

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**Third Session — Eighteenth Legislature**  
**36th Day**

**Tuesday, April 12, 1977.**

The Assembly met at 2:00 p.m.  
On the Orders of the Day.

**MEMORANDUM BY SIR BARNETT COCKS**

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Pursuant to a recommendation of the Third Report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly I now lay on the table a Memorandum by Sir Barnett Cocks which in his view, if adopted, will be a sound investment in parliamentary democracy.

**MR. J.A. PEPPER (Weyburn):** — Mr. Speaker, in just following up the recommendation and the report that you have now laid on the table, I would like to move, seconded by Mr. Wiebe (Morse) that:

The memorandum by Sir Barnett Cocks dealing with the duties and role of the Clerks at the Table and the Legislative Assembly Office be referred to the Select Special Committee on the Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly for consideration and recommendations thereon and that this Select Special Committee be further instructed to submit its report on this matter to the Assembly with all convenient speed.

Motion agreed to.

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle):** — Mr. Speaker, through you I would like to introduce to the Assembly 14 cubs and scouts seated in the Speaker's Gallery from the first Pilot Butte Cubs and Scouts Troup. Pilot Butte I might add is one of Saskatchewan's fastest growing communities and participation of the leaders and chaperons, Janet Johnson and Carol Clark, is indicative of the growing community spirit in the community of Pilot Butte. I welcome them to the Assembly. I hope that their afternoon is entertaining and interesting. I will join them for photographs and drinks later and we wish them a safe journey home.

**HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**QUESTIONS**

**PURCHASE OF LICENCE PLATES**

**MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Indian Head-Wolseley):** — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a series of questions to the Minister in charge of SGIO and the issuance of licences in Saskatchewan. I would like first of all to ask the Minister if he has been aware of the persistent and very long line-ups of people trying to obtain licences particularly in Saskatoon and Regina, some of the duration of one hour or one hour and a half? Some people with great inconvenience to themselves have been going back three and four times and still

not able to obtain a licence plate. With the introduction of the new system, has the Minister or the Department done anything to provide extraordinary assistance or emergency service in this period of time which is such an inconvenience to the person trying to buy a licence?

**HON. E.C. WHELAN (Minister of Consumer Affairs):** — Yes, we have and I would like to tell the Hon. Member that I think the length of the line-up and the time that it takes is an exaggeration because we have been checking it out and I don't think it is as long — anybody that has lived in Regina knows that there has been a line-up at this time of the year for plates. I am sure that the time that it takes has been cut by 75 per cent from what it was in the first week or so. We've been checking it out. I can give you names of people who were down there for three-quarters of an hour or half an hour. It depends on the time of day that you go and that sort of thing.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — A supplementary question. I may have a comment to make on that remark of the Minister. How about the delays in getting the plates mailed out? Can the Minister inform the House as to the status of applications that have been sent by mail. Some people have complained to members of our caucus that people have sent in their application with their cheque in the first week and still have not received their driver's licence and their plates. Can you tell us what is the status and how far out of date they are and what kind of additional staff might have been put on for this purpose?

**MR. WHELAN:** — As I have pointed out over and over again, we are trying to change 720,000 registrations to a monthly renewal basis. We are trying also at the same time to register something like 520,000 vehicle operators. This is the only time it will be done in the next five years. It is a difficult procedure; we know that; we have been talking to the people that have been handling the licensing. We have been rearranging some of the procedures to cut down on the time that is being spent. We are meeting the people that are handling the licensing. We are doing everything that we possibly can. We anticipated this when it was set up. It happened this way when it was organized in the Province of Manitoba and it happened in other jurisdictions. I would like to advise the House and I am sure that the Hon. Members are interested that when you renew a licence plate now in Manitoba it takes about five minutes to do so, but the first time around it took just as long as it is taking here in the Province of Saskatchewan. Exactly the same consultants that handled it in Manitoba are handling it in Saskatchewan.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Another supplementary. Well I think it is a monumental mess, Mr. Minister, and I think the department has some responsibility to plan it. Could the Minister tell me if all the renewal forms have been put in the mail? Some people have also reported that they have not received their renewal forms for licence and for driver's licence. Can the Minister tell me if all the citizens of all the licensees have had their renewal applications forwarded in the mail at this time or are there still some to come?

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**MR. WHELAN:** — The people who are waiting for their new plates still can drive their vehicles until the end of April. If you drive around the city of Regina you will find that beginning with my own vehicle they have a last year's licence plate on it. I am sure that the problem will be solved by the end of the month and I am sure that it is an easy thing to sit back and criticize the civil servants and give them a bad time before the Orders of the Day, but we knew that this situation was going to happen. We fully anticipated it, but we thought that the people opposite would be more understanding.

#### **POTASH CORPORATION OF SASKATCHEWAN CORY LIMITED**

**MR. S.J. CAMERON (Regina South):** — In the absence of the Minister of the Potash Corporation, I direct my question to the Minister of everything and the part-time Attorney General.

I noticed in the most recent issue of the Saskatchewan Gazette, that Potash Corporation Saskatchewan Cory Limited is in the process of changing its name and indicates that its registered head office is the third floor, Bank of Canada Building, rather than Saskatoon, Can you explain that to the House?

**HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General):** — I will take notice.

#### **SHUT DOWN OF FERTILIZER PLANTS**

**MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose):** — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Premier.

In the last weekend edition of the Toronto Globe and Mail we have a quotation from Kenneth Neilson, who is the chairman of the fertilizer industry of Canada as well as the chief executive officer of Western Co-op Fertilizer. In his article he states, in regards to the industry, that there is every indication that the producers at this particular time are facing a prospect of moving to shut down plants and could well be shut down for a considerable length of time. In view of this study that has been made and the announcement that has been made, Mr. Premier, I wonder if you would care to comment upon the further acquisition of potash mines as being a sound investment for Saskatchewan?

**HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier):** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I assume that Mr. Neilson was talking about the plants in which he is involved — that is nitrogen plants — and I assume also that whether or not nitrogen fertilizer is consumed on the Prairies will have relatively little to do with whether or not potash is consumed. I think that all of us know that comparatively little potash is consumed in western Canada. On the other hand major consumers of nitrogen and phosphates are in western Canada and it is entirely possible to have a significant drop in market for nitrogen and phosphate fertilizers without having any drop in the market for potash.

**MR. BAILEY:** — A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The report goes on to say, Mr. Premier, that at the present time there is a tremendous buildup or stockpiling of fertilizers including the plants in western Canada. The complaint, of course, was that of the tremendous amount of investment in the stockpiles.

In view of the overall report, which includes our own production here in Saskatchewan, would you not consider that the investment, even within the stockpiles and the forecast which the president of the Canadian Fertilizer Plant is making, is not a serious threat to our position or to the Government's position, of acquisition at this time?

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! I will take the next question.

### **MOTORCYCLE INSTRUCTIONS — SAFETY '77**

**MR. L.W. BIRKBECK (Moosomin):** — I'd like to direct a question to the Minister responsible for the Highway Traffic Board, regarding Safety '77. Your department as well as the SGIO provides grants to the Saskatchewan Safety Council which will contribute immensely to the success of Safety '77. The Saskatchewan Safety Council embarks on April 18th, on a series of motorcycle instruction courses, but due to a high enrolment and a lack of training area, I understand that all they have at this point is the parking lot in the Balfour Tech School, a great number of new operators are going to be on the streets and the highways without proper riding instructions. Has your department taken any steps to correct this problem before April 18th; if so what are they?

**HON. G. MacMURCHY (Minister of Municipal Affairs):** — Mr. Speaker, I'll have to take notice of the question. I don't have the answer in my mind.

### **GOVERNMENT PENSION POLICY**

**MR. E.F.A. MERCHANT (Regina Wascana):** — I'd like to direct a question to the Minister in charge of the Public Service Superannuation Board. I understand he has just returned from a conference. The Minister last year indicated that the province had paid out, I believe, \$2.4 million, to subsidize superannuates. What will the cost be to the province this year, for the payment to the superannuates?

**HON. W.A. ROBBINS (Minister of Health):** — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure I've got the question entirely. You're talking about the Public Service of Saskatchewan — the total payments? It is in the range of \$6 million.

**MR. MERCHANT:** — Would the Minister agree that the superannuates would have been far better off had they had a funded, a fully funded program in the first place, rather than having the money over the years, put directly into general revenues and held in the manner that it was as a supposed debt? Would the Minister agree that the people now drawing pensions, after having worked for the Government would have been better off had they been better treated in the past?

**MR. ROBBINS:** — Yes, I've been saying that for years.

**MR. MERCHANT:** — Final. Would the Minister not also agree that in essence, what the Government is doing now with the pensions policy

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regarding public servants, is that the employees are receiving the promise of a pension which would run about half a billion dollars in the hole if all of the employees stayed on to pick up their pensions and that, in fact, what you are doing is either conning the taxpayers or conning the workers? Either the taxpayers will pick up an overwhelming load that they don't anticipate and that your Government is not warning them about, or in the alternative people who believe they are getting pensions will, in fact, quit their jobs and you're conning the workers into thinking that they are receiving a pension that they, in fact, will not receive?

**MR. ROBBINS:** — Mr. Speaker, the situation is no different for the public service employees than it is for any of the private or public employees across Canada who are participating in 15,853 pension plans, which cover 3,426,245 people and not 20 per cent of them will end up with reasonable pensions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

### **GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT LIMITS**

**MR. E.A. BERNTSON (Souris-Cannington):** — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. In view of the fact that several of my friends and neighbors who are engaged in the agricultural industry in Saskatchewan and I'm sure several farmers all over Saskatchewan have in recent weeks been ticketed for being one or two hundred pounds overweight on the front axle of their grain truck, while still staying within the gross vehicle weight limits and in view of the fact that most farmers do not have scales on their farms, would the Minister and his department consider a change in this policy to allow, perhaps a ten per cent fudge factor for a particular axle providing they stay within the gross vehicle weight limits?

**HON. G. MacMURCHY (Minister of Municipal Affairs):** — Mr. Speaker, there has been no change in the load limit policy of the Government. It is true that we made some proposals with respect to municipal load limits, but there has not been any change. What the Highway Traffic Board officers are presently carrying out are the regulations which are now in effect.

**MR. BERNTSON:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I agree with all that. What I'm asking is, would the Minister consider a change in policy to allow for a fudge factor on one axle within the existing limits? To clarify, Mr. Speaker, the tickets are being issued for being overweight just one or two hundred pounds on one axle while still being within the gross vehicle weight.

