder to recover once payments have been missed. Our FarmStart councillors will be talking to those who are in difficulty and will be advising them as to their cash flows.

This severe problem points out once again what I have so often repeated, the need to get our livestock industry in a better position to withstand periodic severe downturns of income. You will note that many of the enterprises that are doing quite well, the dairy industry, the poultry industry and the egg industry, are generally under some form of orderly marketing systems, and we are able to keep their returns close to a profitable level. The Hog Marketing Commission and the Sheep and Wool Marketing Commission are helping those industries to market more effectively.

The beef industry alone is totally exposed to the unregulated and free market and as a result beginning farmers are at the mercy of that market.

It is most unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that many of the people in the livestock industry continue to insist that new and begging livestock producers should continue to be exposed to these extreme uncertainties. It is my sincere hope that in the next few months we will be able in co-operation with the other provincial governments and with the Federal Government to be able to provide to some of these small farmers some measure of stability under a stabilization program.

I would urge those Members opposite who appear to be so concerned with the welfare of young producers to get behind our attempts to bring stability to the industry instead of saying “to ‘h’ with those young fellows, if they can’t hack it they shouldn’t be in the business.” That is exactly what they are being told.

I repeat again, Mr. Speaker, that the FarmStart Corporation is already taking steps to reduce payments on their loans. The program is a good one and is recognizing some of the short-term difficulties of those in the beef industry. I should like to move, seconded by Mr. Larson (Pelly):

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

commend the Government of Saskatchewan for their concern and foresight in providing various options for flexible and deferred loan payments for young developing farmers in beef production, based on marketing conditions and ability to pay.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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**Mr. A.N. McMillan** (Kindersley): — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me say first that I wasn't aware that the Provincial Government and particularly the Department of Agriculture had made a provision for an adjustment on payments to be made. I say that is welcome news to some degree, it doesn't however change the intent of our resolution or our desire to see it passed.

We have stated on many occasions and I don't think you have disagreed with us that certainly cattle producers and particularly young people who are just getting established are having problems in the cattle business. You pointed out yourself that it was because of the fact that markets were depressed and particularly those people who got involved in a cow-calf operation were suffering. You have said that you can make adjustments in your payments to make the adjustments down and that in itself will be enough to weather these people over the problems they are facing. I would tend to disagree with you in many instances. I don't think it goes far enough.

We see as well that you stated that the reason we are facing depressed markets, etc., you inferred specifically to this, is because we don't have an orderly marketing system for beef. At the same time, the same inference was made that the reason pork prices had stayed up was because we had an orderly marketing system. I say that is an intention to mislead people. The Hog Marketing Commission was no more responsible for high prices of pork in Saskatchewan than I am. No more than a cattle marketing commission could bring the prices up in Saskatchewan to reasonable levels. I sent you a letter personally dealing with some of the people whom I had met in my constituency pointing out that they were concerned about the cattle prices and they asked me to suggest to this government that a floor price be instituted to cover the cost of production which is what we are talking about when we are talking about an orderly marketing system; so that young producers receive at least their cost of production. I was left with the impression from correspondence with the Government that a system like that brought in would be far, far too costly for the province of Saskatchewan and therefore shouldn't be brought in. It was unjustified. I agree with that point, I agree with the Government it is too costly. But to suggest to us on one hand that an orderly marketing system for beef in Saskatchewan would immediately eliminate our problems, when in fact you have said in other instances exactly the opposite, I say is misleading.

Now what we have said here, is that we realize that beef problems are perhaps beyond the control at the moment of any government. It is difficult certainly for the Government of Saskatchewan to bring in measures that would immediately correct the beef marketing system, certainly an orderly marketing system wouldn't correct them. We realize that. We have said here and realize that young people are in trouble because of their capital investments in cow-calf operations, etc. We have said time and time again, the FarmStart program is a good one, it is an amalgamation of older programs and some new ones. We say it is good, and we have continually given it our support here.

But we say there is nothing you can do as a government to correct the overall beef picture, you have however, the opportunity to do something very concrete to help young cattle producers and people just getting started that are in trouble.

We have said give them a moratorium on their loans for two years, and we think the beef markets are going to go back up in two years. It seems to be the indications that your government has received as well as everyone else. Let them off the hook. You say, well, we adjusted their payments a little. An adjusted payments isn't going to do you one lick of good in the cattle business today if you don't even make a dollar on your herds. No payment is certainly better than an adjusted payment.

If your income is less than zero, I don't know how you can make a \$2 payment, let alone an adjusted payment. We say it is not enough.

I agree with you that we can commend the Government for its work in the FarmStart program, just as we can commend the previous government for the kind of work they did in helping to encourage young people to diversify and farms to diversify. I say don't be satisfied with what you have done here. It isn't all the answer and certainly don't mislead people by suggesting that orderly marketing in Saskatchewan would immediately eradicate the problems we have in the beef industry.

I urge all Members to support the initial resolution because I think it was a good one, it was a concrete resolution and it was positive in nature. I urge you to vote against the amendment because in fact we in Saskatchewan and the Government are not doing everything it can to see that young cattlemen and people who have just got involved in the business are getting along all right. For that reason I urge you to vote against the amendment and support the resolution. I should also beg leave to adjourn debate, the Member for Shaunavon has something to say on this, as well as other Members.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

## **ADJOURNED DEBATES**

### **MOTIONS FOR RETURN**

#### **RETURN NO. 52**

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. E.F.A. Merchant (Regina Wascana) for Return No. 52 showing:

(1) The number of people spending 14 or more days in the Saskatchewan institutions for the mentally ill in the 1974-75 fiscal years. (2) The number of people held in Saskatchewan institutions for the mentally ill as a result of having been found not guilty of some crime by reason of their insanity in the 1974-75 fiscal year. (3) The number of people committed to a Saskatchewan institution for the mentally ill in each of the mental health regions pursuant to Section 12 of The Mental Health Act, the cumulative total for the Province, and the number of people so committed under Section 12 who were held in the institution for the mentally ill in each of the mental health regions beyond 72 as a result of a further order or a renewal certificate, and the cumulative thereof for the Province. (4) The number of people seen by psychiatrists in each of the mental health regions

pursuant to section 18(1) of The Mental Health Act, the cumulative total for the Province, the percentage of such persons seen who were thereafter admitted in each of the mental health regions, and the cumulative total thereof for the Province. (5) The number of people in each mental health region who requested reviews pursuant to Section 24 of The Mental Health Act in the 1974-75 fiscal year and the cumulative total for the Province. (6) The number of such reviews pursuant to Section 24 of The Mental Health Act which were decided in favour of the patient and resulted in the patient's release from the mental institution shortly thereafter in each mental health region in the 1974-75 fiscal year, and the cumulative total for the Province. (7) The number of applications in each mental health region made to the Court of Queen's Bench pursuant to Section 26 of The Mental Health Act in the 1974-75 fiscal year and the cumulative total for the Province. (8) The number of such appeals in each mental health region which were granted pursuant to Section 26 of The Mental Health Act in 1974-75 fiscal year and the cumulative total for the Province. (9) The number of applications made by people held by reason of their insanity for release to the review panel for the criminally insane in the 1974-75 fiscal year. (10) The number of patients taken in Saskatchewan institutions for the mentally ill without their permission who had not been found not guilty of some crime by reason of their insanity in the 1974-75 fiscal year. (11) The number of patients receiving ECT treatment (shock treatment) first with their consent and secondly without their consent in the 1974-75 fiscal year. (12) The names and address of the members of the review panels currently serving under Section 22 of The Mental Health Act. (13) The names and addresses of the members of the review panel for the criminally insane currently serving.

**Hon. W.A. Robbins** (Minister of Health): — I must point out, Mr. Speaker, that if we answered these Orders for Return, as best they could be answered, I must say they couldn't be answered. Even if those could be answered to the best of our capability, it is reasonable to wonder what value there would be to anyone in some of the answers. I must point out that if we went back through all the files we would have to go back through some 125,000 files, 10,000 out-patients, 2,500 in-patients in facilities and psychiatric services each year for some 10 years. It would cost in the range of \$100,000. I must point out to the Members that even the printing of these pages costs over \$200 per day.

I really think we should take this question before the anti-inflation board.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Robbins:** — I simply want to make a few comments with respect to that because it is not just a case of clerical people going into files, you would have to have some people with some professional capability to make a clinical analysis in relation to the information therein. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, Members will bear with me and I will give a bit of background in relation to The Mental Health Act which is a very complicated Act.

There are two major types of admission to psychiatric wards, psychiatric facilities and hospitals as defined in The Mental Health Act. Patients are admitted of their own free will, in certain instances the nearest relative may sign for them. These are called informal or voluntary admissions. Patients who are admitted or detained compulsorily under doctor's certificates, these are called committed or formal patients. A person who has admitted himself voluntarily can be detained for more than 24 hours after he or his nearest relatives has given notice in writing to the medical officer in charge that he desires to leave. The only exception to this would be where the person was thought to be so mentally disturbed but required to be put under certificate in which case the medical officer in charge would certify him.

Patients are certified or committed where in the opinion of the physicians involved they require care, supervision and control for their own protection and welfare or the protection of others. Patients are usually admitted under two certificates, under Section 11 of The Mental Health Act. A patient may not be detained for more than 13 days on the authority of these certificates unless those certificates are renewed at the end of this time. A renewal certificate lasts for three months, then a further renewal for six months is possible and finally a renewal for one year can be carried out. All subsequent certificates on long-term patients must be issued at least once per year. During the life of each certificate the patient or his nearest relative or someone acting for him can complain to the review panel which consists of a physician, a lawyer and one other person all independent of Psychiatric Services Branch. If the review panel finds that a complaint is warranted the panel may order the release of the patient. If the patient or his relative is not satisfied with the verdict of the review panel it is possible to appeal to the Court of Queen's Bench.

These appeal mechanisms allow strong protection for the civil rights of patients. Each time a certificate is issued, a patient and his nearest relative must be informed of the existence and function of the review panel and of their right to appeal.

