

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Second Session — Eighteenth Legislature
30th Day

Friday, April 23, 1976.

The Assembly met at 2:30 o'clock p.m.
On the Orders of the Day.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. M.J. Koskie (Quill Lakes): — Mr. Speaker, through you and to the House I would like to introduce a delegation from the town of Watson. They are seated in the Speaker's Gallery. The Members of this delegation are Mayor Werner of Watson, Al Weigors a council member, Dan Loehn who is the Credit Union Manager, Rolly Hobbs of the town council, Milton Kerpan, principal and school teacher at Watson, the town administrator, Lorne Negreff and a consultant, Max Bohson of Epic Engineering.

I want to say that we welcome them here. We had an excellent meeting this afternoon with the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. MacMurchy) and I expect that they will enjoy the remainder of the proceedings here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Television News Report on Confidentiality of Documents

Mr. E.F.A. Merchant: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might direct a question to the Hon. the Attorney General. Yesterday he indicated that a transcript of certain material regarding a television interview had come onto his desk and that he wasn't in a position to deal with the matter at that time. I wonder if the Attorney General has now examined the words spoken by the Hon. Member in question and can comment to this House on possible disposition by him or his department?

Hon. R. Romanow (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I have studied the transcripts of yesterday but unfortunately the transcripts just keep on coming. I note another statement yesterday with respect to words similar in intent by the Member for Nipawin (Mr. Collver) and I simply say that I need more time in the light of what came to light yesterday and I am not in a position to make any announcement.

Mr. Merchant: — Mr. Speaker, has there been any interim decision made by the department or is the department in fact dealing with the matter? Have you asked that an investigation at the departmental level, I suppose, as opposed to the political level, be conducted and is there an interim report at that level?

Mr. Romanow: — There is no interim report and the only thing that I can say to the Member is that he should await developments.

Bribery — Leakage of Confidential Documents

Mr. E. C. Malone (Regina Lakeview): — I should like to direct a question either to the Premier or the Minister of Finance. Both Ministers will recall that when I questioned them two days ago on the bribery — leakage of confidential documents affair they both took refuge in executive privilege and refused to answer the question. The last public official to do so that I am aware was a man by the name of Nixon and we all know what became of him.

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Mr. Malone: — In view of the . . .

Mr. Speaker: — The Member . . .

Mr. Malone: — . . . I wonder in view of the fact that now a few days have passed whether the Ministers have reconsidered the situation and we are now prepared to tell us what happened in connection with the documents that were passed back and forth between them?

Hon. A. E. Blakeney (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member asks me to tell this House the discussion I had with one of my Cabinet colleagues. I think the practice is exceedingly well established in the British Parliamentary system, I will not deal with what may happen south of the border, but in the British Parliamentary system communications between Cabinet colleagues are privileged. I state my view that communications between Cabinet colleagues are privileged and I think no good purpose would be served by attempting to change the long-established practice.

Mr. Malone: — A supplementary then, Mr. Speaker. Would the Premier then not agree that when those conversations, albeit privileged, have something to do with the Members of this House and possible offences by Members of this House that the privilege must be looked at in a different situation and perhaps the public interest be considered more than executive privilege?

Mr. Blakeney: — Well, Mr. Speaker, after all, this is not a privilege which we are asserting but it's the privilege that the system requires. It is, I think, not reasonable to suggest that communications between Cabinet Ministers be the subject of questions in any Legislature. With respect to whether or not the comment concerned any Member of this House may I, as an aside, say that communications between Cabinet colleagues frequently concern Members of this House and sometimes the references are not too flattering. But to direct myself to the particular question you ask, I listened to the Hon. Minister of Finance say that he withdrew any allegation of impropriety. I repeat again that I am prepared to accept that position.

Mr. R. H. Bailey (Rosetown-Elrose): — A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the Attorney General consider the statement in today's Leader-Post, April 23rd, which was made by the MLA of Regina Lakeview, should a legislative committee on privileges and elections be formed?

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I believe if I heard the Member correctly the Member is asking the Attorney General to comment on a newspaper report which is out of order.

Mr. R. L. Collver (Leader of the Progressive Conservatives): — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the Attorney General seen the newspaper report on the use of civil servants by the Liberal caucus in today's Leader-Post?

Mr. Romanow: — No, I haven't.

Mr. Collver: — A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the Attorney General undertake to examine that newspaper report and to take that under advisement and in consideration when he is considering his transcript of the television report which is identical news coverage.

Mr. Romanow: — I am not in the habit of reading the Leader-Post all that carefully but since the Member specifically draws my attention to it I will make an effort over the weekend.

Mr. E. A. Berntson (Souris-Cannington): — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Attorney General would check the transcript from CKCK dated April 21st and compare it to the tape. I am sure he will find that it is not entirely accurate. I can acquaint you with the errors if you are in any doubt at all.

Mr. Romanow: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I of course don't have access or at least have not had access to the document the Member has. The only document that I have was what was purported to be aired on the television station. And I must assume that that which is aired was certainly the transcript, at least it was according to the quote by the Leader for Nipawin.

Premier's Trip to China

Mr. C. P. MacDonald (Indian Head-Wolseley): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Premier. It is rather traditional that Members of the Legislature often go on a brief holiday after the session is completed. I understand the Premier is going on a slight bit of a jaunt and from the newspaper reports the Premier is going on a trip to China, it's only a week away. Could the Premier bring the Members of the House up to date on his itinerary, where he is going and how long he will be away?

Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, the group which is going with me, you ask — my wife is going on the China portion of the trip, but not to a number of the other places and not at the expense of the Government of Saskatchewan. The other people accompanying me will be one person from the Potash Corporation and two persons from the Department of Industry and Commerce, one who deals in the wheat grains and rapeseed and one who deals in cattle and who is something of an expert in this area. In addition Mr. Kinzel, Mr. Lawson and Mr. Bailey will be going for all parts of it.

We propose to leave here about the 2nd of May on Sunday and proceed directly to China with a stop in Tokyo, a stopover stop in Tokyo, be in China for about ten or eleven days, leaving there about the 15th, then proceed back to Japan for four or five days of meetings. thence to Korea, to Seoul, to Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines in rapid succession and then back to Saskatchewan.

In all cases we will be meeting with agricultural officials, representatives of farm co-ops and other companies dealing in potash, with some talks with people who deal in other Saskatchewan commodities, particularly rapeseed and breeding cattle and there will be some calls of a courtesy nature with respect to major wheat traders who deal with the Canadian Wheat Board but who purchase Saskatchewan grain.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald: — Supplementary. If I understand it, Japan, Korea and is it south Korea, not North Korea?

Mr. Blakeney: — South Korea.

Mr. MacDonald: — That's rather interesting. And some courtesy calls and some wheat customers. Could the Premier tell me are all of these officials, six in number, if I counted them correctly, going along and I can understand perhaps the one member from the Potash Corporation, two from Industry? Could you tell me what is the purpose of the other three and what specific role they have to play in the Government and which countries are you stopping and making a courtesy call to wheat customers?

Mr. Blakeney: — I would need to get my total itinerary here, but basically with respect to the wheat customers they are primarily in Japan where we'll be meeting with the big trading corporations Mitsui and Mitsubishi and Zen Noh who are the fertilizer people, the co-op. We'll be meeting with MITI, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Agriculture. We will be talking on at least on a courtesy basis both in China and Japan about wheat. There are some sales of wheat and grains into Philippines and other countries and these will be discussed in the course of conversations with agriculture officials. The primary function of our visit will be to talk potash.

I have been briefed by Mr. Gibbings of the Canadian Wheat Board as to whether or not it would be appropriate to say a kind word with respect to Canadian wheat and other products. Some of my conversations will be a good deal more individual project directed.

Mr. MacDonald: — Further supplementary if I might. Could the Premier then indicate what the estimated cost and I presume from what I could also gather that you'd be away approximately a month, would all the officials spend the entire month away with you and he didn't indicate to me what official role Mr. Kinzel and the remaining three people are to fill.