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — We have not considered to this point any change in the existing policy.

### **IS CHAIRMAN OF WESTERN DEVELOPMENT MUSEUM ON GOVERNMENT PAYROLL**

**MR. G.H. PENNER (Saskatoon Eastview):** — A question to the Attorney General. Are you aware whether there has been any correspondence received within the

last few days from the city of Saskatoon with regard to the recent dismissal of Mr. Wilson from the WDM and the subsequent resignation of Mr. Unrau?

**MR. ROMANOW:** — I have received no information. It may be possible that some other Minister has.

**MR. PENNER:** — If such correspondence were to come forward does the Attorney General have any opinion whether or not, if for example, an inquiry were to be asked for, whether the Government would carry one forward?

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! Order! I'll take the next question. I'll take the Member for Swift Current.

### **CONSIDERATION OF CLOSURE OF SWIFT CURRENT POWER AND GENERATING STATION**

**MR. D.M. HAM (Swift Current):** — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister in charge of Saskatchewan Power Corporation. Is it true Mr. Minister that SPC plans to close the Swift Current generating, Swift Current Power and Generating Station?

**HON. J.R. MESSER (Minister of Mineral Resources):** — I believe that SPC is aware that at some point in time in the future there may have to be consideration given in regard to whether or not it is economically feasible to continue the operation of that generating station. There is no decision that has been made at this point in time.

**MR. HAM:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. If this is the case, Mr. Minister, will the people whose jobs will be affected be moved from the city or will they be offered jobs in the area?

**MR. MESSER:** — As has been the practice and the policy of the past where generating stations or the like operations have been phased out of operation by the Saskatchewan Power Corporation to be joined into the overall provincial grid, the jobs that have been in those places have always been absorbed into the SPC system with as little inconvenience as possible.

**MR. HAM:** — When do you, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, expect a final decision in this regard?

**MR. MESSER:** — I think that that is too hypothetical of a question to really address ourselves to. It is always under constant review. I am not aware of any final decision coming in the near future.

### **IS SPC CORY A SUBSIDIARY OF PCS**

**MR. S.J. CAMERON (Regina South):** — Mr. Speaker, I ask a question of the Attorney General as a member of the Board of Directors of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. Was PCS Cory Limited incorporated as a subsidiary

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of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan? If so why is it in the process of changing its name and do you intend to incorporate additional subsidiaries?

**HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General):** — Mr. Speaker, I said I would take notice of the first question and I am going to take notice of this question in the same category.

### **GRANTS IN LIEU TO MUNICIPALITIES**

**MR. R.A. LARTER (Estevan):** — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. RMs are now required to supply increased services, such as roads, schools, hospitals, recreational facilities, an increased police force as a direct result of Crown corporations involvement in our area and other areas. With this reduced tax base it is a less than fair and equitable arrangement. Will the Government take steps to change these formulas wherever Sask Power moves into an area — Estevan?

**HON. G. MacMURCHY (Minister of Municipal Affairs):** — Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member is referring to a policy of grants in lieu. I might report to the Hon. Member that this whole issue of grants in lieu is under consideration by the Government. As a matter of fact the Hon. Member will recall the appointment of the former Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, Mr. Walters, as a special advisor on municipal financing. He is looking at this whole issue of grants in lieu. As yet we do not have a clearly defined policy to announce.

**MR. LARTER:** — A final supplementary. Could the Minister tell us approximately when these studies will be done, when we will hear something on this?

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — I am sorry I can't give a specific time.

### **LICENCE PLATE PAINT**

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Mr. Speaker, I would once again like to direct a question to the Minister in charge of licence plates. Could the Minister inform the House if he has had any complaints about the legibility of the paint on the licence plates? Some people have indicated and I have noticed myself you almost have to have perfect vision or be right on top of someone in order to see the licence plate number. Has the Minister had any complaints? Could he tell me who the consultant was who gave him the recommendation of the color?

**MR. WHELAN:** — I haven't had any complaints of that sort. I have had lots of others, but not one of those.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Has the Minister made a decision yet as to whether or not he is going to increase the fees paid or the remuneration of licence issuers in Saskatchewan so that at least they can hire more staff to try to look after the administrative horror . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! Next question.

## **TABLE RICHARD THOMAS REPORT**

**MR. H.W. LANE (Saskatoon Sutherland):** — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. The recent dismissal or firing if you like of Gordon Wilson at the Saskatoon Western Development Museum and close on the heels of that, the protest resignation of Unrau has been of some concern to the citizens of Saskatoon and people of Saskatchewan. In light of the fact that this followed very closely on the heels of a report done by your government called the Richard Thomas Report, I would ask if you would be prepared to table that report in this Assembly so that we can have a look at it and see what the involvement of the Government was?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — I have no knowledge of the Richard Thomas Report. I will take notice of the question.

### **IS CHAIRMAN OF WESTERN DEVELOPMENT MUSEUM ON GOVERNMENT PAYROLL**

**MR. G.H. PENNER (Saskatoon Eastview):** — Mr. Speaker, is it correct that the chairman of the WDM is on the payroll or paid in any way whatsoever by the Government of Saskatchewan?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — The question is, is the chairman of the Western Development Museum Board — I cannot answer the question, I will have to take notice.

**MR. PENNER:** — A final supplementary. Would the Premier in taking notice of the question also indicate whether or not it isn't in his view, a conflict of interest or inappropriate to have the chairman of an independent body being paid also by the Government of Saskatchewan, and that the firing in fact of Mr. Wilson was not really anything more than something perpetrated by the Government of Saskatchewan?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, the question presupposes that the answer to the previous question was in the affirmative. If the question is in the affirmative then obviously I will need to consider that in the answer. I do not know the answer to the first question, as I made clear. I will therefore take notice of the second one.

## **WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS ON MUNICIPAL ROADS**

**MR. W.C. THATCHER (Thunder Creek):** — A question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Some time ago the Minister in a speech to the SARM convention introduced some proposals to the changing of the weight restrictions on municipal roads. Some time has gone by on this and now there is a very eerie silence that prevails over the entire situation. I would like to ask the Minister when he will clarify his Government's position. In essence when you made your speech it was Government policy; it is now a resolution. When will you clear the air for the truckers of Saskatchewan.

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — Mr. Speaker, I will be clarifying the proposal as



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soon as I have at least an opportunity to sit down with the executive of SARM. We have been in contact with one another with respect to a possible meeting. I understand that they, the directors and the executive, are now in the country attending RM meetings and banquets where this topic is being discussed. I am sure they will want to complete that circuit before they get back to me with respect to the position they wish to take.

**MR. THATCHER:** — A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. One evening when I was slumming, Mr. Minister, I noticed the Commonwealth in which it indicated this was Government policy not a resolution. Would the Minister tell me if the official organ of his party was speaking for the Government or whether it was not.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! Next question.

### **RICHARD THOMAS REPORT**

**MR. LANE (Saskatoon Sutherland):** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier has already taken notice of the business of the Richard Thomas Report. I would ask if he would be prepared at the same time he is looking at the other information to ascertain why the person most directly interested in the outcome of the Report, i.e. Gordon Wilson was not shown a copy of the Report and was, in fact, refused to have a look at the Report; if he could provide us with that information.

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — I very much doubt that the question has anything to do with the Government of Saskatchewan. I very much doubt it. Accordingly I will take note of that, but I would be very surprised if it were the Government of Saskatchewan involved.

### **POTASH CORPORATION OF SASKATCHEWAN CORY LIMITED**

**MR. CAMERON:** — Mr. Speaker, I will see if I can draw some information from the Premier that I can't seem to get from the Attorney General. Why is the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Cory Limited in its notice in the Saskatchewan Gazette, last edition shown as having its head office, registered head office situated at 300 Bank of Canada Building, Regina, an address which I am sure is well known to you since that is your former law firm.

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I will take notice of that. I suspect that the answer is what he well knows. When companies are first organized it is very common not only to name the members of the firm as the directors, but also the law office as the head office. Very frequently this is all changed when the beneficial owners take over. It is not uncommon at all.

### **STATEMENTS**

#### **STUDENT BURSARY PLAN**

**HON. D.L. FARIS (Minister of Continuing Education):** — Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce an increase in the bursary assistance through the Saskatchewan Student Bursary Plan. The maximum bursary available under the Plan has been raised to \$1,800 from \$1,000 a year, an increase of \$800 a year. Up to \$3,600 a year in combined bursary and loans will be available to

post secondary students in Saskatchewan who require financial assistance. The Bursary Plan is operated in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Student Loan Plan and the Canada Student Loan Plan. Both loans and bursaries are awarded on a need basis. All loan applications are automatically evaluated for bursary eligibility. The first \$1,000 of assistance will be provided for in the form of a loan in the most cases guaranteed by the Federal Government. Students requiring additional assistance will receive half in the form of a provincial non-repayable bursary and half in guaranteed loan. Any assistance in excess of \$2,600 will be provided entirely by non-repayable bursary.

I would like to point out that the Plan has been designed for most assistance to those students with the greatest need. Last year 3,657 students received a total of \$1.7 million on provincial non-repayable bursaries. Application forms are available from the Department of Continuing Education, universities, technical institutes and community colleges.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. G.H. PENNER (Saskatoon Eastview):** — Mr. Speaker, if I may be permitted to comment, I am sure that all people who will want bursaries next year will be pleased to see that there has been an increase in the amount. I want to say, however, Mr. Speaker, at the same time that I am sure that the Minister is just as aware as the members of our caucus of the concerns that have been expressed on the Regina Campus and on the Saskatoon Campus of the fee increases next year that are going to be substantial in order for students to continue with university. I also want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that one of the major concerns that has been voiced by students in addition to the availability of dollars themselves has been related to the qualifications that have been there for students when they wanted to apply for a loan. I submit, as I did during Estimates, that the amount of money that a father or a mother happens to make has absolutely nothing to do with the need of a particular student to get money. Students themselves will have indicated to the Minister and to officials in his department that many of them are on their own. They want to get money on their own and not based on whether their father or their mother has a certain amount of money for them. I would have hoped that the Minister would have something to say, too, about that particular aspect, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose):** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the statement made by the Minister. I think first of all that the Minister and his department should be congratulated for bringing the loans more in line with the cost of university education today. I think the Minister would agree that it is probably about 18 months to two years behind, but nevertheless I am pleased and I know that many, many young people in Saskatchewan will be pleased not so much on the tuition increase, Mr. Minister, but the cost of locating living accommodation either within Regina or Saskatoon and in some cases, Moose Jaw.