A patient may also, Mr. Speaker, be admitted upon the authority of one medical certificate but he may not be detained in the hospital upon a compulsory basis for more than 72 hours unless another medical certificate has been completed under Section 12 of the Act. Where a person believed to be mentally disordered refuses to be examined by a physician he may be brought before a magistrate and the magistrate may order that he be taken to a specified hospital as an out-patient for examination by a physician. If it is found that he requires in-patient care, the certificates of medical physicians will become the authorization for admission and detention.

There are one or two other ways in which the opinions of medical physicians may be applied to authorize admission and detention of mentally disordered persons to a hospital. These are authorizations that are used only in very unusual cases.

Mentally disordered persons who are involved in criminal law are admitted and detained on the authority of either a court order or an order in council. When a patient is admitted to an in-patient facility the medical officer in charge may cause him to be examined to determine whether or not he is competent to manage his estate. If he is, a certificate of incompetence may

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be issued and this is forwarded to the Administrator of Estates. The Administrator of Estates may then manage the person's estate or arrange for a close relative to do so. A certificate of incompetence remains valid unless revoked. For example, if the patient is discharged into the community he may continue to be considered incompetent to manage his estate. However, the patient or his nearest relative can appeal to the review panel against that certificate. Alternatively a patient who is incompetent may request or have requested on his behalf an examination by the medical officer of the facility in order to determine whether a certificate of competence may be issued. If this is done then the medical officer can notify the Administrator of Estates, the person examined and his nearest relative of the issue of the certificate of competence.

Under Section 19 of The Mental Health Act, an informal or voluntary patient cannot have any diagnostic or treatment measure carried out on him unless he or his relative signs the consent form, unless it is a case of emergency. In the case of a committed patient the medical officer in charge has the necessary authority to determine the care and treatment to be provided to the patient and to direct the giving of that care and treatment. However, in the case of electro-therapy the units have been asked to obtain the consent of the patient or his relative whenever possible even though it is not required by law.

I simply give that, Mr. Speaker, to the Assembly as a bit of background. I should now like to refer to the particular motion and the questions asked, then give a bit of a resume, if I may, in relation to what has been happening in the field of psychiatric services.

In the Order for Return, 11 questions actually appear. I should like to comment on them individually. The first one asks the number of persons spending 14 or more days in Saskatchewan institutions for the mentally ill. The question actually is fairly ambiguous. There is only one institution for the mentally ill, and that's the North Battleford institution, the mental hospital at that location. However, it would appear that the questioner, and he may in his contribution to the debate clarify this, means facilities, which would include psychiatric wards at general hospitals and psychiatric centres. It is not clear what the point of this question really is, but during the period 1963 to 1976, or to date, there has been a large reduction in the number of patients in mental hospitals, and that occurred both under our administration and under the previous administration, and I want to give them credit for that.

We have over 3,000 patients in mental institutions in Saskatchewan in 1963, and today we have about 350. Now, not everyone agrees on this. Some people are very critical of the fact that some of these persons are released into society and you will never get a unanimity of opinion in relation to it.

Because of the way our statistics are collected, we shall have to give the answer in calendar rather than fiscal years. I want to make that clear, and I have already mentioned this to the Hon. Member for Wascana.

Question two asks the number of people held in institutions that haven't been found not guilty because of insanity. And that one is relatively simple, in many respects.

Question three deals with the number of persons detained under Section 12 of The Mental Health Act, and the number kept beyond 72 hours, as a result of a further order or renewal certificate. We could only give a complete answer to this question by going back to the original files. I repeat again, Mr. Speaker, that involves looking at about, if you went the whole ten-year period, 125,000 files. From the way in which these statistics are collected, we can give some of the later statistical information because we are getting this into computer data and therefore we can provide some of it in the later years.

Question four asks the number of people seen in each of the mental health regions, under Section 18(1) of The Mental Health Act. A cumulative total for the province. The percentage of such persons seen, who were thereafter admitted in each of the mental health regions, and a cumulative total for the province. This kind of information can only be obtained by going back directly to the records. I repeat again, looking at about 125,000 files. This is a formidable job which would have to be undertaken in each of the regions throughout the province, including the University Hospital in Saskatoon, which is not under the direct jurisdiction of the Department of Health.

Question five deals with the number of people in each mental health region who requested reviews under Section 24 of The Mental Health Act. This kind of information is not tabulated in a statistical form. Inquiries would have to be directed to each of the five review panels, and since the constitution of these panels has changed over the years, Mr. Speaker, it will be difficult, in a ten-year period to provide this information in a complete form. Individual case files would contain the information, but these would have to be looked at on an individual basis.

Question six asks for the number of reviews decided in favour of the patient. Again, we have some information available, but tracking down the information for a complete ten-year period would be extremely difficult. However, it should be noted that there have been relatively few appeals made to the review panels over the years, and in most cases, the panels have upheld the decisions of the psychiatrists.

Questions seven, eight and nine do not create any grave difficulties in terms of answering them.

Question ten contains a double negative. It asks about the patients who have not been found not guilty of some crime by reason of insanity and who have been taken into Saskatchewan institutions for the mentally ill without their permission. The meaning in this particular question is not very clear. We think it means orders-in-council cases, other than those found not guilty because of insanity. And, if so, the same remarks would apply, as applied in the previous question.

Question eleven asks the number of patients receiving electro-therapy, or sometimes it is terms electroplexy treatment, first with their consent, secondly without their consent over the whole period. In the case of informal patients, those people who voluntarily admit themselves, consent to treatment is required either by the patient or his nearest relative. For patients detained under certificates, the medical officer

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in charge has the authority to provide the necessary care and treatment. In the case of informal patients, therefore, either the patient or a near relative may agree to the treatment. In the case of the formal patient, that's the person who is committed by a physician or under the judgment of a magistrate, the medical officer in charge can do so.

In practice, in case of formal patients, an attempt is made to have the patient agree to the treatment verbally, and in practice, many patients do so. It is therefore impossible to answer the question in the strict sense of the word. But a review of individual files would show which informal patients had signed the consent form themselves and which patients had had their nearest relative do so. This would be an immensely complicated and essentially fruitless task. We have not been faced with this request for ECT statistics before, and therefore, we have not maintained this information on a statistical basis over the years, except in the individual files of the patients concerned.

We are prepared, however, to look into the number of treatments for 1974-75. We already have the comparable figures from the private sector available through the MCIC reports for private psychiatrists bills on a fee-for-service basis and the number of these treatments can therefore be determined.

Now I just give that as a bit of background, and I don't do so critically, Mr. Speaker. I am simply attempting to point out to the Assembly that this is an horrendous task to attempt to get all the information the Member asks for, and we are anxious to give him all the information he wants. But if we have to go back for the full ten-year period, we would be in deep trouble.

Now I should like to make a few comments, with respect to advances that have occurred in the psychiatric services program. I don't think anyone in this Government would contend that it is perfect by any means. It is an extremely complicated and difficult field, and you cannot get unanimity even among psychiatrists with respect to treatment of people who are suffering mental illness. But I should like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that since 1971 there have been major advances in the psychiatrist program, and I want to list some of these in order to put some of the criticisms that have been made into the proper perspective.

First of all, the major reduction in the number of in-patients should be noted. There are now only about 350 patients in Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford, and perhaps another 200 in various psychiatric units scattered around the province. As recently as 1963 there were over 3,000 patients in mental hospital care, and I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that I wish to give credit to the previous administration, as well as this administration, in relation to the programs that have been carried out in that respect.

Despite this, it has sometimes been suggested that a psychiatrist has an interest in keeping patients in the hospital, but obviously the statistical information clearly points out that that is not the motivation. Surely the whole Saskatchewan experience belies this, and does it most convincingly. Since 1971 here are some of things which have happened to improve the program. The old Weyburn hospital was discontinued and



divided into the Souris Valley Extendicare Hospital, which underwent extensive renovations, and the Weyburn Psychiatric Centre which was completely revised and upgraded in 1975. The two portions which formerly constituted part of the old hospital, and held well over 1,500 patients a few years ago, now has a combined total of about 350 patients.

The old Munro Wing which should become obsolete, was abandoned and transformed into a modern psychiatric unit in Regina General Hospital with an extra 14 beds and a modern out-patient client downtown on Hamilton Street in this city.

Training of psychiatric nurses was centralized and the academic portions of it strengthened.

The Swift Current Out-Patient Clinic was moved to new premises, and negotiations were commenced towards the establishment of an in-patient facility for psychiatric patients in that city.

Major expenditures, Mr. Speaker, were made in the mental retardation program, and it was placed under a new department termed Core Services. Services to children and youth have been considerably improved, and in particular services delivered by Harding House in Regina have considerably increased the number of people that could be dealt with.

Contract employment for psychiatrists was introduced in the year 1974, and this, together with more competitive salary levels, has considerably improved the recruitment and retention of psychiatrists in this province.

Negotiations have been going on with the federal authority in regard to the regional medical centre planned for Saskatoon. This is now coming toward successful fruition and should accommodate patients who require both security and treatment.

The McNeil Clinic, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon, was formerly located in very cramped and uncomfortable quarters, and was relocated in a much more satisfactory premise.

The Saskatoon Mental Health Clinic was likewise moved to new and much more satisfactory quarters.

In 1972 the Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford became one of the few to receive the distinction of being provisionally accredited by the Canadian Council of Accreditation, and in 1974 its status was raised to that of full accreditation. It was the first mental hospital west of Manitoba to achieve this status.

In 1974, Mr. Speaker, we completely reconstituted the Advisory Board of Review. Saskatchewan has been the first province to have such a board which considers the cases of patients detained when found not guilty because of insanity, or unfit to plead. The original Saskatchewan Board in 1948 was the first of its kind in Canada, but the new Board contains many improvements. For example, it ensures that every patient will be reviewed by the Board every six months or less; and recommendations made to Cabinet for final decision.

Increased grants have been made by the Government to mental health in Saskatchewan, in order to assist the operation

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of community service centres throughout the province. And, Mr. Speaker, I am well aware that that organization is suffering from lack of funds in relation to its programs because of the inflationary trends that have been occurring in recent years.