Mr. Blakeney: — First, again all of the officials will not be away the whole month. Most all of them will be going to both China

and Japan. After the Japanese trip some will be returning since we are not pushing the other-than-potash items as vigorously in Malaysia, Philippines, Korea and Indonesia. Those are essentially potash calls, although there will be some breeding cattle discussions in those countries where we have had some success in the past.

Mr. Kinzel and Mr. Bailey will essentially be handling the numerous arrangements with respect to travel, hotels and the like which are a necessary requirement. I have found this to be such. Mr. Lawson will be handling press relations.

Mr. W. C. Thatcher (Thunder Creek): — Mr. Speaker, would the Premier tell us who these three officials are, representing the commodity groups? In addition, specifically would he assure us, in view of the fact that over the years the cattle industry in Saskatchewan has established amazingly good relations with that area, has had amazingly good success in selling them animals, will the Premier assure us that he will not foul that market up that we have spent so many years building?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Blakeney: — Yes, I think I can assure the Hon. Member that. The cattle industry has had outstanding success and I think that they would be prepared to say that their relations with the Saskatchewan Government in the last five years have not been such as to foul up their activities. I think indeed the big movement has taken place since 1971.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Blakeney: — They have worked closely with the Sask Trade and the Pacific Rim people in the Department of Industry and I think both Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Gray are going with me. They know a great deal more about this than I do and I will be taking their advice.

Mr. Speaker: — The Member for Nipawin.

Government Ownership of Farm Land

Mr. R. L. Collver (Leader of the Progressive Conservatives): — A question to the Premier. Last evening to the Science Council of Canada you announced that one of the ways that your Government was going to solve the problem of boom and bust for farm income is through land tenure policies. Does this mean eventual government ownership of all farm land?

Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member may have been there but he certainly wasn't listening. I announced no such thing. I did not announce that the Saskatchewan Government was going to solve any problems.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Blakeney: — Our Government is much fonder of solving the problems and having the people see the solutions than making the announcements.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Blakeney: — We have endured seven years of government with announcements and I think it's time to have governments with solutions. To deal specifically with the question asked by the Hon. Member for Nipawin, what I was saying last night was that the problems of food production and distribution in the world were partly technological and partly governmental and some of the governmental aspects included such things as distribution of food, transport of food, shipping of food, land tenure. I say that the land tenure system in a country like Indonesia has a major effect on food production in Indonesia.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Collver: — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Did the Premier in any way last evening to the Science Council of Canada imply that the land tenure system in Saskatchewan was a major factor in the future of agricultural production in Saskatchewan?

Mr. Blakeney: — No, I did not imply that in the positive or in the negative. I simply didn't deal with the question of what effect land tenure in Saskatchewan might have on food production in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Collver: — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. You also referred in the speech last evening to people as a natural resource. Is this indicative of your Government's attitude towards the people of the Province of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Blakeney: — Yes and No. I think I should obviously have brought my music as the Hon. Member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake would be heard to say. What I was saying was that to produce food requires not only technology but people and politics. And in that sense of the word the resources which produce food include technology, land, people and political decisions and that was the point I was trying to make.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Regional Funding of Regional Councils

Miss L. B. Clifford (Wilkie): — Question to the Minister of Health. Have you had any letters or representations from hospital boards requesting that you continue the funding of the regional councils? If so, how many would you estimate?

Hon. W. A. Robbins (Minister of Health): — Hundreds of them.

Miss Clifford: — I understand that the regional councils are going to form a committee to come and meet with you. Have you met with them yet?

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Mr. Robbins: — I met with them when the announcement was made on April 8th.

Miss Clifford: — Would you agree that these regional councils play an important part as far as helping the hospitals to receive accreditation and also to help the hospitals to give better patient care?

Mr. Robbins: — Yes.

Miss Clifford: — Would you agree, supplementary, Mr. Speaker, that the service and the input by these regional councils cannot be measured by dollars and cents and therefore will you consider additional legislation in this matter?

Mr. Robbins: — I didn't make the decision on my own I assure you. I want to make it very clear that we have SHSP approach these councils on the basis that those services will be continued through another route at less cost.

Catalogue People as to Political Affiliation

Mr. Berntson: — Not a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

A question to the Premier. Is it the policy of this Government to catalogue the people of Saskatchewan as to their political affiliation?

Mr. Blakeney: — Well, yes in the sense that each four years we have them mark their X and they catalogue us. But if you mean, do we keep lists indicating what the political allegiance of people is, the answer is No.

Mr. Berntson: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Why then the question in a recent survey to study community impact, contracted by this Government asking the people in a signed questionnaire if they are members of a Progressive Conservative constituency organization?

Mr. Blakeney: — I think the answer, if I heard the Hon. Member yesterday in reading what he asked was that, first the questionnaire was not designed by the Government of Saskatchewan, it is not being conducted by the Government of Saskatchewan. It is being conducted by the university so far as I can understand from what the Hon. Member said and certainly we did not, we or any agency of the Government, set the questions. It is I think equally relevant to ask whether we are categorizing people into members of Canadian Union of Public Employees or Kinsmen clubs, or 4-H clubs, or Catholic Women's League or all the other things that were asked on that list. I don't know why the people who designed that questionnaire felt it was necessary to get a profile on the person, they obviously did, any questions as to why, I think we might usefully direct to them.

Farm Credit Corporation to Reduce Number of Loans

Mr. Thatcher: — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. I am sure the Minister is aware of intentions on the part of the Farm Credit Corporation to reduce its loans by very close to one-half and the prospect of further restrictions being placed before the end of the year. In view of this situation has the Government of Saskatchewan and specifically your department, considered possibilities of perhaps supplementing this vacuum which is going to be created?

Hon. E. Kaeding (Minister of Agriculture): — No, we have not.

Mr. Thatcher: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister not agree that because of escalating land costs which are compounding the problem and which of course is making very difficult the prospect of farmers financing their purchases, that some supplemental help or aid or some form of support is necessary?

Mr. Kaeding: — No, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't agree to that. It seems to me that any assistance you would give in that respect would be built into the capital cost of the land eventually and you would just continue the same process. That I think happens even with farm credit where they can get credit at low costs and so they are able to pay a higher price for land and they do that.

Mr. Thatcher: — Last supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In that case the Minister in no way will fill the vacuum being created. Is the Minister suggesting that the Department of Agriculture will exploit the situation to the benefit of the Land Bank Commission?

Mr. Kaeding: — Certainly not, Mr. Speaker, we will probably also be removing ourselves partially from the purchase market because we don't feel that some of the prices that are being charged for land now are realistic. We think we will not be purchasing some of these high priced parcels of land.

IMCA Potash Development in New Brunswick

Mr. R. A. Larter (Estevan): — A question to the Premier in the absence of the Minister of the Potash Corporation. Is the Premier aware that the new IMCA potash development in New Brunswick shows up well in all test phases and does the Premier know that practically the same grade of ore as Saskatchewan potash and that it is 600 feet shallower than in the veins in Saskatchewan and has no Blairmore field to contend with? Does the Premier know that it would be a long-term supply and only 20 to 30 miles from ocean shipping?

Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I have seen those reports. I don't know whether I am aware of the facts that are contained therein nor do I know whether anyone else is aware of the facts contained therein. But I am aware that it is now reported that the finding in New Brunswick has promise.

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Mr. Larter: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the Premier now withdraw the Bills and call an election.

Mr. Blakeney: — No.

Alternate Method of Service for Regional Hospitals

Miss Clifford: — Supplementary to the Minister of Health. You have indicated that you have outlined an alternate method of service for regional hospitals at less cost. Could you tell me why you feel there is such a negative reaction from these regional hospitals and rural hospitals and regional councils, and why do you feel that they are so afraid that this will affect their hospital care?

Mr. Robbins: — No. I don't know exactly why. I know that the alternate proposals will be presented to the councils very shortly by SHSP. I might also say that back in 1965 the councils were going to be withdrawn but your government at that time withdrew from that approach.