I think that the Minister is quite correct in that there should be some guidelines as to the need of the student. I disagree with my colleague from Saskatoon who has just spoken on this subject. Regardless of the parental position or financial position, I think this is money coming from the taxpayers of Saskatchewan and I think it wise to have some

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guidelines to the recipients as to the financial status. I am not saying that that should be the sole criteria, but I believe in the way in which the control is laid out by the Federal Government as well as the Provincial Government it gives some control. I am pleased that the Minister has made this announcement and I am sure that the young people of Saskatchewan will be pleased to hear that they will be able to look after their financial needs, particularly those in the low income families, for the next year.

## **MOTIONS FOR RETURN**

### **RETURN NO. 17**

**MR. D.M. HAM (Swift Current)** moved, seconded by Mr. Birkbeck (Moosomin) that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 17 showing:

- (1) The number of highway construction projects in Saskatchewan in each of the years 1973, 1974, 1975 and 1976 to date.
- (2) The number of miles in each project in each of the years 1973, 1974, 1975 and 1976 to date.
- (3) The names of the tenders for each project and the bids for each project in each of the years 1973, 1974, 1975 and 1976 to date.
- (4) The name of the successful tender for each project in each of the years 1973, 1974, 1975 and 1976 to date.
- (5) Whether there were contracts awarded without tender in 1973.

He said: Mr. Speaker, speaking to my Motion on a series of highways questions, it is hard for me to understand why simple, relevant information such as this is not available without hesitation. The logical conclusion in the department and the Minister's reluctance can only be taken as fear, fear of the mismanagement, excessive expenditures and political favoritism. If Saskatchewan, as boasted by the Members opposite has a super highway system, the information I requested should be proudly presented, not conveniently withheld.

In the 1975-1976 Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation Annual Report the Minister states, "Saskatchewan continues to have more miles of highway per capita than any other area." I don't question that fact, it's possible, Mr. Speaker. Our costs are higher than any other area comparatively and that's an argument one must suggest to this statement.

It also states in the Annual Report under the goals of the department, "To provide and maintain a highway transportation system that will give maximum levels of service at reasonable cost to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan." Why then the concern about information requested or are these costs excessive? They must be. Could the well known problems that exist in PC constituencies such as Nipawin and Estevan be contributing factors? The Minister after repeated requests, last year, did not make himself available for meetings with concerned groups in the Nipawin area. Was he afraid to face the facts? Are these areas mismanaged or poorly planned? The Minister said in the last session that 1976 was a record year insofar as weather was concerned with respect to building. The weather is normally a contributing factor to poor road construction. Yet some areas with projects underway were not completed. Shortly, Mr. Speaker,

we will hear the Minister defend and commend his department. That being the case the Minister has nothing to hide. The Members of this Assembly, the people of Saskatchewan are entitled to the information I have requested.

I now move this Motion.

**HON. E. KRAMER (Minister of Highways):** — Mr. Speaker, I am surprised and disappointed that the delinquent Member for Swift Current would come in here a month late, after he had placed the question. The only thing that was wrong was that he didn't have the good sense to prepare the question and phrase the question in a sensible manner. There is no such thing as successful tenders. The only thing that is lacking in his Motion, is the fact that it should read "successful bidder". That was my only question. But he waited a month; he spent a month sunning himself in the Bahamas while we're waiting for this question to be amended.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! I don't know that sunning in the Bahamas has anything to do with this order.

**MR. KRAMER:** — Suffice it to say that he was sunning himself somewhere other than in this House. I don't think the Member is honest when he comes in here and accuses me of not answering a question when the question was worded improperly. I can now, at this point in time word it properly so that it can be answered correctly. If he had been here during the last month to move his Motion, it would have been done and he would have had his answer. The rest of his inane remarks fall into the same category as not making sense, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan takes second place to none, in producing highways for fewer dollars. So I move the rewording of this Motion and, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table it.

Motion as amended agreed to.

## **RETURN NO. 29**

**MR. HAM (Swift Current)** moved, seconded by Mr. Birkbeck (Moosomin) that an Order of the Assembly do issue for a Return No. 29 showing:

- (1) The total printing and binding costs of producing the annual government report brochures that are required to be tabled in the 1976-77 Session.
- (2) The total cost of printing and binding the 1977 Budget Speech as tabled in the 1976-77 Session.

He said: Mr. Speaker, being a Member for the sunny south west, the city of Swift Current, where the sun always shines and we can always boast of tans, I will speak on this Motion. The inability or reluctance of the Government to make available this information is baffling to say the least. The taxpayers through their elected Members are entitled to know how wisely or unwisely their tax money is spent. I assume this is one of the reasons that we're elected. One can only conclude the cost of the publications questioned are extravagant and wasteful. I suggest they're entirely unnecessary in many cases. Of course the expense of three or four dozen annual reports is meaningless in comparison to the potash takeover. It is not strange, Mr. Speaker,

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that there is some analogy between this Motion and the potash expropriation. This Motion refers to paper production costs and that is all that the 272 odd million dollars bought the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, paper deeds. The only significant difference would be that there may be a possibility the potash corporation may produce a profit. The annual reports however, will always be an expense. Mr. Speaker, all levels of government were elected to lead, to set an example, to spend the taxpayers' money wisely. At any time in history, but especially now, the nation is faced with inflation and unemployment. When this province is faced with an economic slump, the savings of all levels of government would be indirectly beneficial to all. As usual, the Government holds true to its course of government secrecy and centralized control. These brochure expenditures must be expensive, excessive and embarrassing. Hopefully the approach in succeeding years will become more conservative in relation to these expenses.

I now move this Motion.

**HON. W.E. SMISHEK (Minister of Finance):** — Mr. Speaker, we have just heard the Hon. Member give this House some of the most blatant misrepresentations. Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member asks why is the Government refusing to answer this question.

Let me tell the Hon. Member, for three successive weeks this question has been stood by the Opposition because the Hon. Member wasn't here to move this Motion. That's right, two Tuesdays in a row the Motion was called and he was not here to move it. Don't accuse this Government for your own failures. You were elected to represent the people that you are supposed to rather than to stay away from the House.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. SMISHEK:** — Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member doesn't even know how to prepare the question and yet he tells us that we are refusing to answer the question.

Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of shabby treatment that this House is subjected to by Members from the Conservative Party, the cheapest nonsense that I have heard since 1964. What has this question got to do with potash expenditure? The Member has asked what are the costs of certain documents to be tabled. We are prepared to provide that information. But let the Hon. Member also ask the question in a way that it can be answered. I don't know what he means by brochures. I don't know what he means by leaflets that might be circulated.

Mr. Speaker, we are prepared to provide the answer to this House on the basis that it can be answered. I am going to move an amendment. I am prepared to provide the Member for Swift Current with a copy of the amendment that I am going to move.

I move that Return No. 29 be amended by changing all words after the word "showing" and the following substituted therefore:

- (1) A list of those government departments that are required to table a formal annual report in the 1976-77 Session.
- (2) The total cost of printing and binding each of these reports.

(3) The total cost of printing and binding the 1977 budget Speech.

This, I think, is what the Hon. Member really wants. I don't know how to answer his question on brochures. There are many brochures that are circulated here that are not required to be tabled.

Motion agreed to.

#### **RETURN NO. 40**

**MR. S.J. CAMERON (Regina South)** moved, seconded by Mr. Penner (Saskatoon Eastview) that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 40 showing:

The number of trials conducted in Saskatchewan on criminal charges in each of: (a) the Magistrate's Court (b) the District Court (c) the Queen's Bench Court, in each of the years 1971 to 1976, both inclusive.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this and a series of questions following are asked with this background in mind.

Two things. One is as Mr. Speaker will know, that we have been concerned for some period of time about the delays in the court system in Saskatchewan. It isn't a phenomenon which is restricted to Saskatchewan. It is a country wide phenomenon. Now people are wondering in many ways what can be done with respect to it. We have from time to time made some suggestions, some of which have met with the approval of the Attorney General and some of which wait to be considered.

There are a good number of voices across the land in governments and elsewhere, in Bar Associations, that are beginning to propose solutions to some of these problems. One of the things that is being raised is whether or not we should have time limits on the length of time it takes a matter to get to court. In the United States and in Great Britain I think each of those jurisdictions have 90 day time limits from the time a charge is laid. They have 90 days to get the charge into court and on to trial.

Secondly, in our jurisdiction and certainly in other jurisdictions as well we are now appreciating the tremendous burden which has been placed upon the system by the legal aid measures we adopted in the past five or six years. What legal aid has done in many respects is to bring to trial people who in other circumstances would have pleaded guilty, who are today pleading not guilty and going to trial very often, when they have an option, to the District Court and on to the Queen's Bench and in some cases appeals where, in fact, it is very questionable whether they should be doing that. In the process what they are doing is so burdening the courts and contributing to additional delays.

Third, people are growing concerned too, with the practice under which appeal courts receive so many appeals on sentences. Sentences are handed down by the District Court and by the Queen's Bench and indeed some in the Magistrate's Court and appealed to the Court of Appeal. Some concern is being expressed about the high volume of these appeals going to the Court of Appeal, and really saying in effect that Courts of Appeal are

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chiefly these days, in respect of criminal matters, tinkering with criminal sentences instead of performing the original function that was intended.

One of the other suggestions for reform that is being advanced and I am sad to say being advanced by the federal Minister of Justice and his law reform commission and if I can read between the lines of our own Attorney General's remarks, drawing some sympathy from him, is that perhaps one of the answers is to do away with the preliminary inquiry which no doubt would save some time but which would no doubt also substantially weaken the quality of justice which we are meting out in criminal matters.

These questions are designed to draw the kind of detailed information which we need from the Government in order to assess the current problems and more importantly in order to be able to focus on the kinds of solutions which would be of some genuine value.

I have been here throughout the Session. I haven't been tanning anywhere and I think this is the first time these matters have come before the House. Therefore I hope they aren't going to draw the same kind of response the previous two questions did. I hope, too, the Attorney General, and I am not quite sure why he has wanted these questions made debatable, will indeed provide us with the information.

Mr. Speaker, I so move, seconded by Mr. Penner (Saskatoon Eastview), Return No. 40.

**HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General):** — Mr. Speaker, I will be asking at the conclusion of my remarks, which will be very brief today, to adjourn this Return by virtue of the fact that I have not had enough opportunity with the officials in my Department to determine whether or not the questions can be answered in the form that it is asked. I will be doing that for all of the ones that relate to the Department of the Attorney General. I want to tell the Members of the House it is not designed as any attempt to delay or to thwart the request for information. Indeed I hope, barring illness, that next Tuesday we will be ready to proceed with either agreements on these requests or amendments where necessary.

There may be some amendments necessary because from the preliminary work that the department people have done with respect to the series of questions we may need to amend fiscal years, as opposed to calendar years; the questions are framed in calendar years. Some of the questions are not synchronized with the way the administrative set-up is in the department. We will try and take that into account. I think many of them we can answer and put the information before the House.

I would simply close my remarks this afternoon by saying that we all share the concern expressed by the Member for Regina South about delays in the Saskatchewan court system or indeed in any court system in the Dominion of Canada. Again I think when my Estimates come up we may have a more detailed discussion of this and pending the tabling of this information at some later date, a more detailed debate or discussion but I am led to believe by the magistrate's people and by other administrative officers in my department, that while there is a delay in Saskatchewan, no doubt we are quite favorable in ranking, in

terms of delays with respect to the other provinces, if I may put it in that context. I don't think that is an excuse nor is it an answer to make sure that we speed the thing up a little more. The point I want to make is that my officials advise me that this is not as critical a problem as appears to be in other jurisdictions in the country.

One other final word before I adjourn the debate and that is specifically with the possible solutions the problem which the Member for Regina South has raised. One particular comment he made related to preliminary inquiries and the possibility of doing away with preliminary hearings. I have taken the position that this is something which must be examined very carefully. In Saskatchewan we have been experimenting for a little while now with a pre-trial disclosure mechanism. By this I mean the prosecutors in appropriate cases reveal the file to the counsel for the defence, to show the counsel for the defence the nature of the case which lies against the accused. There is as well an understanding and perhaps I won't put it any higher than that, the defence counsel outlines in exchange the nature of the defence.

In Ontario they have recently formalized this procedure. Just a few weeks ago, in fact, about a month ago, I think they announced it, with a view to seeing if on revelation of the files the various parties can determine whether or not charges should go ahead or whether or not a change of plea should be made.

Discussing this with my colleague in Ontario, Ontario appears to have entered into a fairly elaborate reporting system on this new procedure, something which I think they probably have to do by virtue of the fact that it is a province nine or ten times the size of Saskatchewan.

In our province the department solicitors feel that our little experiment can be achieved for the time being without getting into a heavy bureaucratic overlay. This is not by way of laying the groundwork for doing away with the preliminary hearings. It is by way of an attempt to see if we can smoothen out the judicial process without impairing the rights of any accused person, because the state has rights as well in unnecessarily delaying the obligations of the state in certain prosecution cases.

Mr. Speaker, I believe personally that this is the kind of experimentation which needs to be done, not only because of the delay problem and indeed not in sole response to the delay problem in courts, but rather as kind of an ongoing testing of certain propositions which may exist in our criminal judicial system. I believe that lawyers must continue to ask questions relating to the fundamental concept of such things as preliminary hearings. I think in Saskatchewan our lawyers have been fairly good but generally my observation has been as Attorney General that the organized Bar tends to react in an almost knee-jerk kind of reflex in opposition to any kind of suggestions which say that there should indeed be a testing of the proposition that a preliminary hearing is something which is vital to the democratic and judicial system that we have in this country. We are participating as much as we can in the Department of Attorney General with other provinces in developing these kinds of experimental programs and trying to work up solutions to the delays in the court system.



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Mr. Speaker, I have spoken far more than I had intended to. But I simply want to tell the Members of the House that I will be asking the adjournment of all the other matters because time has simply not permitted my officials to be ready to advise me as to how we can answer these questions, if we can, and I undertake to the House that next Tuesday when they are called we will be ready to go with the appropriate amendments or with agreeing to as many of these as we can. I think this is valid and proper information which should be before the House and should be the source of a debate on this question of streamlining the court system. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

## **RETURN NO. 41**

**MR. CAMERON (Regina South)** moved, seconded by Mr. Wiebe (Morse), that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 41 showing:

The number of persons charged with offences under the Criminal Code who pleaded not guilty in the first instance, opted for trial by Judge alone, had a preliminary inquiry, then pleaded guilty, in each of the years 1971 to 1976, both inclusive.

He said: I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if it would be in order for me to move several of these at the same time and those particularly that relate to the Attorney General's department. I have no objection whatever to his seeking an adjournment because indeed the questions require a good deal of detailed information. So may I move collectively the numbers of which I will give to you and move them and then I gather the Attorney General will request to be adjourned and I have no objection to that.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — I think the Member will agree with me that it would preclude the opportunity for other Members to speak on any particular one and there may be some Members who wish to do that and I think what we will do is follow the regular routine.

Debate adjourned on the motion of Mr. Romanow.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

### **RESOLUTION NO. 5 — NATIONAL COW-CALF STABILIZATION PROGRAM AND NATIONAL MARKETING AGENCY FOR RED MEATS**

**MR. M. KWASNICA (Cut Knife-Lloydminster)** moved, seconded by Mr. D. Banda (Redberry):

That this Assembly requests (1) the Federal Government to immediately fulfill its obligation to provide a meaningful National Cow-Calf Stabilization Program in response to the prolonged depressed marketing conditions in the beef industry and the dangers these conditions present for an extreme depletion in our beef breeding herd and distortion of natural production advantages through stop-gap provincial programs; and (2) that the Federal Government initiate discussion with the provinces at an early date toward development of a National Marketing agency for red meats.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it's rather unusual that this Resolution

introduced in the Assembly on November 19th of last year is still valid today, some four and a half months later, even after the Federal Government has announced a national cow-calf stabilization program.

Before I go into the two main areas of the Resolution, I want, Mr. Speaker, to present a quick summary of the problems facing our cow-calf operators in the province. Everyone is aware that the problem today is simply that cow-calf operators are not receiving a fair price for their beef. Over the last three years, prices have been dropping steadily, while costs are rising steadily. Our farmers in Saskatchewan are constantly losing anywhere from \$100 to \$250 a head, depending on the age and the weight of the animal. This is the immediate problem. Young farmers and smaller farmers cannot survive this situation as well as the established farmer and many are forced to sell out their herds and breeding stock. This will cause a serious shortage of beef in the years ahead and many experts predict extremely high prices and shortages ahead for our consumers of beef, by the year 1980.

This so-called over production now and low prices today will definitely mean shortages and high prices in the near future and this should concern every citizen, whether he is a farmer or not.

I'm glad, Mr. Speaker, that I chose the word "meaningful" cow-calf program when I worded the Resolution last fall, because the Federal Government did realize the political bind it was in and decided to do something for our farmers. I compliment the Federal Government for doing something, but I criticize it for bringing in such a weak and meaningless program.

What's wrong with the federal program? First, how far will \$70 million go on a national basis? Our province, which is small in population but large in cattle numbers, will be spending an estimated \$36 million alone in their program in 1977. That is more than half of what the Federal Government has estimated for all of Canada for 1978. How can \$70 million hope to keep our herds up and make a meaningful payment to farmers who are losing over \$100 a head right now, in all the provinces?

This meagre sum amounts to about \$20 a head, when farmers are losing well over \$100 a head. Secondly, no payments will be made to our farmers under that federal plan until 1978. That is one year away. The crisis is here now! As the old saying goes — and it's very valid here — the federal program is "too little, too late."

Thirdly, this weak federal program will not help eliminate the various stop-gap provincial programs which distort the natural production advantages because richer provinces with smaller numbers of beef cattle can afford to pay higher subsidies to their farmers, even though that particular province may not be a natural beef producer. Yet another weakness of the program is that payments are made, or will be made, on the basis of 90 per cent of the average calf prices averaged over the last five years. If there is an upturn in the 1977 prices, that will increase the average and thousands of beef producers will receive nothing, even though we know every one of them has been losing money over the last three years. As a matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is possible that no payment at all will be made under the plan announced by that Federal Government. Of course, this plan does nothing to correct another problem,

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the monopolistic pricing policy, and does nothing to improve the present chaotic marketing system in Canada and in the provinces.

For all these reasons, we in this Legislature, must all ask Ottawa to make the necessary changes in the plan to make it meaningful with long-range goals and objectives, and I will be asking all Members, regardless of their political views, to join with me in supporting this Resolution, dealing with a very serious problem in Saskatchewan today.

Beef imports into Canada are a real concern to our producers as well, as imports have produced the negative effect of depressing our markets and causing damaging reductions in domestic prices paid to our producers. It is interesting to note that since 1968 consumption in Canada has outstripped production. I was quite surprised to learn that fact. And the current slump in prices will lead to a further decline in numbers of cattle raised. According to Statistics Canada, in Saskatchewan, total cattle and calf numbers have dropped quite markedly to 2.91 million in July of last year, from a 3.02 million high in 1974. The total numbers are down for western Canada by some 208,000 since 1974. And so the picture in Canada today simply put, is one of declining prices, declining numbers of cattle and increasing imports. Imports in 1976 came to 190 million pounds of beef. That is a lot of beef that could have been grown in Canada by our Canadian farmers and sold in Canada.

I want to turn now to the second part of my Resolution which calls on the Federal Government to initiate discussions with the provinces at an early date toward development of a national marketing agency for red meats. And, I suspect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is the part of the Resolution that will get the hottest debate and I look forward to that debate.

Many farmers and their various organizations believe that Canada's beef marketing system needs an overhaul, if not a complete change in direction. True, not all farmers believe this, but as one can best surmise by statements of various groups, perhaps more than 60 per cent are desirous of change and a close examination of the present marketing system in Saskatchewan and Canada.

At the annual meeting of delegates of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool held in Regina last November, a Resolution was passed to launch an immediate study into beef marketing in Canada. This study may ultimately favor establishing a national producer-controlled marketing system for cattle. And, indeed, discussions are being carried on across the province at various meetings sponsored by other farm organizations like the NFU and the Western Canada Cow-Calf Association. And I am glad that this debate is going on in the province at this time. What are the results of some of these meetings?

As reported in the press, at a meeting held in Langenburg in the latter part of February with over 350 cattlemen in attendance, a Resolution was passed asking for a national producer-controlled marketing board — 350 cattlemen there. A meeting at Esterhazy attended by about the same number, 350 people, also passed a Resolution asking for a national producer-controlled beef marketing board.