These are only a few of the advances made in the last few years. The whole thrust of our program has been in the direction of giving patients greater freedom and responsibility, and our success in placing patients back in the community clearly illustrates some success in this program.

If we had really imposed severe restraints on patients' liberty, would the number of patients in mental hospitals be diminished in the astonishing way which is unmatched in any other province in this country? Despite this record, and we think it's impressive, there are some people who still think that patients' liberty is unnecessarily curtailed. I would say that such judgment should not be based on isolated individual cases in which perhaps the normal machinery does break down at times, but rather, on the examination of the program within its whole broad context. In this respect the psychiatric program of this province, Mr. Speaker, is second to none in Canada, or indeed in North America.

Mr. Speaker, which those few remarks, I would like to move an amendment, seconded by my seatmate, Mr. MacMurchy, to amend Return No. 52.

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

1. The number of persons who spent 14 or more days of the year in Saskatchewan facilities for the mentally ill, regardless of the number of admissions or the number of facilities in which the admissions occurred for the year 1975.
2. The number of persons restrained by warrant of the Lieutenant Governor on the first of January, 1975 and also the number of persons who at that time had been found 'not guilty' because of insanity regardless of where they were restrained or detained.
3. The number of persons committed to each Saskatchewan facility for the mentally ill pursuant to Section 12 and Section 18(3) of The Mental Health Act during the year 1975 and who were subsequently detained in such facility beyond 72 hours and the cumulative total thereof for the province.
4. The number of people in each of the facilities for the mentally ill who requested reviews pursuant to Section 24 of The Mental Health Act in the year 1975 and cumulative total for the province.
5. The number of such reviews pursuant to Section 24 of The Mental Health Act which were decided in favour of the patient and which resulted in the patient's release from the facility for the mentally ill shortly thereafter in the year 1975.

6. The number of applications in each mental health region made to the Court of Queen's Bench pursuant to Section 26 of The Mental Health Act in the calendar year 1975.
7. The number of such appeals in each mental health region which were granted pursuant to Section 26 of The Mental Health Act in the calendar year 1975 and the cumulative total for the province.
8. The number of applications for release made to the Advisory Board of Review in 1975 by people restrained by warrant of the Lieutenant Governor and who had been found 'not guilty' by reason of insanity.
9. The number of persons taken into Saskatchewan institutions for the mentally ill during the calendar year 1975 who had not been found 'not guilty' of some crime by reason of insanity but who otherwise were restrained by warrant of the Lieutenant Governor, either because they were unfit to take their trial or had become mentally ill while serving sentence in a provincial Correctional Centre.
10. The number of individual electrotherapy units of treatment administered during 1974 by (a) psychiatrists in private practice in Saskatchewan; and (b) psychiatrists employed by the Department of Health; also (c) number of physicians in private practice of psychiatry December 31, 1974; and (d) number of physicians employed by Psychiatric Services Branch December 31, 1974.
11. The names and addresses of the members of the Review Panels currently serving under Section 22 of The Mental Health Act.
12. The names and address of the members of the Advisory Board of Review currently serving.

I so move.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

The debate continues on the motion and the amendment.

**Mr. E.F.A. Merchant** (Regina Wascana): — Mr. Speaker, the Minister is quite right in saying that we discussed the matter, I didn't realize that you would then embarrass me with my colleagues by saying that I was a co-operative person. It was a shock to hear those words. I'm relatively happy with the amendment, quite frankly with this many changes and some of them are small changes, I am not in a position to say tentatively whether all of the information that I require will in fact be forthcoming.

And I've been told by the Minister whether I like it or not the amendment will be passed so that it's not very germane for me to say whether I think it's an acceptable amendment at this time or not.

Let me say however in response to some of his comments

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about the operation of The Mental Health Act in general that I wasn't, in posing these questions, taking on the operation of the Department of Psychiatric Services and Mental Health. I don't however share the Minister's view that there is sufficient protection for people who are in mental institutions. We've heard amongst other things that some 125,000 different files on people have been involved in the last ten years – that's a large number of people who have been involved in psychiatric services in one manner or another. I don't share the Minister's view that there is sufficient protection for the public under some of the operative sections of the Act.

First, by way of example, and the Minister spoke to it, under Section 18(1) of the Act anyone can go to a magistrate and have a magistrate swear out a warrant for the arrest of that person and the person is then taken by a police officer for psychiatric examination. I have run into, not a large number of people who are so taken but certainly a number in their 20s, and I was talking to someone yesterday who was so arrested.

Now, that frequently comes up in marital matters and we don't have sufficient protection. Our Mental Health Act was patterned upon the British Mental Health Act. The British Act, from Memory I think it's their Section 29 which says that it has to be a mental health worker or a constable or a social services worker and we don't have mental health workers by definition as they have in the British legislation. But I think that we got carried away with Section 18 and it was for that reason that I was specifically wondering how many of the people brought in under 18(1) were then held under 18(3) and then subsequently to being held for the 72 hours under 18(3) how many of those people were then held for a further period of time by the signature on a renewal certificate? As I understand from the Minister that information, the comparison of 18(1) to 18(3) will not be forthcoming. And that is the one substantive area in terms of the amendment that the Minister has proposed that concerns me.

But let me then go on in terms of what happens to a person in a mental health institution. It may well be that we're talking about a minority kind of problem but it's a problem where people's liberty is taken from them and when we're depriving people of their liberty I think that we have to be extremely careful that those things are done carefully and properly. A renewal certificate – the Minister implies that that involves a second investigation and some care in the hands of the department. It does not in all cases and indeed I suspect it does not in most cases. A renewal certificate is simply signed by the chief psychiatrist in the institution, and the renewal certificate is frequently signed with that chief psychiatrist ever even having seen the patient. And there's no requirement under the Act for a renewal certificate for that psychiatrist to say I have seen and examined that patient. Again, when you compare that with the British Act, there is more care to ensure that the second opinion by the psychiatrist is given in a meaningful way and the second opinion has meaning.

Before, Mr. Speaker, I move to Sections 22 and 24 let me just draw an interesting anomaly in our Mental Health Act with the Act that follows it in the statutes. We have a Lunacy Act, Chapter 246 and the Mental Health is 245 to deprive a man of his liberty to put a man in a mental institution or a woman

without his or her consent all you have to do is have the signature of the two psychiatrists but to take the man's right to handle his personal affairs, to take away his right to handle his property, you not only have to have the sworn depositions of the same two psychiatrists but that matter has to be reviewed by the way of an application to the Court of Queen's Bench. What we seem to be saying is we are more concerned about a man's property than we are about his liberty. And these questions are designed to move towards the information which I think will be required to build a substratum of amendments which I will be in due course proposing to this House regarding The Mental Health Act. The Minister then went on to discuss the way the review panel Section 22 operates and the Minister, I think rightly said that it's fair to assume that the review panel, an independent review panel would give proper protection to the patient if the patient came before the review panel. The very fact that the person has some mental illness in the first place, or did have, makes it unlikely that patient knows his or her rights, makes it unlikely from one of the mental institutions that the patient will contact counsel or lawyers to know their rights and get before the review panel. And secondly, thought I say it in no criticism of the members of the review panel I think we've all seen in various tribunals that when you keep coming before a tribunal with essentially the same application the tribunal becomes jaded, their mind closes to a limited extent. They lose the freedom of thought, the investigatory freedom of thought to investigate as they really should and as a review panel really should. I'm concerned about the way the review panels operate and for that reason I want information about the number of reviews that they hear and the number of reviews that they uphold.

Lastly, the next step is an appeal from the review panel to the Court of Queen's Bench. In my experience at the bar I have never run into such an appeal. An appeal may lie, an appeal is present but I've never seen such an appeal appear in our courts at least around the province where I've been and I am what is described as a court-going lawyer, as opposed to an office lawyer so that I tend to be in chambers, I tend to be aware of the kinds of applications that are forthcoming. Now, again that is the reason that I'm interested in the information that is requested. Again, the information will build a substratum where I think that the material will show that the reviews when they are taken, the review by the Court of Queen's Bench is a review without counsel and rarely taken. Now, I stress again that I'm in agreement with the amendment that's to be made here. I understand that further amendments are to be made here. I'm told by the Minister that the cost is high to prepare this information, I'm reminded that to think that the Athabasca Pulp Mill that the Liberal Party filled that table with books and documents and information in response to questions on the Order Paper and where there's a proper and rightful need for the information certainly. I don't think the Minister implied as much that Members opposite this side would not hesitate and I hope that they would never hesitate to back away from inquiring for information where there is a good need for that information and I suggest that there certainly is. I don't think that the Minister implied that there wasn't. Indeed the Minister has told me that they're concerned about this area. He can understand the reason for the application for these answers and they're prepared to do their best to give the answers.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mrs. E.G. Edwards** (Saskatoon-Sutherland): — It had not been my intention to enter into this debate because of the very specific nature of the questions but in the Minister's reply he did give a fairly long speech on general matters pertaining to mental health care or psychiatric care in Saskatchewan and in reply to that I will only make my remarks very brief this morning. I should like to get a copy of the Minister's speech and then reply in a more detailed manner later.

He mentioned advances in psychiatrist programs in Saskatchewan through the years and rightly so. We have made advances because they were badly needed. The Minister of Health mentioned, for the patient's sake, aims and objectives of returning patients to the community, so that they would have greater freedom and greater responsibility and that they would be better in the community setting. I don't think anybody could argue with those aims and objectives. But when that decision was made I think there should have been a very real concern about how they would be received in the community, what kind of situations they would be returned to, what kind of patients would be taken back to the community. I know that there are mentally approved boarding care homes, and many of these are in those homes. My concern is that these people should be placed in homes where they will be well cared for and that the homes meet realistic standards, and that the quality of care that the patient needs is being given. I mean, proper medication, good nutrition and good surroundings. I will have more to say about that in a moment.

Many of the patients who are returned out of these institutions were also of the kind that I would call "senile-aged" who were returned to Level III special care homes. These cases, whether Level III or Level IV did cause problems for other guests in those homes. This perhaps has been part of the reason for the overcrowding or long waiting lists we see in Level III institutions. Again I say, while we solve a problem in one way, we often create other problems which have to be looked at in a realistic way.