Premier's Trip to China

Mr. MacDonald: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to follow up with the Premier. Somehow other colleagues got in and he has been very open with the answers. There are two questions I wanted to ask. First of all I ask the estimated costs, I am sure you have proposed a budget and it may well be estimated, but what is the budget for your jaunt? The second question, is there anybody from Sask Pot or whatever you call it, Canpotex, the marketing agency that you established going along on this particular trip?

Mr. Blakeney: — Two questions. The first related to the estimated costs, so that I am not relying on my memory, I will take notice of that.

With respect to the second question as to whether anyone is going from Canpotex, the answer is No. We will be working very closely with them. I spent a couple of hours with Mr. Roger Hatch, the chief official of Canpotex a couple of days ago to get fully aware of his views. I think it is his view and ours that it is not necessary that he accompany us but we will be keeping their interest very much in mind.

Mr. MacDonald: — One final supplementary. It would seem to me that the Premier is kind of endorsing the two potash companies that withdrew from Canpotex. After taking six government officials and doesn't even have enough confidence, why do you not have enough confidence in the marketing agency if you are going on a trip to sell potash at great public expense. Why then are you not taking officials from Canpotex?

Mr. Blakeney: — First, I am not going on a trip to sell potash. I think we ought to settle that at the outset. I am going on a trip to talk to people who might subsequently buy potash.

Mr. MacDonald: — What's the difference?

Mr. Blakeney: — The difference is that I do not propose to come home with any orders. And therefore the success of the trip ought not to be judged on whether or not there are orders but rather whether orders appear two to three years hence. That is the point I want to make now so that Hon. Members will not suggest that I am going to sell potash.

The second point is that we have consulted carefully with the people from Canpotex. They do not feel it necessary that they join us. I would be perfectly happy if they did, but they do not feel it necessary. It is not a case of not having confidence in them but rather it not being necessary for them to go with us on this occasion. They have just been over there. They were with Mr. Jamieson in Indonesia or Mr. Hatch was. He has just been in Japan. He has been in touch with other customers. He has not been in China lately. It does not appear a necessary or desirable expenditure at this time for him to be with us.

Mr. Collver: — A supplementary question. Is the Premier suggesting then that the trip can be regarded as a total failure if no orders appear in two or three years?

Mr. Blakeney: — Well, I suppose that if we fail to sell any potash into that area in the next two or three years, the trip would be a total failure.

Mr. Lane: — By way of supplementary. Would the Premier not admit that if orders do appear in two or three years that it could be the results of Mr. Hatch and his efforts over the last while with Canpotex?

Mr. Blakeney: — I would very freely admit that. I think that these types of trips where one is making contacts may or may not be productive. But in my judgment it is a worthwhile gamble, if that is the way to describe any sales trip or any pre-sales trip.

Proposed Uranium Refinery in Saskatoon

Mr. Malone: — A question to the Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker. I noticed in a short article in the Star-Phoenix that you will be attending a meeting in Saskatoon this weekend, presumably representing the Government. One of the matters that will be discussed is the proposed uranium refinery to go into Saskatoon. Would you tell the House the position that you will be advocating on behalf of the Government at those discussions.

Mr. Robbins: — I am not meeting anyone in Saskatoon this weekend with respect to a refinery.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I am sorry that the Member for Lakeview is on his feet each day when I cut off the Question Period.

STATEMENTS

Provincial Disaster Financial Assistance Program

Hon. E. Whelan (Minister in charge of Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office): — Mr. Speaker, this Government is pleased to announce that the Provincial Disaster Financial Assistance Program will be continued during the 1976-77 fiscal year.

Essentially the program remains the same as in previous years. However, based on our growing experience with this program some minor changes will be made. Effective immediately the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office will be assuming full responsibility for program operations of functions formerly of the Department of Finance. Damage for which insurance coverage is available will not be eligible for assistance under this program. On eligible claims the following deductibles will apply.

For individuals \$50 deductible; for small business two per cent of gross annual sales averaged over the previous three years; for local governments two mills on confirmed tax assessment.

Instructions concerning this program and the methods of obtaining designations for disaster assistance will be mailed to all local governments in the immediate future. Inquiries about the program should be directed to Mr. Larry Divine, Executive Officer, Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office, 2215 Eleventh Avenue, Regina.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, in reply to the statement. I am somewhat shocked quite frankly that the Government would refer to its growing experience and still continue to ignore farmers who have suffered severe damage due to flooding this year. Crop insurance is not an adequate answer and the Hon. Member knows that. Many farmers received no compensation for flooding south of Regina, downstream of the Wascana Creek. And seemingly from your statement they have been totally ignored again. I can only condemn the Government for ignoring farmers who are suffering severe flood damage this year and for that I am most disappointed in the statement made.

I notice too that the per capita grants or the grants for people who were forced to vacate their homes seemingly are not referred to in this. Far be it from me to suggest that that was a one-shot prior to the election benefit of last year. I hope it wasn't and I hope that the Government would reinstitute that per diem grant that was given last year to the individuals who were forced to vacate their homes. I can only say that this program, if it is based on your growing experience, and I think most people will be disappointed and you certainly didn't learn much. It is good as far as it goes but it certainly ignores two major areas. And for that I am most disappointed.

Mr. Larter: — Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the Minister's statement, I should like to say that I am very disappointed on the agricultural end of it where we have had farmers in the Souris Valley

who have suffered hay losses and crop losses for quite a number of years and they are unlike the small businessman in your brief here that they cannot be reimbursed and I think it has been really unfair to these people in the valley. I like the approach that you have taken on getting at settlements on the flooding as far as the 1976 flood is concerned, and I believe that we certainly do have to look at the long-term solutions though and finish these problems once and for all.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Canadian Pacific Railway

Hon. G. MacMurchy (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I want to make a statement on a vital transportation issue.

This past week Canadian Pacific has announced its intention to drop out of truck service to most points in the province. They will drop out by not applying to renew their Highway Traffic Board running rights when they expire April 30th.

Canadian Pacific originally served these points by train. In the late 1950s and the late 1960s they applied and received permission to meet their service obligations by trucks. Now the CPR is attempting to turn over the bulk of these routes to small local truck lines. Our Government regard this as one more step in the CPR's plan to abandon the service that it was created to provide.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. MacMurchy: — We are really concerned that while the local truckers may offer better service, they will not have the massive resources of the Canadian Pacific to back them up. Should any difficulty arise the towns along these routes could be in jeopardy. Canadian Pacific is prepared to continue its service on an interim basis to points where no local trucker is interested. However, CP will seek to charge rail rates which are approximately double of Highway Traffic Board rates. Excessive tariffs will effectively turn away traffic, putting Canadian Pacific in a position to apply to be relieved of its service obligations on the ground that use has dropped off.

Mr. Speaker, to the best of our knowledge none of the railway employees, who stand to lose their jobs, was given advance notice. None of the communities has been given any notice. Mr. Speaker, the Government will oppose an attempt by the CPR to disguise their obligation to serve.

The Highway Traffic Board met yesterday to review the entire matter in detail. The Canadian Pacific has been advised that its intention to abandon service would have to be considered as a whole, as well as on a route by route basis, because of its overall impact and the implications for the truck network in the province.

CPR has been further advised by the Highway Traffic Board that it will be expected to continue service until hearings can be held and a satisfactory solution arrived at. Refusal to apply for temporary renewal of its in-province authorities

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will jeopardize all running rights on provincial highways now held by Canadian Pacific.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. J. Wiebe (Morse): — Mr. Speaker, a few brief comments in regard to the statement by the Minister.

Let me initially thank him for giving an advance copy of his statement prior to the starting of the Session. Let me as well say that I am pleased that he made the statement today because I had planned on asking specifics questions of the Minister in regard to that very press release which was implemented by CP last Wednesday.