The National Farmers' Union says 57 meetings it sponsored very recently around the province attracted some 1600 people who were about 85 per cent in favor of creating a system in which government agencies would purchase meat from producers and sell

it to packers, controlling the price right through from producer to the consumer.

A recent meeting in Shaunavon, and I am sure the Member from that area will be up in this debate supporting that particular meeting and espousing what it said, attended by more than 100 people, was 95 per cent in favor of retaining the present open-market system. But I ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what has the open-market system, with its boom and bust cycles done for our beef producers in Saskatchewan so far? What about the recent meat scandals in Quebec which revealed that the Mafia control a good portion of the industry today? What about the commission agents, who buy as cheaply as possible from producers, to sell to the packing house with whom they are affiliated? What about the serious inequities in the prices producers receive for live cattle of the same quality in that same open market? These inequities occur regardless of how the producer sells his animals or the region in which they are sold. What about the hoax perpetrated for years by a well-known food chain that steer meat is somehow better quality than heifer meat? And the food chains have downgraded heifer meat and offered ridiculously lower prices for it. Prices for heifers have been anywhere from \$3 - \$10 less per hundredweight than for steers. And I ask Members of this House to ask themselves, what is sacred about a market system that has victimized beef producers so severely that many have gone out of beef production, suffering heavy losses? And I think each one of us rural Members can look at our own constituencies and tally up the number of farmers that are going out of the cattle business, have lost money, and are going to pack it up.

I want to know too, what is good about a marketing system which lost an estimated \$87 million for the farmers of Saskatchewan in 1975? This is an estimate made by the National Farmers' Union. What is sacred about the absence of any real farmer bargaining power in the market place to counteract the powerful domination and manipulation of the price-setting mechanisms by the packinghouse and the retail food industry? There is nothing sacred about that. The farmer is one of the few people left today who does not bargain for the price he receives for his goods and services. What is sacred about such a system of marketing? How can we continue to support a marketing system that allows prices on carloads of beef being shipped out of Saskatchewan to be set after the cars are loaded and after they have reached their destination in Montreal or Toronto? I wonder what other groups of people would do business that way, to have a product on the market and not know what price it is going to get until it ends up somewhere in another part of the country? Mr. Deputy Speaker, we cannot afford the present system of marketing beef any longer, and it is time for an overhaul.

Yet, there are many strong voices of support for the present system. Where do these come from? Vocal groups of well-established cattlemen, yes they favor the system, because they have done well and are well-established and they can take the rise and the fall. The Vice-President of Swift Canada Co. Ltd. favors the present system. He said, and I quote, "It is difficult at this time to identify any serious weakness in the Canadian retail beef marketing system." That was a March 26, 1976 quote from the Winnipeg Tribune. Chester Wilcox, Meat Merchandising Manager of Dominion Stores said, and I quote, "I believe the system we're handling beef in now is the best system for handling beef at this time". (Globe and Mail, March 26, 1975) These are the kinds of people who think the present system is just the best system for

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them. This is the old cliché — what's good for the huge chain stores and the packinghouses must be good for Saskatchewan farmers. This is definitely not the case in the beef industry.

Before I conclude my discussion today, I would like to present some basic calculations which should help many of us to make up our minds on this question. If Saskatchewan, and I say, **if** Saskatchewan were to develop a more efficient beef marketing system, along with concurrent expanded and more efficient meat packing facilities, it could mean potential net savings of between \$13 and \$20 million per year — savings which could be shared with cattle producers in the province, packers, and consumers — all.

Now I just want to go through that calculation that I have worked out. In 1975, 339,000 head, or 2/3 of Saskatchewan's beef cattle, were slaughtered outside Saskatchewan in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario — 2/3 of the cattle outside the province. Only 1/3 — about 168,000 head, were slaughtered in Saskatchewan and more than half of the meat from these animals was shipped as carcasses or sides rather than as boxed wholesale or retail cuts. These figures do not include the nearly 1/2 million head of Saskatchewan feeder cattle that are shipped out of the province each year for finishing in other areas.

A more efficient Saskatchewan beef marketing system could include the following potential cost savings:

First, shipment of animals direct to Saskatchewan plants for rail grading instead of indirectly through public stock yards and country sale yards, could result in potential savings according to the Federal Beef Marketing Enquiry, of about \$6 - \$11 per head on an estimated 300,000 head not shipped directly to the plant in 1975. This would be about \$1.8 to \$3.3 million savings annually.

Secondly, operation of Saskatchewan plants on a double shift basis, thus spreading fixed costs over more animals, could offer estimated potential savings of \$20 to \$30 per head on a slaughter cattle supply of 507,000 head in 1975. A saving there of between \$10 and \$15.2 million a year.

Thirdly, if we upgraded our system of marketing and slaughtering, freight savings on carcasses shipped, instead of live animals are estimated at \$10 per head on 32,000 head shipped east and \$5 per head on 306,000 head shipped to Manitoba and Alberta in 1975. This would be a saving of about another \$1.8 million.

Fourthly, a potential savings on freight, shrink and better utilization of by-products through shipment of boxed beef instead of carcasses — estimated \$16 per head there on 482,000 head (95 per cent of Saskatchewan slaughter cattle not shipped as boxed beef in 1975) for savings of about \$7.7 million. Estimated potential gross under my four point tally, is between \$21.4 to \$28 million a year.

Now obviously if you overhauled the marketing system, you would have to have some expenses incurred. If we take away estimated operating and assembly costs of a Saskatchewan Beef Marketing Commission, or whatever it is, at \$6 per head on 507,000 animals, the cost would be about \$3 million. Less another cost which would be incurred for capital investments

required to upgrade Saskatchewan facilities to process Saskatchewan supply of slaughter cattle to the box beef stage would cost about perhaps another \$5 million to update and expand the plants so that we can handle all our own beef. This could mean a potential net savings of between \$13.4 and \$20 million a year for Saskatchewan.

Now that is a rough calculation. I tried to put together the best kind of figures I could, if we updated and modernized our system of beef marketing in the province.

Now the accomplishments of these activities which could also obviously be to the benefit of all Saskatchewan people, would, of course, require the complete co-operation of everyone engaged in the beef marketing system. Cattle assembly systems would need to be re-organized; meat packing, cooling and processing facilities would need to be expanded and constructed; rail grading and weight per grade pricing systems would need to be brought to maturity; and marketing mechanisms, as well as markets, would need to be developed.

The opportunity exists for Saskatchewan beef producers to play a leading role in the advancement of measures which could benefit themselves as well as the entire province. The first step requires that the cattle producers petition the Government with their views and plans for a new and improved marketing system, as is provided for in the provincial Natural Products Marketing Act. This is the Act which allows farmers to do this, to petition the Government to do something. And I know that our Minister of Agriculture will be willing to listen to these requests and make the necessary changes. However, we are all aware, everybody is aware in this House, that no government can take any action unless the public is behind it and supporting it.

No doubt the Manitoba vote will be brought up in this debate ensuing, so I would like to make a few comments at this time on that particular vote. I view the Manitoba vote as a vote on a particular kind of marketing agency in a particular area of Canada. One should not assume that the negative vote in Manitoba necessarily means an automatic negative vote in Saskatchewan or British Columbia or Alberta for that matter. The Manitoba situation is much different from the Saskatchewan situation. The vote in Manitoba called for a "board" not a "commission" and we are all aware that a board has much more authority than any commission would have, by statute.

**AN. HON. MEMBER:** — Is that not what you say when you get down to the bottom line?

**MR. KWASNICA:** — No, not really. It is important to consider the matter as a continuation of the basic philosophy of orderly marketing. And that is what I am talking about; that is what we all understand this to be. This philosophy has been fought for by prairie farmers over the years and the Canadian Wheat Board is an accepted method of marketing prairie grains, and few would deny the success and value of the Canadian Wheat Board in today's marketing structure. I am glad to bring this kind of a resolution on the Order Paper for debate because we in the New Democratic Party have a philosophy which is that orderly marketing in the long run is the best way. We have seen over the years the inequities that have arisen — I don't have to remind you of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, which rooked farmers something terrible in the years

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we had a Canadian Wheat Board — so therefore I am glad that we have a chance to debate a philosophical argument of this kind.

In concluding my comments today, I want to mention a specific communication that I have received from farmers in my constituency regarding orderly marketing of beef. This particular communication is against it. It's a telegram I received from Zone 9, Local 2, of the Saskatchewan Stockgrowers Association, in the Lloydminster area and they sent me a telegram on March 9, which contained about 19 signatures from farmers throughout my constituency, flatly opposing the idea of a beef marketing board or commission. I am glad that they have indicated to me as a Member where they stand on this issue. It is a flat rejection of orderly marketing. However, on the other hand, I know for a fact, that there are many members of another organization in my constituency as well, the National Farmers' Union, which is fairly active in that northwest corner, who definitely favor a national red meat marketing agency. As I said earlier, the Wheat Pool has ordered a study which could very well suggest orderly marketing too for beef. I am informed, Mr. Speaker, at this very present time that some several hundred Saskatchewan farmers are in Regina today, in the Centre of the Arts at this very moment, meeting with the Minister of Agriculture of our province and his Agricultural Cabinet Committee and the MLAs who have been able to get over there. At this very moment I don't know what the number is but we know that it is in the hundreds and I have received phone calls from the farmers in my area who have arrived on the scene already. They are at this very moment presenting a proposal to the Minister of Agriculture regarding setting up of a beef marketing commission. They have done a lot of research and they are placing their proposal before us at this very time. And I am glad that they have taken time off from their spring work to come to Regina today to do it.

The problems in the beef industry have been clearly identified in my presentation this afternoon. The situation is serious. The future is ours. It can be a stable and bright future if we choose to put some order into it. Therefore, I urge all Members to support my Resolution, which really, if you look at it carefully, is well thought out, very simple and it calls for meaningful changes to the announced National Cow-Calf Stabilization Program and asks the Federal Government to initiate discussions with the provinces at an early date in order to develop a national marketing agency for red meats. Everybody can truly see the advantages of going national on a project of this kind, for sales, for advertising, you can put everything into this particular agency and move the beef produced in this country at stable prices so that the farmers will know where they stand.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move Resolution No. 5, seconded by the Hon. Member for Redberry (Mr. Banda). And by the way, before I conclude, I am pleased to see that the Member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher) has now agreed to a debate with the federal Minister I am told on the value or non-value of orderly marketing and I will look forward to that debate and I can assure the Member that I will be there, whenever the debate is called, and we on this side of the House look forward to that particular debate with anticipation, because here we have two Members of the same party, supposedly at different ends of the spectrum.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. W.C. THATCHER (Thunder Creek):** — I am glad to see that the Member for Cut Knife (Mr. Kwasnica) will be in attendance when his hero, and particularly the hero to his Minister of Agriculture, ventures forth into Western Canada to talk about the marketing board structure. I sincerely hope that your hero does come out to western Canada because there seems to be some doubt, since the Manitoba vote, that the proponents of the marketing boards have enough courage to stand up on platforms in front of legitimate cattlemen and time will tell whether the hero to this government across the way, at least your agricultural people, will stray out into the confines of western Canada to face western Canadian cattlemen.