Getting back to the kinds of boarding homes that people are discharged to. I mention this only as a case and I would hope that it may be just an incident or an isolated case. The Minister has said we have a psychiatric program second to no other in Canada and in fact in North America. The kind of case I am going to cite, if it is not an isolated case, we have reason to be concerned. I had reason to make a call to a place in Saskatoon. The home was a boarding home and to the best of my knowledge not an approved home as far as The Mental Health Act, and yet in that boarding house where there were 14 or 15 men of all ages, Psych Services had placed a middle-aged single woman, a mental patient. To the best of my knowledge there was no supervision of her in a medical way or any other way that I could see. The family were concerned. Her friends were concerned. Many appeals were made to have her removed from that place because of the surroundings, to no avail for many months.

In that home there were two stabbings and the poor girl was, needless to say, mentally upset from that if nothing else, she was a mental patient but the conditions she lived under certainly did not add to her welfare. Now the question that I have for the Minister is: — with the appeals of the family

(because certainly the patient was in no position to make an appeal to the Appeal Board) what kind of service are we giving when Psych Services condones placing a patient in an environment like that? I don't know what kind of mental health care they would say was good for her in those surroundings. I won't go into take any more but that is the kind of thing that you see happening on occasion. I say that we have to be careful when we are returning these patients that they return to surroundings where their mental condition will be improved.

Mr. Speaker, I won't prolong my remarks this morning because I do want to get a copy of the Minister's remarks and I will reply in more detail on another occasion, so I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

### **RETURN NO. 53**

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. E.F.A. Merchant (Regina Wascana) for Return No. 53 showing:

(1) The number of people spending 14 or more days in the Saskatchewan institutions for the mentally ill in the 1973-74 fiscal years. (2) The number of people held in Saskatchewan institutions for the mentally ill as a result of having been found not guilty of some crime by reason of their insanity in the 1973-74 fiscal year. (3) The number of people committed to a Saskatchewan institution for the mentally ill in each of the mental health regions pursuant to Section 12 of The Mental Health Act, the cumulative total for the province, and the number of people so committed under Section 12 who were held in the institution for the mentally ill in each of the mental health regions beyond 72 as a result of a further order or a renewal certificate, and the cumulative total thereof for the province. (4) The number of people seen by psychiatrists in each of the mental health regions pursuant to Section 18(1) of The Mental Health Act, the cumulative total for the province, the percentage of such persons seen who were thereafter admitted in each of the mental health regions, and the cumulative total thereof for the province. (5) The number of people in each mental health region who requested reviews pursuant to Section 24 of The Mental Health Act or the then comparable section in the 1973-74 fiscal year and the cumulative total for the province. (6) The number of such reviews pursuant to Section 24 of The Mental Health Act or the then comparable section of which were decided in favour of the patient and resulted in the patient's release from the mental institutions thereafter in each mental health region in the 1973-74 fiscal year and the cumulative total for the province. (7) The number of applications in each mental health region made to the Court of Queen's Bench pursuant to Section 26 of The Mental Health Act or the then comparable section in the 1973-74 fiscal year, and the cumulative total for the province. (8) The number of such appeals in each mental health region which were granted pursuant to Section 26 in the 1973-74 fiscal year, and the

cumulative total for the province. (9) The number of applications made by people held by reason of their having been found not guilty of some crime by reason of their insanity for release to the review panel for the criminally insane in the 1973-74 fiscal year. (10) The number of patients taken into Saskatchewan institutions for the mentally ill without their permission who had not been found not guilty of some crime by reason of their insanity in the 1973-74 fiscal year. (11) The number of patients receiving ECT treatment (shock treatment) first with their consent and secondly without their consent in the 1973-74 fiscal year.

**Hon. W.A. Robbins** (Minister of Health): — Mr. Speaker, the remarks which I made in relation to Item 9 will, of course, also apply in Item 10. I have discussed this with the Hon. Member for Wascana. It is our intention, of course, to amend this motion as well. I don't want to make any further remarks on it. I suppose I can't refer back to the remarks made by the Member for Wascana on the previous motion, but I was only going to make the comment that I don't know what the Athabasca deal had to do with psychiatry except that Members on this side thought it was a "nutty" deal.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I should like to move, seconded by my seatmate, the Hon. Mr. MacMurchy, Member for Last Mountain-Touchwood:

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

1. The number of person who spent 14 or more days of the year in Saskatchewan facilities for the mentally ill, regardless of the number of admission or the number of facilities in which the admissions occurred for the year 1974.
2. The number of persons restrained by warrant of the Lieutenant Governor on the first of January, 1974 and also the number of persons who at that time had been found "not guilty" because of insanity regardless of where they were restrained or detained.
3. The number of persons committed to each Saskatchewan facility for the mentally ill pursuant to Section 12 and Section 18(3) of The Mental Health Act during the 1974 and who were subsequently detained in such facility beyond 72 hours and the cumulative total thereof for the province.
4. The number of people in each of the facilities for the mentally ill who requested reviews pursuant to Section 24 of The Mental Health Act in the year 1974 and cumulative total for the province.
5. The number of such reviews pursuant to Section 24 of The Mental Health Act which were decided in favour of the patient and which resulted in the patient's release from the facility for the mentally ill shortly thereafter in the year 1974.



6. The number of applications in each mental health region made to the Court of Queen's Bench pursuant to Section 26 of The Mental Health Act in the calendar year 1974.

7. The number of such appeals in each mental health region which were granted pursuant to Section 26 of The Mental Health Act in the calendar year 1974 and the cumulative total for the province.

8. The number of applications for release made to the Advisory Board of Review in 1974 by people restrained by warrant of the Lieutenant Governor and who had been found "not guilty" by reason of insanity.

9. The number of persons taken into Saskatchewan institutions for the mentally ill during the calendar year 1974 who had not been found "not guilty" of some crime by reason of insanity but who otherwise were restrained by warrant of the Lieutenant Governor, either because they were unfit to take their trial or had become mentally ill while serving sentence in a provincial Correctional Centre.

**Mr. Merchant:** — Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

## **ADJOURNED DEBATES**

### **RESOLUTIONS**

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 30 – SHORTAGE OF HOUSING AND RENTAL ACCOMMODATION IN SASKATCHEWAN**

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed resolution by Mr. J.G. Lane (Qu'Appelle):

That this Assembly condemns the Government of Saskatchewan for its failure to take any provincial government action to alleviate the crisis of shortage of housing and rental accommodation in the province of Saskatchewan.

**Hon. G. MacMurchy** (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, Resolution No. 30 I think is very typical of the Member for Qu'Appelle, typical of his kind of resolutions and his kind of comments over the last four years. I think, Mr. Speaker, it is also typical of the party that he speaks for on housing. It is a party that is now a two-time loser, strike two, and is running real hard, it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, to make it strike three.

The resolution is typical in its lack of respect for the simple plain facts of housing in Saskatchewan. It is typical of the Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle's attitude toward our programs. As the official Opposition spokesman he feels obliged to be critical of what we do in the Government and that is fine. But I am sure in saying that that he would like to have nothing better than to have the present building boom back in 1971, when

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he was an employee of the former government. What he criticizes under our government, they would certainly have envied and they would certainly covet for themselves.

This resolution is also typical of the Member for Qu'Appelle because it offers only complaints and it proposes no answers for the complaints. Just one more reason why really they are on the outside, sort of looking in on the action, the action of the political scene in Saskatchewan today.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question we have a demand for houses today that is unprecedented in the province's history. But, Mr. Speaker, housing is a pretty reliable measure for the economy and we are enjoying boom times.

I think that if the people of Saskatchewan were offered a choice, and I remind the Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle that he asked me to contrast the Liberal government years with our government years - if they were offered a choice, I am sure the people of Saskatchewan would take the problems of prosperity in Saskatchewan today with our government over the problems of depression that they were faced with under a Liberal government.

Mr. Speaker, a number of actions have been taken to stimulate the construction of houses and apartments and they have had considerable success. Our building industry is working at full capacity and if there is any major damper on even greater production it is the shortage of skilled labour. I remind the Member for Qu'Appelle that the major reason for the shortage of skilled labour today is because of the policies that were implemented by the former government.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacMurchy:** — Their labour laws, their strike policies held wages down while their economic policy made work nearly impossible to find. And many of our best people in the construction industry left Saskatchewan and they are only now beginning to return.

I say that since we took office in 1971 we have encouraged wage parity without prairie competitors and comparable wages are attracting tradesmen back to Saskatchewan. I want to assure this Assembly we will do all we can to maintain our relationship with neighbouring provinces so that we can attract the people that we need.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacMurchy:** — Mr. Speaker, the Member for Qu'Appelle referred to a 10 per cent figure that he says is the percentage of new homes bought by people who are first time buyers. He thinks that this is a cause for concern. It is my experience, Mr. Speaker, that there are people in Saskatchewan who buy an older home first and later on when they have paid off some of their bills, when they become established, they will go out and buy a new house. Just as some of the Members opposite who now drive their Cadillacs and their Chryslers, some of them started out with a heavy Chevy. And so there are people who buy new homes after having lived in an existing house or an older one previous.

Maybe that sounds unusual to some of the Members opposite who start out just a bit ahead of the ordinary people. But I am not concerned, as the Member is concerned, about this kind of practice. But what concerned me with respect to his comments with this practice is that this is the practice that the Liberal government used. It was a kind of a trickled down policy of homeownership. And the name was appropriate because really the Liberals when they were in government did little to help middle income and low income families to buy their first home.

For example, their policy was to pay a grant of \$500 to home buyers, any and all home buyers, regardless of their salaries. A universal program it was. It is interesting and I am sorry that the Minister of Welfare, the former Minister of Welfare, the Member for Indian Head-Wolseley is not here because he was against this when it came to social services. The Liberal grant went to people who could have survived quite well without it. So in their budget allocations there was much less available to help the people who really needed it.

We have set out to turn that trickled down policy into a steady flow, to ensure good housing for as many people of Saskatchewan as possible. We introduced the \$1,000 House Builders Assistance Grant and it is for people who really need it, geared to income. So those who need it most get the largest grant.