The press release in my mind, Mr. Speaker, indicates the total disregard by Canadian Pacific for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wiebe: — Especially at a time when they themselves are trying to obtain sympathy from rural people in Saskatchewan in regard to their application to abandon our branch lines. I have been in contact yesterday and today with Mr. Mayer from the Federal Department of Transport in Winnipeg. He assures me that Canadian Pacific has an obligation to our rural communities in Saskatchewan to maintain that service and it is their intention to make sure that Canadian Pacific lives up to that obligation.

My only comments in regard to this, is that I would urge the Minister of Transport, the Provincial Government, to work closely with the Department of Transport in Winnipeg to ensure that hearings are held prior to the implementation of any of the applications to abandon service. I would also suggest that the Provincial Government look very closely, before granting permits to all alternate carriers or alternate permits, to allow that service that is now presently being given by CP to be transferred over to another carrier.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bailey: — Mr. Speaker, I too, should like to thank the Minister for the advance copy of the paper which he has read in this House this afternoon. I certainly believe the Government's action and particularly the language which is contained within the last paragraph is in fact the attitudes the Provincial Government should be taking and I commend them for it.

I should also like to point out that we would like the Conservative caucus to make sure that the Government does deal with this organization in such a way that they live up to the commitments that they have to this province. So I would encourage the Minister in the statement he has made and he will find full support among this caucus.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

POINTS OF ORDER

Question Period

Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should just like to question you on your ruling on the Member for Rosetown-Elrose, when you ruled him out of order, quoting from a newspaper article when only yesterday the Member for Regina Wascana (Mr. Merchant) quoted from a transcript of the television newscast, and it was in order, and I just ask: does the electronic media have special status in the press gallery?

Mr. Speaker: — No, the set of rules apply to everybody in this House. The same set of rules were applied to the Member for Rosetown-Elrose as were applied to the Member for Wascana. The Member for Wascana was immediately ruled out of order as was the Member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Collver: — Mr. Speaker, my Point of Order is in regard to today's Question Period and the ruling which you gave on a supplementary, your allowing the supplementary question after the Premier had stated in his answer to the question by the Member for Souris-Cannington, that the Government is not responsible for contracts for surveys that they let. Surely a supplementary question would be in order to clarify whether that is in fact the Government of Saskatchewan's position, that they are not responsible for the contracts which they =d

Mr. Speaker: — Order! The Member is placing arguments rather than a Point of Order.

Now, I gather that the Member is suggesting he wants to know the reason why I cut the Member off after the question from the Member for Souris-Cannington, regarding "Cataloguing people." The reason that I cut the question off was I felt there had been some supplementaries and we would move on to the next subject. I will stand on the record.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. Pepper that Bill No. 36 — **An Act to amend The Liquor Act** be now read a second time.

Hon. E. C. Whelan (Minister of Mineral Resources): — Mr. Speaker, I am completely opposed to this Bill, in fact, I think we are being rushed without giving it careful consideration for examining our position from every angle.

First, 18-year olds in this province are recognized as full-fledged adults. The right to alcoholic beverages is only one of the rights and privileges they hold by law at the age of 18. We have said to these citizens, in a number of ways, you have good judgment; you have the judgment required to drive a car at the age of 17; you can own a vehicle at 18; you can sign a mortgage at 18; you can get a loan at the Credit Union

or a finance company. What is more important, you have a vote. This means not only that you can participate in elections, but at the age of 18 you can vote in provincial and federal elections and even stand for office. In the last campaign I will wager that there isn't a Member of this House who didn't have 18-year olds canvassing and working for him or her, who trusted them in their judgment enough to have them assist in helping the Members get elected.

If there is any logic in the argument being presented in favor of this Bill, if the 18 year olds haven't any judgment in the handling of liquor, what is there to suggest that they use judgment in negotiating a mortgage, or exercising their franchise? Unless we want to question the judgment of the 18-year old regarding the vote any other right or privilege they have at the age of majority, then I suggest that we should pass a law that bars everyone over 18 years of age from liquor.

Mr. Speaker, that's the Temperance Program and I suggest that is basically what this proposal is calling for. And if you ask those who favor it straight away, and some of them have mentioned it in their speeches, they will say that they are in favor of complete abstinence from liquor. To put it another way, in defence of 18-year olds, they don't think it is safe to give people liquor, from that point of view until they are 70.

I have heard the argument about liquor in the schools. People weren't able to get liquor until they were 21 — I remember when I grew up, people at that stage were not able to get liquor in the schools, they were not able to get liquor until they were 21, yet when I went to school I remember at every high school dance about 15 per cent of the students were drunk and you were not able to get liquor then until you were 21.

They will tell you that the young people themselves are in favor of the 19-year old age limit. For many years in this province, women were barred from beer parlours and liquor establishments. We were told continuously that women didn't want to get into beer parlours. However, we adjudicated and made the decision for them and the first time they were allowed in these liquor outlets, the number who attended told the story.

We were told for many years that Indians shouldn't be allowed in liquor outlets, and perhaps someone who can point out all of the faults in our liquor system, can prove they shouldn't be in the liquor outlets now. All the time it was denied them, we were told they weren't in favor of it. We were told they weren't in favor of the vote also, but is there anyone in this House who would deny them the right to vote or to liquor privileges?

The privilege of obtaining alcohol was denied women on the basis of their sex, for years. Prohibition or compulsory abstinence was forced upon the native people on the basis of ethnic background for as many years. We are now proposing to take a privilege from the young people in our ridings who are old enough to vote for us on the basis of their age.

When you look at the history of performance in this area, whether it was based on ethnic background, on sex or on age it is negative; and, as one who certainly sought and received, after they exercised careful judgment, votes from 18-year olds, this proposal is thoroughly embarrassing.

Mr. Speaker, there is one other area I want to turn to, and I want to ask the question, and I want someone among the sponsors of the Bill to give me the answers: Will the proposed legislation solve anything? It will prove that we are getting pretty tough in these areas, but everyone of us knows, and if you have a teenager in your home even though he or she doesn't drink, they will tell you, although the law is rigid and strict for 15, 16 and 17 years, and the law is there, we are not policing it; we are not convincing these people; we are not educating them.

Our record in this area, if we are thinking of abstinence or denial, is so bad that it must be embarrassing. We can blame it on the 18-year olds, we can blame it on the school teachers who don't curtail drinking in high schools, as some parents do, but, what are we doing as a group? Very little. Our record is bad.

We can talk about highway accidents and we can blame them on the young people, and we can blame them on liquor, but it has been that way for a long, long time, and frankly, as legislators, and as a particular legislator who sat on one legislative liquor committee and two highway safety and traffic committees, I question the effectiveness of chastising one group.

I remember well looking at the lists of 108 drivers who had been responsible for traffic deaths and out of a long list, only two were 18 and under.

If we are not going to educate the public from the time they can read and listen, on the need for traffic safety and the dangers of alcohol; if we are not going to try reasoning with the parents to set an example; if we are not going to try to organize defensive driving courses, breathalyser tests, roadside tests; lower speed limits, then, I think we should get really serious about this kind of law and we should pass it, but not just for 18-year olds, but for everyone.

In the whole field of enforcement, a survey was taken in the City of Saskatoon last year, I believe it was called, "Operation Overserve." It covered the sale of liquor to all ages, cleanliness and other conditions in outlets, enforcement of age limits, identification and so forth. This report indicates clearly our refusal to recognize the need for enforcement of the legislation we presently have. The need for looking at the attitudes that exist in our outlets, for, as the survey shows clearly, if there are violations by those in the 18-year old group, there are violations involving people in every age group from 14 to 70.

Let me sum up. If we cannot enforce the laws and are not enforcing the laws for 15, 16 and 17-year olds, how can we establish a line between 18 and 19-year olds and how can we enforce it?

Second, if these people are old enough to vote for one of us, and even work politically for one of us, surely we should be able to influence their judgment in the handling of alcoholic beverages, short of taking away this privilege, one privilege among many they enjoy at the age of 18.