Mr. Speaker, I suppose that lawyers get upset when non-lawyers tell them how to practice law. I suppose doctors get upset when laymen tell them how to practice medicine and I suppose accountants get upset when non-accountants tell them how to be an accountant. And I think cattlemen are basically the same way, because I have listened to some of the darnedest tripe in the last 20 minutes about my business that I make my living from, from a teacher that probably doesn't know a cow from a blackboard, and as I recall talking to one of his colleagues about a year ago, wouldn't know the north end of a cow heading south, and yet this expert, the best that they can put up to talk about agriculture, is a teacher. Maybe that's because you don't have too many agricultural people over there, certainly not very many knowledgeable ones.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Cut Knife has spent some considerable time in elaborating on how the cattle industry is going down the tubes, how that, at the present rate of destruction there will be no cattle herds left, that there will be a shortage of beef, and I suppose you can carry it through that famine will take western Canada. Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you today that some of the theories as well as the figures that he has put forward are harebrained and not even remotely cognizant of the facts. Mr. Speaker, in Canada today, as of January 1, 1977, the number of total cows, and bear in mind this is a crunch one, the number of total cows is down less than three per cent from the all time record levels of one year ago, the levels that were totally unacceptable, that glutted the market and absolutely made life miserable for every cattleman established or non-established. Bear in mind, the most important factor is yet to come and that's in the United States, because that's the one that turns our market. In the United States, they are down only about two and three-quarters per cent from the unacceptably high levels of one year ago. And that's an even bigger factor than the Canadian one.

Mr. Speaker, the present cattle numbers right now are lower than they were for any period in our time up through 1975. In essence what I am saying, they are down slightly from what they were at the end of 1975 but higher than at any other point in time in our history. If I could use the American figures, which I deem much more important than Canadian, you go back to '72 — 38.8 million, '73 — 40.9 million, '74 — 43 million, '75 — 45.5 million, '76 — 43 million, '77 — 42.5 million. Mr. Speaker, this is hardly any evidence of the cattle industry disintegrating. In fact, the problem has been that the cattle industry expanded too quickly and it must now contract to acceptable levels of production.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Cut Knife has spent some considerable time downgrading the free market system. Mr. Speaker, I



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should like to say that I have one criticism of the free market system when it pertains to beef cattle over the past couple of years, and that is that it has worked far too efficiently. It worked far too well. Because the free market has reflected the situation as it existed, we had a terrible over-supply and the markets simply reacted to it.

Now let's go back as to why the free market system did not react properly when we had the collapse. It was not given an opportunity to react properly. If you recall we were facing record prices both in Canada and the United States when a supposedly right-wing, free enterprise president froze the price of beef. His name was President Nixon. And freezing that price of beef was a political move aimed at consumers in the United States who were mumbling. But again it is a tragedy that he froze the price of beef because it had gone as high as it was probably going to go, because consumers were already building up a resistance to the product, they were going to stop buying it and the price would have eventually started to decline. But instead, the American President had to intervene, probably in something that he didn't know that much about. The absolute result of this was that when he froze this, he did not freeze the price of imported beef, which in essence was our exported beef to the United States. It was not frozen. Feedlots in the United States hung on to their product indefinitely, would not market it because of the freeze, so the primary source down there was Canada, and the pressure on the Canadian market was intense. The Canadian price skyrocketed. Some of you may remember those days.

The price freeze came off some months later and the glory days that Saskatchewan cattlemen and Canadian cattlemen enjoyed for some period of time was gone. And then perhaps one of the great tragedies happened when the price started to drop and the flood of American cattle started coming out of the feedlots and started coming into Canada. I believe our Federal Government of the day did a terrible thing. They played games with our American friends. They weren't honest with them and under the guise of a phoney ban on DES or diethylstilbestrol, they placed an embargo on cattle totally contrary to traditional patterns, interrupting the free flow of cattle back and forth across the line. The Americans aren't dumb; they knew how phoney it was. And the Government of the day and the Minister of the day, I believe, attempted to perpetrate a bit of a fraud when he used the excuse, diethylstilbestrol instead of honestly and candidly saying, "We just can't afford to have that many cattle coming in here; it's too many, we have got to be sensible." And he didn't have the courage to stand up to the Americans and say that; instead he used this phoney issue and the Americans eventually retaliated by an embargo of Canadian cattle going to the U.S., which was the final and ultimate straw towards collapsing our market. And that's what I mean when I say the free market was not allowed to act properly or act normally in response to these increasing cattle numbers. But since the price has collapsed, since the situation is as it is, it has reacted far too well to the over-supply. And, Mr. Speaker, I wish to suggest to this House today that nothing has been solved by support programs, by cattle loans or cattle advances over the long period of time. Over a short period of time for a cattleman, who is short of cash, no question about it, the short term grants were helpful. But over the period of time, over the long haul, he will curse the day that these programs ever went into being. What they have done is they have kept cattle where they shouldn't be

instead of taking the music, taking your beating, reducing the volume, they simply prolonged it and strung it out and those of you who may argue that the law of supply and demand is dead, try selling a product. You can have supports, you can put everything into it that you want, but somewhere along the line, unless you can create a monopoly, somewhere along the line the law of supply and demand must come into view. Even the Canadian Wheat Board cannot destroy or circumvent the law of supply and demand.

The Member has talked at great length about orderly marketing. And I must confess that I have no idea what orderly marketing is. If you mean going back into the, if I could use the grain trade, if you mean going back to the days of 1968 and 1969 when we had a four bushel quota and then a few years later we had an open quota, if that is orderly marketing, God help us. I really don't know what it is. The one thing I would like to say about the free market system is that even when it is operated under the most adverse conditions of the past two or three years, every animal that has been sold has found a home and I suggest to the Member that the cattle industry has survived this and will continue to survive it provided the governments will stay out of it. Let it take its course and let us get back on stream.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I should like to take just a brief moment to demonstrate another means in which the free market has not been allowed to operate and that has been the importation of offshore, or what is affectionately known as oceanic beef. Mr. Speaker, last year we slaughtered more cows, I mean straight butcher cows than we have for a good many years or which we may probably ever do again. Normally we need this oceanic beef coming in for a variety of reasons. They are supplying grades of cattle with which I don't think we in Canada want to become involved. There is no way the Canadian cattlemen want to become involved in the manufactured beef game. It's strictly not economically sound or feasible. We want to stay away from it. Normally we do not kill enough cows in order to meet the demands for this kind of beef. Last year was an exception. Last year we were killing sufficient grades of these classes of cattle, that we really didn't need the Australian beef. And yet what did the Government in Ottawa do? It raised its import from Australia, the whopping figure of 59 per cent from the year previously. At a time when we were really able to supply this demand, record amounts of oceanic beef was allowed into Canada. And while it has been curtailed somewhat, there are still tons and tons, excuse me, kilos and kilos of bonded beef waiting for exposure on to the Canadian market.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on at great length, talking about this great panacea of a national marketing board or national meat authority, whatever the thing is called, but I won't because he's not much opposition and I'll wait until somebody a little more formidable appears on the scene.

But I would like to take just one moment and point out to the Member, that perhaps he should take a look at some of the marketing boards right here in Saskatchewan and what have they done. Let's take a look at your turkey marketing board. And you just count up the number of producers that you had a few years ago and you count up how many producers that you've got right now and you'll find that the number of birds in operation are probably higher, at least as high or higher than we've had than was the case a few years ago. But look at the numbers now and you will see that what's happened there is that the small operators have slowly and surely been strangled out of there

and it has been simply a case of the larger operators picking up that portion of the market. You take a look at your own hog marketing board and see just what has happened to your numbers of hogs which declined drastically and are now starting to pick up. But take a look at where these hogs are coming from. And take a look at your numbers of producers. And frankly, I wish I had taken the trouble to go and get those numbers. But you can find them for yourself; they're not hard to get. And you take a look at what has happened to your number of hog producers. The number of hogs marketed is climbing now, but where are they coming from? They are not coming from that fellow that used to run a small hog operation. They are coming primarily from the increases in production among our Hutterite brethren — large operations. They're moving into hogs and they're picking up that vacuum. So what is happening in your old hog marketing board is that your smaller producers are falling by the wayside, your larger producers are simply getting bigger. You take a look at your dairy board. You will find the same thing. And frankly, I don't care to waste any more ammunition on such inconsequential opposition so at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, I shall say that obviously I shall not be supporting the Resolution.

**MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose):** — Mr. Speaker, when the Member moved this particular Resolution it reminded me of the debate which took place in this House some time ago, in which we soon do get a difference between the Members opposite and those who sit on this side. Members on this side of the House are saying that we should let those who are in the business make some decisions. And the very typical approach from the Government Members opposite is, look, we'll tell you what's good for you. I was amazed at the mover of this Resolution, Mr. Speaker, mentioning a vote and how there is a vast movement in Saskatchewan from these different groups who are supporting the cattle marketing board. The Member knows full well that that statement is completely out of order and does not in any way resemble the feelings among the people who are, in fact, producing cattle. He knows very well the ruckus that the producers in Manitoba raised, when they got all of the kinks out of the ballot. He knows very well that if a ballot were exercised in Saskatchewan today, it would have the same resounding effects and the same outcome as in the Province of Manitoba. What the Member is trying to say, and supposedly all Members opposite, is to go to one of the last truly independent operations and say, look, we know what's best for you, we know in entirety what's best for you. So please let us tell you. You know, you people, you need some government control over your operations. You know the Members start talking about a few meetings out here and there. You see a press report about a meeting held, I believe it was in Wawota, where the number present was somewhere in the neighbourhood of 225 people. And those who favored, and who would favor the Resolution right now out of the 225 were ten. Now don't come to this Assembly and try to tell us that there's overwhelming support out there among the producers in favor of the marketing board because that simply is not the case.