I think the Member who criticized that program should check into his figures more carefully. He talked about a 10 per cent figure. He claims on the one hand only 10 per cent of the new homes in Regina were bought by first time buyers. I don't know where he got that figure, but later on he stated that 20 per cent of the 8,000 homes built in Saskatchewan in 1974 were affected by the building grant. That grant only goes to first time buyers of new homes. So either we are doing a very good job of helping people in smaller centres to build new homes, or he has made an error in his arithmetic. I wouldn't be unhappy if we were giving to small communities, the people who build in small communities, a large percentage of the grants, because that is where help is needed, that is where we have many older homes which are really not suitable to be passed on to first time buyers. They should be replaced.

Whatever it is I suggest to the Member that if he uses these kinds of figures and gets himself into this kind of situation trying to twist the statistics about the boom situation that we face in Saskatchewan, he is only doing it to try to fit his vision of gloom and doom.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that our house building grant program is a good program and while the Member opposite may belittle it, the money goes a long way towards the down payment on a new home.

Mr. Speaker, another positive program of our government is the Co-operative House Building Plan. On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we believe in co-operatives and we do something about it. We don't attack the Wheat Pool, as the Member for Kindersley does as I read in the Leader-Post. We try to do something with them to help our people. I noted that the Member for Morse (Mr. Wiebe) and I heard him say and I am not sure that I remember where he said it, but he said something like – I am a member of the Pool, but I don't agree with all the policies of the Pool. Isn't that interesting?

Mr. Speaker, it occurred to me when I heard the Member for Morse make that statement that when he is rattling around out in his riding, when someone says to him, you know those NDPs have come up with a good idea with respect to potash, why are the Liberals criticizing? I am sure I can hear him say, well you know, I'm a member of the Liberal Party, but I don't always agree with all the policies of the Liberal Party.

I noticed, Mr. Speaker, in the press that some of the Liberals-cum-Social Creditors in British Columbia, oh, and there are some Tories-cum-Social Creditors in British Columbia too, are proposing to cut down the role of the credit union in the Bank of British Columbia.

Now that bank is an NDP idea. It's a way to hold down the cost of mortgages and I say that the parties opposite on the coast are trying to undermine it. I want to assure this Assembly that New Democrats here in Saskatchewan do not approve of this anti-co-operative attitude and we'll try to work with co-operatives and in particular, Mr. Speaker, we're going to work with credit unions in the housing field.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacMurchy:** — Now Members know that the house building co-ops began in the Maritimes. Pretty good place the Maritimes, the Premier will say. The program began under the leadership of co-operative sponsorship, it is proving very popular, it's proving very successful.

Last year 74 homes were built by families who helped each other to do the work. They contracted some of it out, but were provided with subsidy and assistance on mortgages, land and construction work.

Now the homes built through the publicly assisted co-operatives are homes that people on low and middle income can afford. People earning \$14,000, \$15,000, \$16,000 as a result of the man and wife working. They are decent homes. They come with a pride of ownership that is unknown to people who buy a home from a general contractor, because they've done the work with their hands and they worked with their fellow co-operative members.

Mr. Speaker, we plan to expand the co-op program to many centres throughout the province. Our target is 500 homes. Organizational meetings have been held around the province by staff of the Department of Co-operation and staff of the Housing Corporation and they found a strong response, there was plenty of interest. Mr. Speaker, 400 to 500 people attended the meetings in Regina and the meetings in Saskatoon. Really the only hold-up to going beyond the 500 target may be the absence of enough Federal Government assistance to share the cost. I'm optimistic however that the problem is going to be worked out because they have sympathy, they have support in Ottawa with respect to the co-operative housing program.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacMurchy:** — I noticed, Mr. Speaker, the Member didn't mention the

success of family co-operatives to housing. He didn't say a word about this provincial initiative. He didn't say how the former Minister of Housing negotiated with Ottawa to try to get it going. As usual, Mr. Speaker, his words were negative and critical. He made fun of the ability of ordinary people to get the work done, to build their own homes. He said co-operative housing has been a failure when people without technical skills dominate in the co-operatives.

I say to the Hon. Member that he is dead wrong. Ordinary people can build homes. They are doing it today and they are doing it within just miles of this Assembly. I encourage the Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle to leave his high rise down south and just take a drive through Argyle Park. Yes, he'll see some modest homes, he'll see modest homes, but they are sound, they are well built and the owners of those homes have pride in them.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacMurchy:** — The Hon. Members and all Members opposite may be interested to know that the members of one family co-op did such a good job of framing last year, they were so good, that they received offers from general contractors to hire our with the general contractor.

I hope the Liberals opposite will be a little more careful the next time they try to belittle co-operatives and what they can do for Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, another program not referred to by the Opposition except in a negative way is the Saskatchewan Government's efforts to build new housing for senior citizens.

Now senior citizens in Saskatchewan are a group who have traditionally occupied some of the poorest housing. They are also a group of people who often find their pension income keeps them from carrying out good repairs on the houses they live in. So the quality of their homes decline despite their honest and their best efforts. For these people who did the government for whom the Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle worked, do? What did they do? They offered nothing. All they offered to the senior citizens was deterrent fees and high property taxes.

I say that our government has changed that nightmare. We have abolished the deterrent fee and we've increased the property improvement grant for our senior citizens which has cut their taxes in half, far more in some cases than the school tax it is intended to offset.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've introduced the Senior Citizens Home Repair Program, to help the pensioners fix up their houses they choose to live in.

We have meals-on-wheels. We have other services that make it possible for pensioners to remain independent in their own homes. Thus assisting them, yes financially, but assisting them yet, socially.

For those who prefer to live in a suite, to live in an apartment, with other people of the same age, we have greatly increased the number of senior citizens low rental units available.

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Towns rejected by the former government now operate modern housing for the pioneers. Housing that's a source of pride in the community and it's a comfort for the senior citizens who live in them. Yes, and in Regina, senior citizens high rises are increasing in popularity. Two of them are located in downtown Regina. Located close to the shopping, to the transit facilities, strengthening the downtown core area. Another one is being planned. These apartments help to free up homes in other areas of the cities for use of families who are starting out. Here again the province has shown initiative in acquiring old homes for renovation and for rental to low income families.

I hope to have an experimental project along these lines in operation very shortly.

The Member for Qu'Appelle spoke of the Neighbourhood Improvement Program. A program of the Federal Government. He hoped in his remarks that I wouldn't take credit for it and won't take credit for it. But I say to the Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle that the Neighbourhood Improvement Program was designed in Ottawa, for whom? For the large cities like Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver. Even medium-sized cities like Regina and Saskatoon, smaller cities like Yorkton and North Battleford were either in a very marginal way or were entirely left out. Yet in Saskatchewan cities, in Saskatchewan's towns we need the use of this program as much as any other community in Canada. Towns especially have large number of homes that are serviceable, provided improvements, provided upgrading can be done. Despite the obvious need the Liberals left them out.

Well, why don't we do it, he asks? I don't want to take credit for the Government. I don't want to take credit for the former Ministers of Housing on account of the fact that due to their efforts and the efforts of the Government the Neighbourhood Improvement Program has now been expanded so that some of our towns and our cities can make use of it.

Saskatchewan through their efforts succeeded in persuading Ottawa that our small centres needed help. Instead of no small towns receiving assistance, Mr. Speaker, I tell the Assembly that today 17 of them are benefiting and I hope we'll have more included in 1976.

Concluding my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I want to present the facts on housing for 1975 and 1976. Our target of 10,000 starts in 1975 has been exceeded by at least 500 at last count and the number could well reach 11,000 when the figures are all in. Of these, roughly 7,500 are new homes and 3,000 are apartments.

In Regina, which the Hon. Member represents, 2,000 homes were built along with 1,000 apartment units.

The Member for Qu'Appelle commented on rent controls. I can remember the debate on rent controls, how concerned the Members opposite were with respect to new housing as we introduced our rent control program. How the possibility of public involvement in apartment construction of new suites would stop.

The Member for Qu'Appelle would be interested to learn that the same Federal Government whose virtues he extols is predicting another 1,000 apartment units for Regina in 1976 despite rent controls of this Government.

At present 1,200 units are under construction and over 650 will be available for rent by June. I want to assure, Mr. Speaker, this Assembly that this NDP Government intends to continue to make maximum use of grants, to make maximum use of loans that the Ottawa Government offers and to undertake our own Saskatchewan programs to meet our own unique needs.

I therefore, Mr. Speaker, move, seconded by Hon. Mr. Robbins, an amendment to this resolution.

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

commends the Government of Saskatchewan for its initiatives in housing, notably:

- (a) The Co-operative Housing Building Program;
- (b) Home Builders Assistance Grant;
- (c) Senior Citizens Home Repair Program;
- (d). Senior Citizens Rental Program;

and urges the Government of Saskatchewan to continue to pursue new initiatives in home renovation, land assembly and encouragement of apartment construction.

The debate continues on the motion and the amendment.

**Mr. R.L. Collver** (Leader of the Progressive Conservatives): — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to get into this debate but with two and a half minutes left to go, it would be difficult to even comment briefly on the Minister's remarks. I wonder if we might call it 12:30 at this point.

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

**Mr. Collver:** — Mr. Speaker, in the discussion of housing and as complicated an area of housing, I felt that somehow this morning in the explanations given by the Minister and quite frankly in the discussions by the Member to my right the other day, that there seems to be a feeling that the very complicated and complex housing market and housing conditions somehow be made simplistic and be made simplistic by governmental action. The amendment, and I haven't got a copy of the amendment and did not have time to jot it down, but as I understand it, it was commending the present government for taking some needed steps in some areas of necessity such as the senior citizens housing area and that kind of area and for that I do commend the present government. I believe that the present government has taken some action in terms of senior citizens housing and in terms of assisting senior citizens in fixing up their older housing. I think that was a rather interesting and very exceptionally well thought out program and is helping the senior citizens in this province to meet the needs of their older houses and to make them a little better and to make the accommodation a little better.