Third, the need for programs regarding alcohol and traffic safety, as was clearly set out in the Ontario report, and has been stated in many reports, should get a thorough try, before we single out this group for legislative reprimand.

Mr. Speaker, I am completely opposed to the Bill, and would be embarrassed to explain it, particularly to the young people of this province.

Mr. A. N. McMillan (Kindersley): — Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in favor of implementing the proposed amendments to the Act as laid out in the Orders of the Day. I don't do so without some hesitation. I'm very aware of the fact that, to some degree, changes of this kind would indicate, perhaps, an inconsistent policy on the part of the Government, that is, the point raised about young people being old enough to vote, being old enough to participate in elections but not being old enough to drink. I say those are reasons that cause me to hesitate. However, I think the responsibility that we as a government owe the people of Saskatchewan far outweighs, certainly in the long run the inconsistencies in government legislation, raising the age to 19.

We heard a lot of statistics in the House since this topic came up for discussion and certainly many areas have been covered. I am particularly concerned myself, certainly considerably distressed by the apparent growing problem in schools with alcohol abuse. Certainly statistics involving young people in traffic violations and accidents speak for themselves. And I don't suggest that if the age was immediately raised to 19 there would be corresponding reduction in the amount of alcohol consumed by young people, or corresponding reduction in the amount of traffic violations or accidents by young people. However, there is one point to remember I think and one perhaps that has not been stressed enough in the legislature and that's the question of the dangers of alcohol abuse, certainly, to the moral and spiritual fibre in this province. And this has been raised by people more qualified in that field than myself. But there are some dangers that are involved with the physical abuse of alcohol.

I am under the impression and I have done a good deal of work with young people with alcohol related problems, be they family or personal problems. And I am aware of some statistics, really fairly general, that the Alcoholic Anonymous Association in North America seems to feel are accurate. They are under the impression that the average North American male can sustain fifteen years of heavy drinking before he develops an addiction to alcohol. By heavy drinking they consider six ounces of spirits per day or in Canada it would be the equivalent of four bottles of beer. So all members of society, I suspect, should bear those statistics in mind. They also state that from the research that they and other professionals have done it takes the average North American female seven years of heavy drinking to develop a physical dependence on alcohol. That is six ounces per day or the equivalent of four bottles of beer.

The disturbing statistics that these people come up with is that the best evidence they can muster indicates that it takes the average teenager one and one-half years of heavy drinking to develop a physical addiction to alcohol. Reasons given are because their physiological systems haven't matured to the same degree that adults have, their systems are more susceptible to developing an addiction to the drug. Those are particularly disturbing statistics and they are borne out by drinking patterns in Saskatchewan and I don't refer specifically to patterns of traffic accidents, traffic violations, higher incidents of drinking in high schools. The number of young people who are turning to professional help for treating

alcoholism and the symptoms of alcoholism in Saskatchewan has gone up alarmingly in the past few years and I think it's in no way a small result of the kind of legislation we have before us. There is no question that the greater the availability of alcohol the greater the per capita consumption will be, hence, the greater the per capita level of alcoholism is.

I point these statistics out because in Saskatchewan when the age was lowered there was a corresponding increase in the per capita consumption of alcohol by people under the age of 21. That increase in the consumption of alcohol resulted in an increase of physical alcohol problems among young people. I think on those merits alone, and those bases along this legislation is worth looking at seriously in the affirmative. Until such time certainly as we as the Government of Saskatchewan can implement effective enough education programs to make all the population of Saskatchewan, and not just young people, aware of the dangers involved in overconsumption of alcohol. The rewards that the people of Saskatchewan will gain in the long run will far outweigh the inconvenience the Government will suffer from having an inconsistent program.

I also know that the measures, if implemented as the motion reads, will be ineffective unless the Government has the initiative to encourage vendors and police forces to restrict alcohol use on a strictly legal basis to those people who are 19 years of age. There's a question that this is not being enforced correctly. And unless the Government is prepared to do that, to take some action to see that those loosely enforced policies are improved then a motion such as this for an Act such as this would be largely meaningless.

So, I think, legislation like this can be certainly distasteful but, I think it bears serious consideration, the Government must look certainly beyond this one single move. I would hope they are seriously considering extending the types of programs, the Aware Program being one of them, which is a small step in the right direction, and certainly improving their educational programs about alcohol abuse at the same time increasing the effectiveness of enforcement for those people who have to date been drinking under age.

I will be voting in favor of the motion and as I have said, not without hesitation. I hope the other Members in this Legislature will take this motion seriously enough and in the proper light to support it as well as I hope the majority of the Members of this House will.

Hon. G. T. Snyder (Minister of Labour): — Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few brief words in connection with the motion that is before us and I suppose I do so principally because I don't want my position to be misunderstood. I think it is an important decision that we are in the process of making, Mr. Speaker. It is one that is not to be made lightly. In the company of many other people I am also concerned about the trend to excessive drinking, especially in the case of a progressively younger age group. I should tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I disagreed with the provision to lower the drinking age from 19 to 18 some years ago in this House but I yielded to the presumably superior wisdom of the committee of this House which argued persuasively that a young adult at age 18 could marry without parental consent, could inherit an estate, or could join the armed services and fight and die for his country.

Mr. Speaker, if I were to be convinced that increasing the age to 19 would provide a solution to this grievous social problem. I would have no difficulty in supporting the measure today. I fail, however, Mr. Speaker, to be impressed by the argument presented to me recently by a public school teacher who complained because a school dance of grade eight students developed into a fiasco because of the use of liquor by these teenage children.

We in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, cannot legislate morality nor can we provide teachers in the school system with the intestinal fortitude which will allow them to operate their classrooms properly and discipline offenders as they must if this problem is to be solved. We cannot in this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, legislate parental responsibility which is so obviously lacking in 1976. I suggest to you today it would be equally futile for us in this House in the year of our Lord 1976 to attempt to turn back the clock and remove the right from our native population to consume alcohol. As indicated earlier, Mr. Speaker, I would gladly support the measure if I believed for a moment that it represented any kind of a solution. Instead, I'm afraid, we merely go through the motions, I am afraid we merely raise expectations. For my part, Mr. Speaker, as an alternative, I would support a program of mandatory ID cards with the rigid enforcement for offending persons, be they under-aged drinkers or be they the operators of drinking establishments. This and other measures I believe represent a more viable alternative to a well meaning gesture which I feel will not solve the serious problem, nor, Mr. Speaker, will it instil in parents and teachers and others an element of responsibility, the absence of which has allowed this problem to reach the proportions which it has in our province.

For these very brief reasons, Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid I will not be able to support the measure.

Mr. W. H. Stodalka (Maple Creek): — I rise and would like to indicate that I too will support the resolution. And I just would like to outline basically why I am supporting this resolution. Then I should like to offer a comment or two on the importance of it.

I happened to be a principal of a school at the time that the change was made from 19 years of age to 18 years of age. And I am convinced that the change at that particular time, the reduction from 19 years of age, had the effect of increasing the source of supply to the students. It made it much easier for students within the school to be able to purchase alcoholic beverages. The reason I say this is that in an ordinary classroom situation the last half of the school year from January to June, approximately one half of the grade twelve students reached their eighteenth birthday. And it's during this particular time of the year that there is an increase, or I felt an increase in the amount of use of alcohol in the school and in the functions related around the school. I also realize that this, of course, is not going to eliminate some of the 19 year old students who are 19 years of age and still in the school system. There will still be a few of these. But it still will reduce the easy source that presently exists within our high schools. And not only this, but I think if you talk to the people in the beverage rooms in small towns during the course of the year, visiting them, I notice in the latter portion of the year that many evenings seem to be spent by students visiting the local hotels, possibly some of us as adults could

be criticized for the same thing. But I am convinced as a parent and principal, and now as a superintendent, that that was an error and I agree that possibly maybe even 19 years of age still is too young. I believe though, that it's a step in the right direction.