My colleague for Thunder Creek mentioned the point about always wanting someone else to tell us how to operate. I want to point out a few things to you. In 1970, in the Saskatchewan Chicken Marketing Board, there were 87 producers. We come down to 1976 and the number had been reduced to 68. Let's go back to 1970 and see what the productivity was. 1970 — productivity, live weight in pounds, 17,695,000, with fewer producers as in this case, fewer producers the total output had increased to

21,206,401. I would hope that the Member would come back and tell us how many hog producers are in Saskatchewan today and tell this Assembly how many hog producers were in Saskatchewan, five or six years ago.

Let me show you, Mr. Speaker. We have the Saskatchewan Commercial Egg Producers Marketing Board. In 1972 we had only five producers over the 10,000 dozen mark. A few years later the number of producers was drastically reduced but the number of those who are in the big time operation now, is 13. What the Minister wants to do, the Member wants to do is to check out what is, in fact, happening.

Now the very people whom you claim are hollering for a beef marketing board are the very people who will find themselves out of the operation just as happened with the other marketing boards. Mr. Speaker, if the cattle producers of Saskatchewan want to have a marketing agency it should be the cattle producers of Saskatchewan who decide whether they want it or whether they don't. And I would challenge the Opposition to the Government Members, I would challenge them before they make and pass this particular Resolution to give some consideration to allowing the farmers of Saskatchewan to voice their opinions in the same way as the farmers of Manitoba did. No, Mr. Speaker, despite the gloom that the Member wants to put it, the cattle industry of Saskatchewan has its ups and downs. But thank God for the individuality of the producers; they themselves are saying they don't want to get hooked up with a marketing board. And I hope that the Government would have some consideration before passing a Resolution such as this.

Now in closing, Mr. Speaker, I doubt very much if the Hon. Member of, the federal Member, I should say, the federal Minister of Agriculture is going to venture west to engage the Member for Thunder Creek in this debate. I doubt very much if that is going to happen. Certainly I don't think if it does happen that they will select a site in western Canada. If the Member for Cut Knife has agreed to be there, I'm going to tell the Member, the mover of this Resolution, that I will certainly be there as well. I want to see what happens when this Government which has been holding hands in a dictatorial way with the federal Minister of Agriculture by trying to impose and I am going to emphasize the word "impose" — impose a marketing board upon the cattle producers, a federal Member, a Liberal Member and this Government working hand in hand with them for some time. It is going to be very interesting indeed to see how the Members react to this particular Resolution.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am going to leave the discussion at this particular time and challenge the Government not to pass this particular Resolution until they have demonstrated to Members on both sides of this House that they are, in fact, speaking for the true legitimate cattle producers of Saskatchewan.

**MR. A.N. McMILLAN (Kindersley):** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a few words to this debate perhaps in such degree as to help the Member for Thunder Creek legitimize the discussion. It's a wonderful thing when you get into a debate on the cattle industry and have a teacher from the Government side of the House speak supposedly, knowledgeably, about the question and a school superintendent from the Tory side to speak about it. He is a hobby farmer in the cattle business, I understand. I'm in the cattle business as well and I'd like to pass on a few things to the Government Members and to the

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Members to my left as well about this whole question of marketing boards in Saskatchewan. And it has been a long struggle indeed — the teachers versus the ranchers.

I'd like to address a few remarks firstly, to those comments given to this House by the Member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster who insinuated or certainly suggested that Saskatchewan was not prepared to put a vote to the producers, certainly not in the same light as those put to the Manitoba producers. And I don't blame them a bit. If you're looking for a successful conclusion, on your terms, to a vote like that, I wouldn't put the same vote in this province either. I think the results would be even more significant than they were in Manitoba. The Member suggests that that was one situation a beef marketing board was proposed there in that area and he didn't necessarily mean that the situation in Saskatchewan would be the same. He suggested that a vote would deal with a commission rather than a beef marketing board as was proposed in Manitoba. Well, I'll tell you something about your vote in Saskatchewan on a commission if you'd like to put that vote to the people of Saskatchewan. And I suggest to you that it would go very poorly from your point of view for several reasons.

The most significant is that producers in this province have had several years to evaluate the performance of the Saskatchewan Hog Marketing Commission, a commission which was introduced without a vote from the producers and despite the fact that the producers called very loudly for a vote. Despite the fact that a vote was promised to the producers as well, it has been denied.

Saskatchewan beef producers and pork producers have had the opportunity to assess the abilities of the Hog Marketing Commission in Saskatchewan to provide support for hog producers in Saskatchewan to do a job for them. The Member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster made reference to the potential in Saskatchewan, if we had an orderly marketing system for beef, to bring about tremendous increases in the amount of our locally processed beef.

Let's just take a very brief look at the Hog Marketing Commission and what it has done for local processing of pork. Closure of Burns Plant in Prince Albert and processing of Burns in Regina — pretty fair record — orderly closures is perhaps the best way to put it. If you want to be judged, if you want a beef marketing commission to be judged on the basis of your success in the hog industry, I suggest that there'll be a far more than 77 per cent of your cattle producers in this province that vote against it.

Let's turn to another situation or another area, that the Member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster talked about and that was the question of the vote in Manitoba. One thing perhaps he better be well aware of is that as far as the vote in Manitoba went and the distribution of ballots, it's a curious thing for legitimate cow producers and cattle producers in Manitoba to vote on this thing. Any cattle producer in Manitoba, who was receiving a cash subsidy from the Manitoba government or an agricultural subsidy of some other nature, had his ballot mailed to him by the Manitoba government. His ballot was mailed to him. If a cattle producer was independent, hadn't applied for his subsidy or anything he, in order to obtain a vote, had to write to the Manitoba government and request that a ballot be sent to him. And if you people are aware of the amount of hassle some of those producers had to go through in order to simply receive the opportunity to vote, you might considerably change your mind about

the situation in Manitoba. Everything conceivable was done by that provincial government to see that that vote went in favor of the Manitoba government and it was rejected, despite the fact that the cards were stacked. And I suggest that if you have the courage to hold an honest vote in Saskatchewan, the results as I said, would be even more significant.

There's one specific problem in the cattle business that the Members opposite seem to think that a beef marketing commission would solve and that's, of course, the fact the price that farmers and cattlemen in Saskatchewan receive for their product is not high enough to legitimately cover costs these days. I don't know what you expect to accomplish with a beef marketing commission. We see the situation of the wheat marketing board, great institution in Canada, the saviour of Canadian grain farmers. I suggest it has been good for Canadian grain farmers over the years. What success has it got towards guaranteeing farmers in Saskatchewan a decent return on their investment? It hasn't had that much success in the past and I think if it were not for the introduction of the Federal Government Stabilization Program, its success in the future would maybe be limited as well. What's your Hog Marketing Commission done for hog producers in Saskatchewan in the way of price support? Bring in a subsidy — try and convince the hog producers in Saskatchewan that without a hog commission a subsidy would be unable to be provided. Garbage. Any kind of subsidy this Government wants to institute can be done in the free market system. This same applies to the beef organization. What can this particular Minister of Agriculture or for that matter the federal Minister of Agriculture do to increase beef prices in Canada by establishing a so-called orderly marketing organization? There is only one thing that this Government and the Federal Government can do to raise the price legitimately. Raise the price in Canada and call off the import beef supply. You do not need an orderly marketing system to do that. Your entire concept of a marketing board or orderly marketing system seems to be a little disjointed.

Someone on your side of the House is going to have to get up and explain to Members on this side of the House how a beef marketing board is going to increase the price to beef producers in this province. It has not been done on this level, nor has it been done on the federal level. And until that happens, this caucus, and certainly the beef producers of Saskatchewan, will be unable to support such a program.

The Member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster talks about widespread support throughout Saskatchewan for an orderly marketing system. I will say, if he believes that sincerely, he is sadly misguided, and I do not base my information on that that can be gained from the Saskatchewan Stockgrowers Association. I will have you know our family is very actively involved, has been in the past, and still is, in the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Livestock Committee Yards and organization in Kindersley; very actively involved. We have long supported that organization. Members of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool organization held a public meeting there, which attracted many members of your purported friends, the National Farmers' Union — big supporters of an orderly beef marketing system, certainly, many of the more active members of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, some of whom I even suspect are supporters of this Government opposite. The vote there, when it was put to a vote by the board of directors of the Livestock Committee, as to whether or not farmers at that meeting, and I say that meeting, would have gone in favor of the Government's position, whether or not these people wanted an orderly marketing system,

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or a marketing board for beef, that vote was very soundly defeated, very soundly defeated. Everywhere you turn in Saskatchewan, when cattle producers of any nature are organizing meetings to discuss the question and a vote comes up, it is defeated. And that includes the meetings sponsored by the National Farmers' Union in many, many instances in Saskatchewan.

One curious thing that sets the Liberal Party aside from the New Democratic Party opposite, and perhaps the Tory Party to our left, no one has really seen them in the position where they might be able to indicate to us what their policy in this matter is, but certainly, the very significant thing that sets our party aside from the New Democratic Party is the fact that we have always said, and have always practiced the policy of letting the producer decide for himself.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. McMILLAN:** — That is the Liberal party policy, both on the provincial level and on the federal level. The Member to my left has suggested that the federal Minister of Agriculture is trying to ram a beef marketing organization down the throats of the Canadian cattle producers. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Regardless of whether or not the federal Minister of Agriculture is in personal agreement with a so-called orderly marketing organization for beef, he has long stated that he will never see one brought in if cattle producers themselves do not want one, a position that is significantly different from that taken by the Government opposite, as witnessed by your stand on the Hog Marketing Commission. People in this Liberal Party, and we certainly philosophically cover a wide spectrum of Canadian people, have always taken the opportunity to use our position in the Liberal Party to discuss issues such as these before the public. Some Members of our caucus, I suspect all of them here of the Liberal Party in this House, are opposed to introduction of a mandatory marketing board system.

I suspect even that the majority of Members on this side of the House are opposed to a marketing board system in principle. That is not necessarily the case on the federal level. Some Members of the federal Liberal caucus may very well be in favor of a marketing board for beef cattle in Canada — that's fine, that has been the wonderful thing about the Liberal Party over the years. The important, and most significant factor is that we have always used our position to intelligently discuss the issue with the public and have always assured the public that they would make the ultimate decision.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. McMILLAN:** — That has always been the Liberal Party's position and it will remain the Liberal Party's position.