However, in all of the discussions that we've heard today and in the discussions we heard before there seems to be an over-emphasis on government action, that somehow government is going to solve all the problems. That if government could only find the right magic formula, if government could only find the right

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subsidization program, that somehow the housing crisis or the housing situation in our country would be solved.

Mr. Speaker, in every other country where government action is the primary action in meeting housing needs, and I mention countries such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Russia, Spain, and in some instances, Great Britain, to a very large extent Great Britain, in those countries where government action is the prime action, the housing situation is deplorable. Accommodation for people is based not so much on a family need, but on an individual need. On the average, I understand, in some of these countries, the accommodation is as low as 200 square feet per person, for a family in some instances even lower than that, and that's with regard to a single person. Quite frankly we have seen and I think very dramatically in the last three or four or five years in Canada that the more the government becomes involved in the housing situation, due to political needs, the less adequate is the housing that is being provided to the people of this country.

Now, the Minister mentioned this morning, Mr. Speaker, the shortage of skilled labour in the province of Saskatchewan. I agree with that. There is a shortage of skilled labour in the province of Saskatchewan. And there were a lot of platitudes this morning about how these skilled labourers were going to be encouraged back into the province. There was no mention whatsoever made of two very key factors. One, why is there a shortage of skilled labour in Saskatchewan? Why? Because the atmosphere and climate in Saskatchewan, we believe, is not conducive to their working here. We have certainly a return in the last couple of years of people from other provinces, notably Alberta and British Columbia and most notably British Columbia, returning to the province of Saskatchewan.

But I think if you examine this in more detail I think you will find that the vast majority of those returning to Saskatchewan are not the skilled labour types at all. The vast majority of the people returning to Saskatchewan are people who are looking to become skilled labourers, are people who are, first of all, unskilled labourers and unskilled workers returning here. And, secondly, the older or the senior citizens returning here, finding that it is not quite as glowing as they thought it was in British Columbia and that the real influx of people here is not in the skilled labour field.

Now what are we really doing about improving this situation? Have we talked about, or discussed, or has the Minister mentioned or has anyone suggested changing or attempting to change the apprenticeship program in the province of Saskatchewan, to improve the supply of skilled labour in Saskatchewan? Has anyone talked about improving the facilities of the technical schools in the province to improve the supply of skilled labour in Saskatchewan and to encourage people into the skilled labour field by providing increased resources and increased technological help to these schools and organizations to provide the kind of training they need to become skilled.

And on the job training, what steps are the Department of Labour taking, for example, to improve the apprenticeship programs and to increase the supply? We believe that not enough is being done in this area and that more should be done right away to increase this very dramatic shortage that we have in the province of Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, this shortage is going to get worse.



We are told that when the Syncrude project comes on stream in the province of Alberta that they are going to need between 5,000 to 10,000 skilled workers. And these skilled workers are going to be paid an extremely high rate of pay and, furthermore, they are going to be given everything found and there is going to be real encouragement to get the skilled workers into this Syncrude project into Alberta.

This is not really yet being felt in the labour market in western Canada. It is going to be within the next six months, a year, a year and a half. So the situation is going to get worse and the only way to improve that situation is to improve the supply of skilled workers in the province.

There was no mention this morning at all by the Minister and to a lesser extent the other day about the shortage of investment capital in the province of Saskatchewan. Why isn't this investment capital here? Why aren't we getting the necessary funds in Saskatchewan through the credit unions or through the banks or through the other financial institutions? What reason is there that we are, if you want, running short of capital in Saskatchewan? I am not blaming the present Government for that or the previous Government. Circumstances in the situation in Saskatchewan are such that I believe that in order to encourage investment capital coming here, you have to give people or you have to offer people something more than they are able to get in the province of Alberta; something more than they are able to get in the province of British Columbia or the province of Ontario.

Any of us who have ever been involved in attempting to raise investment capital outside the province of Saskatchewan will tell you that when there is loose money it is pretty easy, but when there is relatively tight money and you go down to Toronto and you approach all the mortgage companies in Toronto, and you are going to say, look we need some money to invest in a building or an apartment building or housing in Saskatchewan, you say, will you loan us the money? The answer is almost invariably the same. 'Look, we have 10 applications on our desk for just as good, just as solid investment as yours. We have money enough for one. Which are we going to invest in? The one that's 2,500 miles away or 3,000 miles away or the one that we can look at out our window, down the street in Toronto.' And that is the serious problem that we have in Saskatchewan. Of course, the people who are accumulating the funds in areas like Ontario and Quebec and other areas are going to say, we are going to invest where we can look at it, where we can sit on it. We are not going to invest in a place that is 2,000 or 3,000 miles away.

To a very great extent the present Government, the NDP, over the last number of years have been calling for western Canadian financial institutions, have espoused it in their brochures and their campaign literature and what have they done about it? Nothing, nothing. Five years in power, do we have a Saskatchewan financial institution? No, sir. Do we have a Saskatchewan financial institution capable of making the kinds of loans and using Saskatchewan resources to invest in housing? No, sir. A lot of platitudes, a lot of discussions, a lot of points made in the brochures. Do we have it? No, we do not. We have a shortage of investment capital in Saskatchewan and we need to encourage Saskatchewan people to save their money; we need to encourage Saskatchewan institutions to invest

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in Saskatchewan.

And how are we going about encouraging Saskatchewan institutions to invest in Saskatchewan? Well, we are damning them in the areas like potash; we are damning them and saying they are of no value to us, we don't want them here. Get out of here, the rotten people. And how are you going to encourage someone outside of Saskatchewan to come into Saskatchewan and invest their capital in one area if you say in another area, we are sorry we don't need you around here. We will just do it ourselves.

Well, we are not doing it ourselves and we are not raising the necessary investment capital to provide sufficient investment capital for housing. And that is the kind of thing we should be doing and not worrying about government subsidization program. Because as we increase the number of subsidization programs we destroy the free market concept. Then we can say, free market concepts have no value. And if the Members opposite say that and will say that publicly and will say it continuously and constantly to the people of Saskatchewan, that they do not believe in a free market, that they do not believe that the free markets serve the people well, then, I think, they are being honest and honourable to suggest, as they have, that somehow they stand both for the free market and for the removal of the free market concept through subsidizing programs to jumping in with ill-sought out subsidization programs.

Let's talk for one moment about the federal program of \$1,500 kicked in to each potential house owner. What does that subsidization program really do? Well, it really doesn't do anything more than reward the contractors and the high labour costs going into the makeup of that particular housing unit. It doesn't do anything more than increase the value of the housing to start with, to the buyer. With all of these government programs, Mr. Speaker, with all these government subsidization programs we are now finding ourselves in a short housing situation.

The Minister mentioned this morning that he was going to take steps, and the Government were going to take steps, to assure that good housing and adequate housing was provided to the people of Saskatchewan and I ask the Minister: — is it true now, are we providing adequate housing to our people? The answer is no.

He talked about the boom economy in Saskatchewan. It is a pop from a popgun compared to the boom that could be here. It is a pop from a popgun compared to the boom that has happened to other places and the kind of housing that has been provided in places like the province of Alberta, for example.

Well, let's talk about Albert which is a western Canadian province similar to our own. Mr. Speaker, a great deal has been suggested by the Government that they could provide for everyone what they call adequate housing. But I suggest to the Members opposite and to the Members to my right, that one of the most serious problems in the housing area today is the politicians entering into the field, if you want, the media, helping the moving pictures that are shown, indicating that every citizen in the country is going to be able to have a 1,200 or 1,400 or 1,600 or 2,000 square foot house just at

their beck and call. Without saying that we just simply don't have the resources at our command to be able to do it; without being honest with the Saskatchewan people or, in fact, the Canadian people; without saying to them, look figure it out for yourself. If you have so many million people in Canada and so much resources everyone can't live in a 2,000 square foot house, it is impossible, or a 1,500 square foot house, it is impossible. And if you raise the expectation levels of the people beyond the level at which the capacity of the province to produce, all you are doing with anything less than that expectation level is disappointing them and saying that we are not doing the job and that we are not solving their problems or meeting their needs. When, in fact, the best way to do it is to help them to meet their own needs.

One of the ways suggested this morning that is being done by the Government of Saskatchewan, and I don't agree that enough is being done, is in the area of co-operative housing.

Something the Minister did not mention, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the demand for the skilled trades and demand for the skilled tradesmen will drop as the level of co-operative housing increases. Demand for the services of the skilled tradesmen will fall as people tend to build their own accommodation more and more. And that probably in the free market sense is the answer to the current crisis. If you have a very high demand on services of skilled employees and you drive the price up beyond the capacity of people to pay, then the only answer is to solve their needs in another way. And co-operative housing is certainly one of those ways. But I suggest to the Members opposite and to the Minister, that the development of co-operative housing in the province of Saskatchewan fails in comparison to the development of co-operative housing in Alberta.

There is far more co-operative housing being built in the province of Alberta than there is being built in Saskatchewan. Far more! Some of it helped by the Federal Government; some of it assisted by the Alberta Government, but far more of it is happening in Alberta.

The Minister mentioned, I believe, 74 units in the province of Saskatchewan this year. Seventy-four co-operative units, when far more could be done by encouraging people to do just that, by an advertising program by the Government, not by subsidies, not by increased bureaucracy, not by increased number of government departments, but by showing people how they could do the job themselves. By increasing the use, and I admit the Government has in some small way introduced courses in co-operative housing into the technical schools but nothing like sufficient to meet the needs of the province of Saskatchewan.

In the province of Ontario, that some of the Members were shouting across just a few moments ago, there is a tremendous increase in the use of technical schools by people who are not involved in the building trades to learn these building trades because they can't afford to pay for the costs of the building trades the price of which has been driven up by this increasing demand. I don't think that we are doing anything near enough in encouraging people to become involved in that kind of an area.

I have mentioned, Mr. Speaker, and I suggest again that we

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are in a temporary housing problem and we should be meeting this need with some temporary solutions. One temporary solution is the increased use of mobile homes and mobile home parks. I was very pleased to see that the Minister, after some pressure, the Minister of Consumer Affairs exempted from the rental control legislation the new development in mobile home parks. Because this is a temporary solution to the temporary problem and with short-term housing that lasts between five and ten years as opposed to the longer term that runs from 20 to 35 years.