As far as enforcement is concerned people within the hotel business or beverage rooms have problems with enforcement. I feel that there should be some changes made here as well. I feel the right to enter into one of these establishments is a privilege and in line with the recommendation that I read that came out of the Province of Ontario. I can see no reason why our liquor board stores which are certainly making extensive profits could not issue identity cards with students' pictures on them. That could make called for evidence to prove age when a student goes into a bar. Having been a teenager many, many, years ago I can remember the business of trading driver's licences with ages to go into a particular establishment and indicating that I was the proper age or whoever might be the proper age, and this of course, can still be very easily done. I know it is being done in other provinces.

I think that enforcement is the key, that changing the legislation so that you must be 19 years of age or older in order to enter the establishment is not a solution in itself. Enforcement must become more stringent and I would recommend that some form of identification that will enable the people operating establishments to establish the age of the individuals who are entering the premises would also be a move in the right direction.

Hon. G. MacMurchy (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, when the Special Committee on Liquor Regulations reported to the Legislature a few years ago, when we discussed the drinking age, I supported the Bill to lower the legal age from 19 to 18 years. I think you will find on the records I made a very brief speech in support of that change. In general I am a believer in giving individuals as much responsibility and freedom with respect to their own actions as is possible. In a society where adult responsibilities are in many cases assumed at the age of 18, therefore, from the rational point of view it does make sense to have the legal age at the same age as we assume other responsibilities.

However, Mr. Speaker, as a result of four years of observation of what has actually been the result of lowering the age, I have changed my position. I will be supporting the legislation by the Hon. Member for Weyburn, now before the Assembly.

I think the most important observation in my decision to support the Bill is the kind of representation that has been made to me during my tenure as Minister of Education. After the drinking age had been lowered a number of problems began to occur in the schools as was identified by the Member for Maple Creek. School athletic activities were disrupted, extra curricula activities of all types became difficult to supervise and no longer constructive. In many cases they had to stop the school dances because of the liquor problem. Concerns were therefore raised to me by parents, by school teachers, by school superintendents, by school boards, who viewed the increasing disruption of school activities with real alarm. Some school boards reported problems even within the school day as

students returned to class having consumed alcohol. As a matter of fact the School Trustees Association felt the matter to be of sufficient concern that they passed a resolution at their 1975 convention as follows:

That we seek the co-operation of the Department of Education and Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation in developing intensive programs on misuse of alcohol to begin at division three.

Mr. Speaker, community groups are also concerned. There has been a significant write-in campaign from my constituency, from church groups, from community groups, in fact even from representatives of the Canadian Legion. As well as the problems in the skating rinks and in the community halls they have had to stand by families suffering the loss of a teenager in an accident that can one way or another usually be tied to alcohol. In my community six teenagers were killed within two years in separate car accidents, all 17 and 18 years of age, all involving alcohol at one stage or another in the evening's activities prior to the accident.

Mr. Speaker, in the Punnichy subdivision of the RCMP during the month of November 1975 there were 147 convictions for alcohol and that was while the liquor strike was on in Saskatchewan. I don't have a breakdown nor do I want to have a breakdown. And while we can't assume that the reduced drinking age has been a direct result of this, we do know that in so many European countries where alcohol is most available the incidence of alcoholism is also greatest and there is a basis for the argument that increased accessibility will mean increased use.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of dealing with the problem of alcohol I have not changed, I remain an education and a pricing man. While my support is no less for the educational approach than it was a few years ago, my experience over the last three years has led me to believe that we cannot do away with legislation. The alcohol component of the driver education program in the schools has not yet had sufficient impact on our students. Perhaps the Aware Program has not yet had sufficient impact on our adults who in a great many ways provide the kind of example to the youth that we should expect. Certainly the youth are becoming more and more susceptible to the pressures of the liquor industry through their advertising and of most concern to me, through their involvement in the sporting world. Because we need to continue to strengthen these programs and because we are still struggling with a sensible pricing policy, we still need the laws. That may not always be so, I certainly hope not, but for the present with the problems that have been identified by myself and by other Members in this Assembly I believe we do need the help of the legislation. I therefore, Mr. Speaker, will support Bill No. 36.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. R. H. Bailey (Rosetown-Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I don't want anyone to think that this is a day in which we should be throwing tributes to the Minister of Transport as we did with his announcement, but I am always pleased to hear a Member of the Legislature and particularly a Member of the Cabinet and by his own admission has cited this afternoon that he had changed his mind on this particular problem that is ours.

I want to congratulate, first of all, in dealing with this particular Bill, the Member for Weyburn (Mr. Pepper) because in my mind there is no question about the sincerity that that Member has in introducing this Bill into the House. I also realize too that the introduction of the Bill into the House was done by the Member for Weyburn and has been supported by Members on both sides of the House without really a thought of what may happen to them politically because of it. I think that is the way that the Bill should be.

You know, Mr. Speaker, in listening to all of the discussions back and forth, both pro and con, I am reminded of the statement which was made by Abraham Lincoln when he said, "Liquor has many defenders but to this point in time nobody has ever come up with a good defence." And that seems the way it is even today and we've well passed 100 years since he was President of the United States. He wasn't President at that time, of course, when he made that statement.

I should like to reply briefly to the Minister of Labour when he mentioned in his remarks that we could take other options to control the problem which we have. I would like to suggest to him that even though the drinking age would be raised to 19 I think the idea of what he would support in the way of a photo on the ID might still be a desirable thing to go along with this particular legislation.

The Member for Maple Creek mentioned the problems which he has experienced in the way of being a school principal and now as school superintendent, and I want to say without being repetitive here, that I, too, have experienced many of the same problems particularly since the drinking age went to 18.

I want to re-echo the words of the Member for Weyburn and state that I, too, will be supporting this Bill but I think in my support to the Bill I would like to rephrase the statements which were made by the Member who brought the Bill in, that we want to be big enough, we want to admit collectively that the Legislature in this province has the responsibility to control the number one social problem that is ours. I think really the onus is going to fall on government benches. You people have by far the majority in Members and you know that, and I think the real onus of this particular Bill falls on the Government seats opposite. I would hope that you would give full consideration to the sincerity and to the approach that has been made by the introduction of the Bill by the Member for Weyburn.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Bill.

Mr. G. McNeill (Meadow Lake): — Mr. Speaker, I feel that I must speak on this and express my views. I will not be supporting the Bill for reasons other than that I know we have a liquor problem probably amongst our teenagers and that, but I feel all this Bill will do is take a group of our society and say, okay, no longer is it legal for you to drink but we will do nothing about stopping you from drinking.

I think, Mr. Speaker, all this Bill will do is permit our 18-year olds from legally entering the liquor outlet and when this Bill is passed it will solve nothing, it will not help our problems; all it will do is condemn a small group of our society and that is our 18-year olds. It will tell them we are not responsible any more and that they cannot live and become adults in our area.

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Mr. Speaker, I can't support this. If anybody in this House could prove to me that they have done anything other than try to pass a bit of legislation to stop the drinking of our teenagers, we have laws that will not allow anybody under age to enter liquor outlets yet they are not enforced. I have heard people, I believe it was on our side of the House, say that some teenager took a flask of his Dad's vodka to school in his lunch kit. I am asking anybody in this House what will this legislation to do stop a kid from raiding his Dad's liquor cabinet? Nothing, absolutely nothing!

I say once again if you can prove to me that you have solved the problem with the 17 and the 16-year olds, I am prepared then to say, yes, let's raise the liquor age. Mr. Speaker, I think if we in this House would spend a little more money and a little more of our time and our effort in education and time in the homes and in the schools — perhaps we should spend more money in the schools on liquor education — rather than tell our 18-year olds that they can't enter a liquor outlet.

Mr. Speaker, I think we are going to have to solve the problem, because we can't legislate it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. J. L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw North): — Mr. Speaker, in speaking to Bill 36, I make it very clear at the outset that I will be voting against this Bill which follows through to the accompanying Bill No. 37.