Mr. Speaker, I honestly believe that somehow we have seen, today, a combination of today's talk by the Minister and the talk the other day by the Member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane). We have seen a prime example of individuals who believe that government solutions are the only solutions and that government solutions will somehow stimulate the free market to action.

Well, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, most of the government solutions that have been tried in the field of housing have done exactly the reverse. They have stimulated individuals to get out of the housing industry; they have stimulated individuals to say that there is no future in the housing industry and we might as well pull back and get out of it.

The free market and the marketplace has served us extremely well over the past number of years and by tinkering with it, by fooling around with it as a sop for political thought, what you are really doing, unfortunately, not thinking step by step, what you are really doing is causing the free market to cease to operate and by doing that you are eliminating a very valuable, as a matter of fact, the most valuable tool that we could possibly use in providing housing.

I predict, Mr. Speaker, that if we continue with these government sops and government subsidies increasing the government subsidies just to meet political needs, that as we see a group of people, for example, who are without good and adequate housing such as the senior citizens. We say they are without housing and will have to give them a subsidy because then they will vote NDP. And then we see another group who are without housing and these are the young people, the young first time homeowner, and this isn't your program, it is the Federal Government's, and we will kick in a thousand bucks to them, or \$500 bucks to them because then they will vote Liberal and they will think that we are solving the problem. And in effect when we do all of these things for political, for obvious political reasons, and not realizing the long-term effects of them and not really realizing what is going to happen to the free market as a result of these steps, Mr. Speaker, by tampering with this free market we are going to find ourselves in a very serious situation. I predict that less and less housing will be coming out of the private sector over the next number of months and years and more and more housing will be built by the government, as I have mentioned before in this Assembly, and will, again, to the detriment of the people of this province.

The Minister mentioned the pride of ownership. I was surprised to hear him say the pride of ownership, since most of the steps taken by the Government Members opposite, in every area, seems to detract from the feeling that people are going to have the pride of ownership. I ask the Minister what about the shareholders of the potash companies and the pride of ownership that they had in that. I guess they don't have any any more,

the same in other areas.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to bring back to this Assembly some statistics from other areas in the country pertaining to how the free market has solved the housing problem and I should like to bring back some statistics from our own province to show how we are not meeting the needs here and how we could increase the programs here. Therefore, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 39 – ESTABLISH A STUDY WITHIN DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed resolution by Mr. Merchant (Regina Wascana):

That this Assembly urges the Government of Saskatchewan to establish within the Department of Social Services a study to consider the policies and operation of those policies regarding: — (a) adoption of children (b) placement and removal of foster children (c) aid and assistance to handicapped and retarded children either staying with their parents or not and adults; and report the recommendations of that study to Members of this Assembly within nine months of the passage of this resolution.

**Hon. H.H. Rolfes** (Minister of Social Services): — Mr. Speaker, I hope that I shall, during my speech not keep to the generalizations and very few statistics used by the previous speaker who just preceded me. I hope to prove my point by using examples and statistics in making a point on this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, when the Minister for Regina Wascana moved the resolution, I don't think there was any doubt at all that he was very sincere in the moving of this resolution. However, I was very much concerned with the manner in which he handled the resolution. I am concerned because it appears that a very complex issue may be approached rather loosely and simplistically. Unfortunately this is exactly, in my opinion, what the Member for Wascana did the other day.

Mr. Speaker, I feel the intent of the resolution, as I said before, was very sincere. The issues involved are very important and something which all of us can identify with in an honest and humane manner. However, it is perplexing to follow the illogical nightmare created by the Member for Wascana. He has taken a number of half truths, mixed them generously with a handful of suppositions, and then iced this concoction with a sprinkling of facts. What is more, he has attempted . . .

**Mr. Merchant:** — You don't even know what you are saying.

**Mr. Rolfes:** — It simply means this that he used half truths to his own political advantage. In very simple terms, yes, that is what it means and knowing full well that's what he was doing. What is more he has attempted force-feed this House with half-baked criticisms. One could become easily exasperated with such tactics but I hope that I will not do so today.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that in case where adoption or foster care is concerned, the public should expect and receive the utmost in consideration and respect. This goes without saying. If situations occur to the contrary then I personally want to know about it. It is in these situations that definite action should occur.

Every government program or service must be open to review. However, times change, as do public attitudes. Recently we have witnessed a couple of phenomena. First, a growing sentiment on behalf of certain public groups that some forum should exist whereby they can register their opinions and concerns; secondly, and similarly a growing awareness of the cultural or racial implications of our child care services. Obviously this is not restricted to Saskatchewan. It is happening across Canada and North America. The Department recognizes these changes and has tried to make appropriate accommodations.

Before I get into such specifics, I feel that in view of some of the generalizations made by the Member for Wascana that I should provide an overview of our child care programs and services for the edification of the Members opposite.

Society, through the vehicle of legislation, empowers the Department of Social Services and its staff to become involved in the care of children. This can take the form of preventive services, temporary custody or permanent custody. The issues raised in parts A and B of this resolution refer to the matter of permanent custody. In this respect, the Department's objective is to secure or establish the best, long term home for the child. With regard to foster care the rights and concerns of the child (or children) must be paramount, the rights of the foster parent, although important must be subordinate. This is the only obvious reality and we must accept it. The Department attempts to find the best long-term home for the child. In so doing staff members pursue every available possibility. Because of this, quite naturally there is some delay in the placement of the child. It is during this interim period that foster care is utilized. There is now a policy requiring that children, when made permanent wards, are referred to adoptions within 30 days of committal. If no home is found within 90 days we refer it to the National Adoption Desk in Ottawa. The length of this interim period varies from case to case — depending on the availability of suitable adoptive or long-term placement homes. By large and large the foster parents of Saskatchewan deserve a great deal of credit and should receive a grand pat on the back from society. Sometimes, some foster parents become emotionally attached. This is quite natural and in no sense do I mean this as a criticism. But when this happens, it can be easily misconstrued by the attached foster parents that the Department, in moving a child, is acting in an inconsiderate and heartless manner. This serves to distort the situation. The situation becomes more confusing when an adoptable child is involved.

In Saskatchewan, as in the rest of Canada, the demand for adoptive children far outstrips the supply. In view of this, Saskatchewan has established a waiting list. Presently the waiting period may exceed 36 months. Prospective adoptive parents must wait in anxious anticipation for an adoption placement. Despite the complexity of child placement it is the job of the social worker to weigh all of the factors. Because adoption offers greater security for the child the adoption is given priority over the case of the foster home. I agree that this situation may appear arbitrary but it is in my first belief that the Department strives to consider objectively all possible factors.

In terms of adoptions, once again the staff must give priority to the rights and concerns of the child. For this reason there exists a probationary period of up to one year during which the adoptive parents, the staff, and perhaps the child have an opportunity to assess the success of the situation. The great majority of adoptions are finalized within the first couple of months. During that time adopting parents may decide to opt out of the adoption. Likewise, the child should have that same right. However, if the child cannot look out for himself then it is the obligation of the social worker to act on his behalf.

Mr. Speaker, I should like now to comment on some of the statements made by the Member for Wascana. I do so in order to point out some errors, omissions and to set the facts straight. The Member for Wascana alluded to several specific cases during his speech. He implied that in each case the people concerned were never consulted with regard to the reasons for departmental decisions. I am advised by my Department that as far as we can identify the cases he has referred to, the Department made extensive efforts to consult with those involved. Specifically with regard to the Prince Albert case, consultation regarding the adoption of the children occurred for well over a year. We have documented evidence that the adoption was a topic of discussion at virtually every contact between the staff and the adults involved.

The Member stated that the Hughes report on the Doucette case was somehow stifled by the Department. Mr. Speaker, the Member is dead wrong. The report of this committee was given ample distribution and fortunately the Member knows this. The Member stated that it was the Saskatoon region which decides the case, it was in fact the Prince Albert region. Wrong once again.

The Members states that there is no provision under the regulations for an impartial hearing. Once again, Mr. Speaker, he is dead wrong. Section 10 of The Department of Social Services Act, 1972, empowers the Minister to establish formal or ad hoc appeal procedures.

The Member is moving his resolution inferred that all departmental decisions were made in isolation of public input. Once again he is dead wrong. For example, let us take a look at the Doucette situation. I do not want to deal with this specific case in any detail but unfortunately since the Member has brought this case up, and since has made some erroneous generalizations I feel that corrections must be made.

In 1974, the Prince Albert Planning Committee was established. The planning committee involved Department staff and foster

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parents. In 1975 this same planning committee was involved in the Doucette case from the outset. Also, and more importantly, it concurred with and supported those decisions made by the Department. Once again, Mr. Speaker, the move of the resolution was wrong.

The Member attempted to suggest that the Department has been doing absolutely nothing for the past while. Mr. Speaker, again he is wrong. The fact of the matter is that the Department policies and practices are continually being reviewed and as a consequence definite steps have been made. I will be referring to these actions in a few minutes.

The Member for Wascana attempted to suggest that this Government has done nothing for the care of the mentally retarded child. He stated that it was government policy to spend hundreds of dollars to institutionalize mentally retarded children but that the government would do nothing to subsidize the family to keep a child at home. Once again, the Member was dead wrong. In 1973 this government passed The Family Services Act. Sections 6, 7 and 8 of this Act empowers the Minister of Social Services to assist families so that their child or children can remain in their own home.

The Member for Regina Wascana committed seven major errors. Mr. Speaker, my point is simply this – the Member's resolution clearly calls for an internal study on these matters but the arguments presented by the Member in moving this resolution have little or no basis in fact.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution raises a number of important issues. It is not my intention to sidestep any of them – not in the least. It is true that the Department has come under recent criticism. But in reviewing this whole area I am convinced that most of this criticism is unfounded. I want to point out to this House that the Department of Social Services has been steadily reviewing its policies and practices. Let me give you a brief list of the positive steps which have occurred as a result.

The Department was aware that it had under its care many children who were hard to place in long-term settings. The Department responded by initiating first, and that was under the previous government, the AIM Program and later the REACH Program. This program provides specialized staff and services and had proven to be very successful.

A few years ago no inter-provincial, nationwide agency existed for the placement of children. At that time the major available resources, outside this province, was an international adoption agency. In recognition of this Saskatchewan, along with other provinces, worked together to establish a "National Adoption Desk". This agency is now a fact. Assuming that the National Adopt Desk is effective in offering a wider scope of placement resources it is my hope that we will be in a position to curtail the practice of international adoption. I can assure this House that I will be keeping a very close eye on this matter.

With regard to the removal and placement of foster children, certain interest groups such as the Foster Parents Association requested involvement. I might add that a good deal of this awareness was initiated by departmental staff. The result has



been the establishment of permanent planning committees in each region. This process began in 1974. Today a very close relationship exists between departmental staff and those interested parties. Public input is a fact! Before a child is moved, the case is reviewed by this committee so that the best plan possible will be realized for that child.

The fourth step taken by the Department was that there has been a growing public request for a formalized appeal mechanism with regard to foster and adoptive care. This trend has occurred right across Canada. But today most provinces do not have any such appeal mechanism.

The Member for Wascana would like to have us believe that any departmental response in this regard had been minimal and of only recent occurrence. Not so, Mr. Speaker. Internal Department planning began in 1974. In the spring of 1975, before the Doucette case occurred, the Department made a formal agreement with Dr. Norman of the University of Saskatchewan. His report on a formal appeal mechanism has been submitted and is now undergoing final review by the Department. In 1976 I expect to have the mechanism in place which will allow the Department to initiate an appeal procedure. The sixth step taken – our child care services have several cultural and/or racial overtones. Many of the children in care are of native ancestry. What has the Department done in this case? It has made an agreement with two reserve chiefs to provide emergency child care services on the reserves upon request. In addition, my Department is currently working on a proposal to be negotiated with the Metis Society of Saskatchewan. Our objective is to enable and encourage native people to become directly involved in locating their own resources for child care. Furthermore, this and other initiatives should result in direct native involvement in the planning of child care services for native children.

The seventh step. Departmental staff workshops are a normal and necessary occurrence. However, in terms of child care staff recent workshops have been planned and administered with the direct joint involvement of the foster parents. Certainly no one could imply that this in any way is an example of the Department working in isolation.

Mr. Speaker, all of this is firm evidence of sensitivity, responsiveness, and positive action. Needless to say, the job is not all done. Changes will always occur. As an example, I sympathize with those who feel that foster parents should have a chance to adopt, as indeed, over the years, many have done. In those cases where the older child and foster parents have become a close and well functioning family unit I agree that consideration should be given to those foster parents who wish to adopt. I know that this attitude is shared by others. As a consequence I have directed my Department to provide me with an identification of the implications of this complex matter.

Mr. Speaker, Part C of this resolution requires separate consideration. After reading the remarks of the mover, I would like to say that the Member for Qu'Appelle is probably happy – or perhaps I should say unhappy – to know that the Member for Wascana is following directly in his footsteps. Like the Member for Qu'Appelle, the mover of this resolution painted a picture with only one brush – coarse; with only one colour – black; and using the same slanted stroke. The result is a

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weird creation which bears no resemblance to the truth, whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, the mover's remarks on Part C suffer from the same deficiencies as the previous comments. At the outset I should like to remind this House that in 1972 this Government established Core Services Administration. This agency was given two major objectives. First, to administer the direct institutional services to the mentally and physically handicapped and, second, to coordinate those services offered by existing line departments. Mr. Speaker, this was a major step forward. It was indicative of a sincere and total commitment on behalf of this Government to improve services for the handicapped of this province.

The mover of this resolution made the wild accusation that this Government was subsidizing the destruction of family units. I do not believe this is so. But as a new Minister I can tell you that I have directed my officials to give high priority to the identification of any changes and, where necessary, to bring on stream effective programs. I would like to refer the Member to Sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 of The Family Services Act, 1973. The Family Services Act empowers the Minister and the Department to provide assistance so that the family unit can remain intact.

Next, the mover made the blind remark that Saskatchewan was not aware that community services was better than institutional services. Moreover, he claimed that nothing had been done in this province. Now, Mr. Speaker, let me relate the facts.

In Saskatchewan, three years ago the institution housed well over 1,300 residents. Today, there are about 1,000 residents. Why? Because 300 people are now living in the communities.

Three years ago the institutional waiting list for mentally retarded people stood over 500. Today it is zero; no one is waiting. Why? Because of the developing of communities services. Mr. Speaker, by my figures that is over 800 people who are now living in normalized community situations.

The mover indicated that Ontario has 14 centres for early childhood care. In Saskatchewan we have 11 developmental centres for the handicapped child. These centres offer services for children from the age of two and up. On a per capita basis this compares very favourably to the situation in Ontario. In addition, the Saskatchewan Government pays 100 per cent of the costs.

The Member pointed out that in Ontario they are building institutions, and somehow or other Members opposite love institutions for the mentally retarded child beside existing schools. He lauded this as a progressive step in terms of integration. Obviously, he has never heard of the situation in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan can take comfort in the fact that he is not running this province. In Saskatchewan we work toward true integration. I know that the Member for Saskatoon-Sutherland (Mrs. Edwards) will bear this out with me when I point out the situation in Saskatoon.

We do not work in isolated buildings – but integration of the mentally retarded child into the actual classroom.

As an example, the integration program with the Saskatoon public school system is held up as a model right across Canada. I don't think there is any doubt about that at all. The Government, through Core Services, is working hand in hand with the Saskatchewan Association for the Mentally Retarded, the Saskatchewan Council for Crippled Children and Adults, the School Boards, and the teachers to affect meaningful lasting integration. I ask the Member, go to Saskatoon and talk to the people of the public school system, talk to some of the parents and I think that you will truly find out what true integration is. Anyone can erect a building, but that is far from integration, and the Members opposite know that this is a fact.

The Member was critical that this province had taken no novel or progressive steps with regard to providing services for the mentally retarded. I would ask that Member to visit Saskatchewan before he becomes an expert on Ontario. He should travel to Rosetown, Wadena, Meadow Lake, Prince Albert, Tisdale, Mortlach, Wilkie, Norquay, and many other centres to see what is going on. Mr. Speaker, I assure him that he will find out what those hard-working community groups think of his slur.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, he should try visiting his own constituency and his own city of Regina. In this city, the city of Regina, there are six group homes which provide a residential environment as opposed to the institutional setting. There are another 28 across the province. Vanier School provides special services for severely and multiple handicapped children. The University Day Care Co-op offers an integrated program wherein handicapped children are involved.

Handicapped people operate the Plains Enterprises Limited which runs a concession shop at the Plains Health Centre. The Wascana Hospital Complex offer a variety of rehabilitative programs. Harrow DeGroot School exists for the mentally retarded.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the Member for Wascana to look around this city and this province at the services in existence before he runs off at the mouth.

Mr. Speaker, the list of developments and achievements is impressive indeed, and the list could go on. We have non-profit incorporated companies which employ the handicapped. PAR Industries in Prince Albert, for example, and Lohr Industries at Tisdale. The Alvin Buckwold Centre in Saskatoon is a recognized leader in this field across Canada. I will give credit here to the Federal Government for initially subsidizing this particular centre. They have done a tremendous amount of work and is certainly recognized, as I have said before, across Canada for the work it is doing.

We have a specialized transportation system which is the first of its kind in North America. The Member had suggested that this Government was reluctant to provide a grant to the Saskatchewan Council for Crippled Children and Adults for their transportation program. There was no reluctance, Mr. Speaker, there was no delay. We were working hard toward including special services within the existing urban transit systems of our cities. This has now been accomplished and ensures major and lasting changes which include the handicapped in the mainstream. Today, we have regular telebus services which are not

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dependent upon charity dollars.

Today we have assured telephone and telewriter services for the handicapped and in the months ahead for the deaf people. Once again, this program is the first of its kind in North America. We have the SAIL Program which offers necessary appliances to the multi-handicapped child.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on. The Member for Wascana, however, should be told that he did not get all of the information from Ontario which he should have received. For instance, they didn't tell him that Ontario has invited Mr. Jack Funk, the head of Core Services, to Ontario to act as a key resource person in aiding them plan and direct their programs. If our programs are so inferior to Ontario why did they invite him as a resource person? This has just not happened once, Mr. Speaker, but three times. Other provinces and states have also requested our staff as resource persons. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would like to repeat something from my Throne Speech.

Dr. Graham Clarkson, who is a noted authority in this field, while speaking at a Dominion-wide conference in Calgary, stated that and I quote:

Saskatchewan is the only province in the Dominion that has taken definite steps to resolve the dilemmas facing the handicapped through the formation of Core Services Administration and the provision of effective community based services.

That was from Dr. Clarkson and I would take Dr. Clarkson anytime as an authority as preferred to the Member for Wascana. Because he is an authority and the Member isn't.

Mr. Speaker, what I have said today indicates that there is no basis whatsoever or requirement for the resolution as proposed by the Member for Wascana. Consequently, I move an amendment as follows:

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

"commends the Government of Saskatchewan and the Department of Social Services for its efforts in providing meaningful and responsive services in the areas of adoption, foster care, the services to the mentally and physically handicapped.

Further, that this Assembly recognizes the importance of child care in our society and urges the Department of Social Services to expand in this field with due regard to the needs of the child, the family, and the society from which they come.

**Mr. B. Allen** (Regina Rosemont): — Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

**Mr. MacMurchy**: — Mr. Speaker, there is a good Saskatchewan blizzard brewing outside and I am not sure how safe travel is.

**Mr. Speaker:** — I just wanted to include that thereby asking the Assembly is in agreement with adjourning the debate.

**Mr. MacMurchy:** — Certainly, I think there are Members who would like to drive home and they can do some phoning to see if it is fit. And if it is fit to drive in daylight, I would move that this House do now adjourn.

The Assembly adjourned at 3:25 o'clock p.m.