In my brief remarks before I adjourn debate today, I should like to suggest that in my time in the Federal House and in my time here, it has always been my impression that when we talk in the House about having a free vote it means exactly that. There are no ties from the Party Whips, no ties from the caucus, the free vote is exactly what it means. I might say that I was more than disturbed to read the Legislative Report of the Saskatchewan Liberal caucus which reads:

The Liberal Members are urging the Government of Saskatchewan to make the legal drinking age to 19 years from 18 years.

It is possible that this does not pertain to the entire caucus of the Liberal Party but I would sincerely urge all Members in this House in their deepest sincerity to weigh the pros and cons the way the remarks that will be made in this debate, and then decide for themselves exactly what a free vote is all about. Now I fail to understand where the Legislative Report came from other than the fact that it was mailed out. I am sure that the Hon. Members opposite have that report and I would presume that the free vote will mean what it does say and that a free vote will be held in this Legislative Assembly when that vote is taken.

I would like to make a few more remarks on this subject, Mr. Speaker, and with that I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. L. W. Birkbeck (Moosomin) that Bill No. 39 — **An Act to amend The Natural Products Marketing Act, 1972** be now read a second time.

Mr. J. Wiebe (Morse): — Just a few brief comments in regard to this particular Bill. I am somewhat at loose ends as to whether to support the Bill or whether to vote against it, and I feel like taking the position that the Leader of the Conservative Party (Mr. Collver) always takes and come down strongly on both sides.

The way I understand the legislation is that prior to the implementation of any natural product under The National Products Marketing Act, legislation will have to be introduced before such an occasion can arise. Basically in the legislative setup that we have today in the political philosophy of the Members opposite we really haven't gained anything. All you have done is postpone the eventual decision to implement a marketing board unwillingly upon the people of Saskatchewan. I would have much sooner seen an amendment presented by the Member for Moosomin to do away with the compulsory aspects of implementing the Hog Marketing Commission or Cattle Marketing Commission or any type of commission and return The Natural Products Marketing Act to that which it was prior to the forming of the Government in 1971 by the NDP.

The Natural Products Marketing Act was introduced and upheld by the former Liberal Government. The Natural Products Marketing Act which in effect said that any group of producers who wished to implement a marketing board or marketing commission could do so but only after 60 per cent or more of those producers were in favor of the implementation of such a board and if more than 60 per cent of the producers were in favor of that board, then the Board would be implemented and the board would be run and controlled by the producers themselves. That is not the particular case under the present legislation nor will the present problems under the present legislation be solved by this particular amendment. As I said earlier, all it does is postpone that which will eventually happen, is that Government Members on that side of the House with the amendment or without it will still be able to decide by themselves as to whether the cattle industry, for example, will have the Cattle Marketing Commission or whether it won't. The cattle producers in this province will not have a thing to say as to whether they want the commission or not. The cattle producers in this province as well would not have an opportunity to contribute to the nomination or the election of the members on that particular board to run their particular marketing commission in the event that it were implemented by the Members opposite.

For that reason, as I said a bit earlier, Mr. Speaker, it is difficult for me to decide whether to support this legislation or whether not to support the legislation. It is not going to be doing any further damage, it may help Members of this Assembly to have an opportunity to voice their concerns by means of debate prior to the implementation of the new marketing commission and for that reason I think that I would lean towards supporting the amendment. But as I say it doesn't solve anything nor does it help anything.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. J. G. Lane (Qu'Appelle): — I concur with the remarks just made by my colleague the Member for Morse, with regard to the proposed amendment to The Natural Products Marketing Act. It is a little strange to see the Johnny-come-lately approach of the Conservative Party when the battle raged across the Province of Saskatchewan opposing the compulsory mandatory implementation of the Hog Marketing Board or Hog Marketing Commission. We didn't hear anything from the Conservatives at that point when the farmers and the Liberals were forced to carry the battle.

I find it a little surprising that the Conservatives didn't come down firmly on the side of the previous position as it existed prior to 1971. And that is before a marketing board would be implemented, in any community, that there must be a 60 per cent affirmative vote for a marketing board by the producers.

I should like to remind the Members opposite that there were marketing boards implemented under the previous Liberal Government but they were done democratically. They were done with a 60 per cent producer vote. So any talk of the Members opposite that the Liberals are against marketing boards, we are against mandatory compulsory and arbitrary marketing boards, certainly we are, but if the producers in their wisdom decide and 60 per cent of them decide by a free vote and free choice that they want a marketing board, we are the only party that had a record that endorsed the standing of the farmers in that particular situation.

Again, we are surprised and disappointed at the Johnny-come-lately approach of the Conservatives, that they didn't take a much firmer stand, but as the Member for Morse says, every little bit helps, so we will be supporting the motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Merchant that Bill No. 40 — **An Act to amend The Deserted Wives' and Children's Maintenance Act** — be now read a second time.

Hon. H. H. Rolfes (Minister of Social Services): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words on this Bill.

I have given considerable consideration to the amendments proposed by the Member for Wascana but after having reflected on the amendments made I would have to report to the House that I would ask the Members to not support the amendments at this particular time. I do so, Mr. Speaker, because the amendments to the Bill have considerable implications to a number of other Bills, I think the Member indicated that when he introduced the Bill to the House.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, if we were ready at this particular time to make major amendments and overhauling of a number of

other Bills, that this particular Bill has interface with, I would not have hesitated at this particular time to support the amendment.

Let me say, first of all, that this amendment would have involved Bills such as The Family Services Act, The Infants Act, The Youth Offenders Act, The corrections Act, Saskatchewan Assistance Plan Act, The Children of Unmarried Parents Act, to name only a few.

I am not saying that the amendments don't have any merits. There are certainly some advantages to the amendments, but one must also recognize that there are some serious implications in accepting the amendments. I think, Mr. Speaker, that if one checks closely, Section 2 of the Act, subsection (b), it could be that the Act already does what really the amendment proposes to do. I think if we read the Act and the definition of a child it says, "Child means a child under the age of 16 years and includes a child under 18 years of age who because of physical or mental disability is unable to provide himself with food or other necessities."

Mr. Speaker, I believe that that particular definition may do what the Member for Wascana wants to accomplish by the amendment. Therefore, I find no real urgency at this time to proceed with the amendment. However, I also have a fear that if we make a blanket across-the-board raising of the age maximum from 16 years to 18 years, it could produce a situation where young people could financially embarrass and burden parents through the mechanisms of the courts. I wonder why a parent, for example, should be forced to support a 17-year old child who refuses to work or who refuses to attend school. Some obligation and responsibility, I think, must rest with that individual and the parents should not be put into a situation where they would be forced unconditionally to support that individual.

Another factor which moves me to not support the proposed amendment at this time, is the fact that we have not had the opportunity to yet fully consider the child maintenance proposals of The Saskatchewan Law Reform Commission. Let's discuss those proposals with members of the public.

Mr. Speaker, that particular report I have before me, was submitted in January 1976 and I have only received a copy of that on February 6th and have not had an opportunity to study that report and the suggestions made by the Law Reform Commission.

Therefore, in closing, I would say that I cannot at this time support the amendment for these reasons:

1. Because of the "interface" that it has with other Bills or Acts.
2. Because of the implications that it has for parents by having a blanket across-the-board amendment.
3. I should like to have the department or the Government have a serious look at the recommendations made by The Law Reform Commission and, therefore, I would ask the Members of this House at this particular time to oppose the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. E. F. A. Merchant (Regina Wascana): — Mr. Speaker, let me deal first, with the substance of this legislation and, second, with the arguments proposed by the Minister.

First, the substance quite simply is that children should be supported until the age of 18. It brings into a coherent pattern this legislation with the federal legislation, with the divorce legislation. As I said, when I move this Bill, not in the sitting that is now proceeding, but when I moved the Bill last fall, it is ridiculous that frequently women find themselves in a situation of wanting to take legal proceedings solely for the purpose of getting the vehicle of support for the children of the age of 18 or beyond if children are going to university.

Mr. Speaker, I can't imagine the Government saying that is not a policy that they support and, indeed, I noticed that the Minister didn't make any attempts particularly to argue with the proposal on the merits. Instead he argues with the proposal in some specific way, the principal argument being that they really haven't had the time to adjust their legislation. Now you have to decide how credible that is.

This very Act was introduced at the fall session. This very Act was allowed to die on the Order Paper at the fall session. This very Act was adjourned from time to time by the Government at the fall session.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Merchant: — Now, the Minister says, gosh, we haven't had the time to think about it! We haven't had an opportunity to make the appropriate amendment. Introduced in October or November, six months have gone by and now the Minister says we haven't had an opportunity to think about it; we like the matter in substance, essentially he says, we like the proposition in substance, but it hasn't been possible for us to bring the other acts into whack, if I may use that phrase.

Indeed, what I hope the Minister will do, and I say I hope, because I would like to see the change whether the Government brings in the change or not, indeed I hope at least that what the Government will do is now they will go out and they will bring back the amendment that they know they should have brought in some years ago.

Sixteen is an age which really dates back some decades, dates back to a time when principally young people grew up and went into the agrarian economy. I don't think that anyone in this Legislature would suggest that a 16-year old is qualified and competent to go out into the workforce, to leave school and to begin supporting himself.

An Hon. Members: — He did!

Mr. Merchant: — Well, if the Minister did, that may be part of the cause!

Mr. Speaker, the Minister also raises two rather weak quizzing quibbles and one is, that he presents the argument

that because the legislation now says that a child under 18, who suffers from a physical or mental disability, that that child may be able to qualify. May be able to qualify. Well the Minister is fortunate, you have come to the right place. I think, as far as I know, I am the only lawyer in this province who has ever dealt with that provision. There are no reported cases. I brought a case into an appeal procedure where the argument was that because the boy was completely deaf, that he therefore was entitled to support up to 18. The thinking of the court was, and they upheld that a completely deaf boy was entitled to support up to 18. But, Mr. Speaker, anyone going to school isn't entitled to support; anyone who is healthy isn't entitled to support. Where I have had some experience in this area I thought that this matter was sufficiently marginal that even over a completely deaf young boy I was prepared to take that matter into an appeal procedure because I thought I would be successful. And, indeed, it was very close to being unsuccessful.

What I did as counsel to try to keep some poor 16-year old from getting support from his father, may or may not be relevant to this House, but it is relevant in relation to how marginal a case has to be before support to 18 will exist.

Mr. Speaker, let there be no misconceptions, the law of Saskatchewan is that the month that you reach your 16th birthday that is the end of support under The Deserted Wives and Maintenance Act unless this Government allows a change to be effected.

The Minister then made some suggestion about children who might refuse to work and that wouldn't operate under this legislation. It doesn't operate now of the 14 or 15-year old who refuses to work and refuses to take any part in school or provide for themselves. The Minister is really finishing his weak argument about time with a couple of quibbles which I suspect even the man who wrote the speech for the Minister doesn't believe.

Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed, frankly, that the Government has decided that they won't pass this legislation. I am disappointed that they would — I am sure that the Attorney General is somewhat disappointed or ashamed, himself. I know that the Attorney General when the legislation came in in the last session thought that there was a possibility that it might be passed. And now six months later they say, oh, we haven't had the time.

I have noticed that they have had time to prepare and bring in 38 of the most picayune minuscule little bills to fill this House, to occupy this House, and fill the gap after potash, little nitpicky changes that they think are of some substance, and some of them are. They have legislation that affects thousands of families and thousands of children who are in need of help, deserted wives, families who are drawing social welfare, with husbands going scot free and they don't think that that is legislation deserving of a little attention between October, when the matter was brought to their attention and now the middle of April.

Mr. Speaker, I can't imagine Members of this House giving much credence to the arguments presented by the Minister in their rejection now of this legislation. I think that they must have decided, for whatever petty political reason that

governments decide to do, what this Government has obviously decided to do, that even when they are dealing with the lives of children and social welfare recipients and even when they are dealing with a case of merit that they know all the province should agree with meritorious, even then they play their cheap political games and they decide if we overlook this change, if we have overlooked it for the past five years, we will wriggle out of making the change now because an Opposition Member has moved the resolution.

I say that I find that somewhat disappointing because my view, and indeed I will have some success, my view by and large is or was that the Government would pay some attention to sound propositions that were moved, in what I would describe when I moved them, in an obsequious manner. I tend always to come to the Government, cap in hand, saying use your big voting majority to do something good. If it is an idea that comes from the Opposition benches, surely you should be able to overlook that, the people will accept that the Government passed it and then in what has to be an Act that they know they should pass, even over that Act, they decide to use the cheap political game of putting it off. And if they make the change in the fall, good. You will have to have noted, the press would have to have noted, a resolution that Mr. Vickar brought in which was identical to a resolution presented in the last legislature; the press would have to have noted that we spent an hour and a half debating today, legislation proposed by the Hon. Member for Weyburn, which was exactly the same proposals that were stood off the Order Paper in the fall. How gullible does the Government think the people of this province are?

I don't think the people are as gullible as the Government supposes them to be and believe them to be. I must say, that it is with some disappointment that I now find the Government will use a sea of nameless faces to vote down this amendment.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

YEAS — 14

Stodalka	Nelson (Assiniboia-	McMillan
Lane	Gravelbourg)	Thatcher
Wiebe	Clifford	Bailey
Malone	Anderson	Berntson
Cameron	Merchant	Birkbeck

NAYS —27

Blakeney	Faris	Rolfes
Pepper	Kowalchuk	Matsalla
Thibault	Robbins	Skoberg
Bowerman	Mostoway	Vickar
Romanow	Larson	Nelson
Snyder	Whelan	(Yorkton)
Byers	Dyck	Allen
Kramer	McNeill	Koskie
Lange	Shillington	Johnson
		Banda

INTRODUCTION OF GUEST

Hon. Eric Kierans

Mr. D. Lange (Bengough-Milestone): — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could interrupt the proceedings of the House to introduce a rather important individual when he comes back into the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce a rather important individual in the back of the Chamber on our side of the House. This is an individual who has been in Saskatchewan numerous times before. He has been here previously as a scholar, he has been here as a private entrepreneur. He has been here as a Cabinet Minister in both the Quebec Liberal Government of LeSage and the Federal Liberal Government of Trudeau. He is none other of course than the Hon. Eric Kierans.

Hon. Members: — Hear, Hear, hear!

Mr. Lange: — As well as being a very distinguished economist in Canada, former president of the Montreal and Canadian Stock Exchanges, he is also a wealthy private entrepreneur. He is also a controversial politician and an eminent Canadian. For those who are not aware of it on the opposite side, Dr. Kierans has come to Saskatchewan this weekend to resolve once and for all the potash issue as it relates to Saskatchewan and our future. Dr. Kierans will be the guest speaker at a grant finale in Radville, Saskatchewan tomorrow night.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lange: — I would invite the Leader of the Opposition or someone in his stead to come over and meet Dr. Kierans, if they so wish, or the Leader of the Conservatives or someone in his stead.

For the mental edification of Members opposite, I am also making a presentation to the respective parties. I would ask one of the Pages to deliver to each Leader of the Opposition some complimentary tickets and a poster for the meeting at Radville, so that in the event that they want to come they won't have to worry about paying two dollars.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lange: — With that rather short introduction, I should like to offer to Saskatchewan and to the Chamber in Saskatchewan the Hon. Eric Kierans.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Lange: — to commemorate his visit I have here a piece of potash ore from the IMC Potash Mine at Esterhazy which I would like to

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present to Dr. Kierans as a memento of his visit to Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. R. Bailey (Rosetown-Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I was just going on behalf of the Conservative caucus to extend an invitation to the honoured guest. I know that the Members to my right are a little concerned at what I might say. It may be a little embarrassing, Mr. Speaker, but I am not going to embarrass them. I will go over and meet the honorable gentleman. I am very pleased to have you in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Assembly adjourned at 4:37 o'clock p.m.