Personally, I can not see the advantage in a mandatory beef marketing system or a so-called orderly marketing system in Saskatchewan, certainly not as put forward by the Member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster. The advantages he speaks of in bringing it in, I think, are false. Under close scrutiny I don't think one of them would stand up one per cent.

The discussion about increasing beef processing in Saskatchewan is bordering on lunacy. That certainly should be evident to

him. If he would talk to the Member sitting next to him, the absent Minister of Agriculture, and ask him how we have been doing in pork processing in Saskatchewan since the inception of the mandatory Hog Marketing Commission, you will have to look at that one again.

I am personally opposed to it, not just on principle, but rather because no one, certainly not in your caucus and no one on the federal level has yet been able to indicate to me that it would be an advantage to Canadian producers. If you have the courage to undertake a legitimate vote in Saskatchewan, I invite you to do so, and I think that the results of that vote should leave, and would leave little doubt in your mind about where the Saskatchewan cattle producer stands on that particular issue.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Score — three ranchers versus two teachers.

**MR. E. ANDERSON (Shaunavon):** — I find the Member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster's Motion very interesting, in the fact that by his remarks I doubt that he has ever sold beef cattle on any market in his life, or had to make his living from raising cattle and selling these to markets.

First we hear that marketing boards are going to stabilize our prices. Now stabilization is what it means, stabilization. We can stabilize at a poverty level or at a level that is a profit level.

If you go to the record of any board, a marketing board, including our Wheat Board, you will find that prices have been anything but stable. I have raised grain for over 20 years, and I have sold the stuff, when you could sell it, from \$1.60 to \$5 and in the last year back down to \$3. So, the fallacy of stabilization or the saying that stabilization is achieved by marketing boards is certainly proven many times over.

We also find that the other great thing that we are going to do for our producers is help the small producer. We go back again to the Wheat Board. Since its inception we have been continuously, throughout western Canada, in fact, all of Canada, but particularly in western Canada, losing our small farmers. Certainly the Wheat Board has powers to control quotas and selling, but has done nothing to keep the small producers in business.

Records were read in by the Member for Rosetown and this is from your Saskatchewan Marketing Board report. It states there, in the egg business, your small producers dropped from 82 to about 46. Your large producer 10,000 and over went up from 9 to 13, with no droop in production, which takes the other hope for achievement that your marketing board will do and throws it out the window. It does not stabilize the price; it does not increase the price that the market will bear and it certainly does not keep the small producer in business.

Then we come to the stance of the federal Minister of Agriculture who says that he would not put in a board without a vote by producers, and producers will run this board. The interesting thing on our Bill C-176, when it sets a criteria as to who can vote, it says anyone with an interest in the product. Now, I am not a lawyer, but we do have some lawyers. I would like to carry that to its conclusion. Does a consumer have an interest in the product and in the producer vote? Where do you



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break off the voter level? We also find that in the United States on most of your marketing boards and in Canada, we now find a consumer sitting on every board. I find it very interesting that we never find a producer being asked to sit on the consumer organization boards. But while we make our livelihood we are expected to put them on our boards.

Here we do find that in Saskatchewan we have a different way of doing things. We can have a board or a commission. A marketing board has the authority to set quotas on sales and also on production. A marketing commission which can be set in place by Order in Council at any time, has the only one difference that it cannot set production quotas. But when you are dealing with a perishable product, you are dealing in a matter of semantics. If you have a perishable product, and you set the quotas, nobody in his right mind produces over what he can sell, so you have set production controls.

I find it interesting that in every session we have a little resolution urging the Federal Government to set up a marketing agency. I find this interesting because I don't think you fellows have the guts to put in a marketing commission on beef or a marketing board or even ask for the vote. I just don't think you do. What you are asking is that the Federal Government do your dirty work which you haven't got the guts to do.

Well I am sorry that I don't have all the figures that I would like to have to enter into this debate. I would like to make a few remarks at another time, so I beg leave to adjourn debate.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 14 — MAINTENANCE OF GOOD HEALTH SERVICES**

**MR. P.P. MOSTOWAY (Saskatoon Centre)** moved, seconded by Mr. Banda (Redberry):

That this Assembly commends the Government of Saskatchewan for making 25 per cent more funding available for hospital services this year over and above the 21.5 per cent more funding available last year and recognizes the strong commitment of the Government of Saskatchewan to the maintenance of needed health services and particularly to medically required hospital services.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to be able to point out certain facts incorporated into this Resolution that I have put forward in the House. The Resolution commends this Government for its last year's drastic increase in funding hospital services . . .

**MR. CAMERON:** — You should be . . .

**MR. MOSTOWAY:** — Well, you just finished condemning your own federal Minister of Agriculture. We don't stoop to those kinds of tactics on our side of the House. At any rate the Resolution commends this Government for its last year's drastic increase in funding for hospital services, an increase of 25 per cent, and this is over and above the 21.5 per cent increase for the year before. Mr. Speaker, no other province in Canada can match

records such as these. No other province can match this province's health services offered. Regardless of how often and how wildly Opposition Members rant and rave to the contrary, the people of Saskatchewan are proud of their health services brought in, I might add, in violent, almost convulsive opposition by the Opposition parties.

Mr. Speaker, I hear voices in the distance and if they would stand up or if they would care to speak on this Resolution a little later on I think we would be pleased to hear where they have gone wrong in the past. At any rate, Mr. Speaker, when one considers the many programs offered, when one considers the fact there is an equalization principle involved in the offering of these services, when one considers what is offered in other provinces and in the various states of the United States, only those who would want to distort for political advantage, will wish to continue this attack on our health services.

Now let's look at some facts in this area, facts that Opposition Members have chosen to ignore. In the first place all provincial governments are experiencing dramatic increases in health costs — increases ranging anywhere from 20 to 30 per cent. All provinces find themselves in this same situation. Besides this, Mr. Speaker, drastic cuts in Federal Government cost sharing in health care is another reason why provincial governments find themselves in this real dilemma. Now add to this Federal Government inflation and a Conservative desire to see wage controls remain in perpetuity and the situation becomes quite clear, and that is that a responsible Government such as this one is concerned about health care costs, and well it should be, because this Government is answerable to all the citizens of the province.

Mr. Speaker, to increase health care spending from \$268 million to \$338 million is not exactly the response of an unresponsive government. It was a responsible increase as compared to Tory Alberta's puny 11 per cent increase and Ontario's increase of just seven per cent.

**MR. PENNER:** — Put the care back . . .

**MR. MOSTOWAY:** — The gentleman talks about care. I am going to get on to the care business as far as the old Tories are concerned in a little while.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — They are young . . .

**MR. MOSTOWAY:** — Well, there are young Tories but they are all old Tory thinkers — 17th century style. But that is new for some of them.

But the thing that must be told loudly and clearly, Mr. Speaker, is that there never was a cutback in grants, nor was one red penny of potash money ever taken from general revenue at the expense of the health care of our citizens. Mr. Speaker, Tory and Liberal claims to this effect were and are false, misleading and typical of them. Those are the very same ones who sit opposite who opposed hospitalization and medicare when those two programs were introduced in this province. At any rate, Mr. Speaker, I would be the last person in this House to deny Liberals and Tories the right to distort and mislead the people in this province. Far be it for me to question the motives of Tories when they try to whip up distorted stories relative to health care in the two recently held by-elections.

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**MR. PENNER:** — Did you say Wipf or whip?

**MR. MOSTOWAY:** — Wipf or whip, same difference. But I do say to these same Tories that deceit is terribly difficult to live with, at least we, on this side of the House, think so, but that is on their consciences and this is especially true of their leader, their leader, who on more than one occasion — where is the Hon. Leader of the Tory Party — who on more than one occasion has resorted to this despicable practice which he practices with near perfection. You see, with experience you become a near perfectionist and I say that the Hon. Leader who is again not in his seat, is a near perfectionist. And when the Tory Leader talks of putting care back into medicare without telling us how he would accomplish this, my thoughts go astray to things best left unsaid in this House at this time.

Mr. Speaker, no one will deny that we should be spending more on a variety of programs, medicare, programs to assist the mentally retarded and other programs too numerous to mention. Well, in this regard the Liberals show some consistency. They are true to their belief that if you give more to corporations there will somehow be more money for government to spend on such things as health care. They in their confusion and naiveness continue to bungle along. Well, I have no quarrel with them if this is what they believe. I have no quarrel with them if they score high on kindness to corporations and low on logic and mathematics and common sense.

But it is the Tories' position that I find difficult to stomach. One Tory gets up and tells this House he believes stiff daily fees should be charged those in hospitals. Another suggests deterrent fees because he feels Saskatchewan citizens are visiting their doctors too often. Why, it wouldn't surprise me one bit if one of these days one of them will propose a motion making it illegal to become ill.

Mr. Speaker, we have the highest ratio of hospital beds per 1,000 in Canada. Our rate of 7.7 per 1,000 citizens is the finest in North America. We also have the highest use rate of hospital beds in North America at 220 per 1,000 citizens as compared with the Canadian average of 156 per 1,000 citizens.

Now I know what the Tories would like to do to increase the hospital bed rate of 7.7 per 1,000 citizens in our major cities. I'm sure their answer is to close down the hospitals in our rural areas. But I say this insidious Tory scheme is not acceptable to the people of Saskatchewan. It may be an accepted accounting procedure to some Tories to resort to this inhuman plan, but it is unacceptable to Members on this side of the House and the people of Saskatchewan.

So I ask, what is the Tory answer to this if I am wrong in my assumption?

Or are they really saying Saskatchewan doctors are unnecessarily hospitalizing too many citizens? I sometimes feel this is what they want to say but are not courageous enough to do so.

Mr. Speaker, maybe Tory Members are suggesting our doctors are tying up hospital beds for too long for routine observations. I don't know. Maybe they are suggesting needless surgery is being performed. Only the Tories know. Maybe the Tories are

suggesting mismanagement. This, I know, only a Tory would know.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, this Government, responsive and dedicated to the people of Saskatchewan, responded well to the situation. It increased its spending; it instituted a day surgery program, and it has dramatically increased its spending in this area in the present fiscal year.

And to those who suggest that hospital waiting lists are too long, I agree, but they are long in other provinces too. Now I am not suggesting we should be satisfied, because I am not. But the situation is improving, and in this regard I have had verification of this from a few doctors with whom I have had communication over the past year.

And so it is, with this in mind, Mr. Speaker, that I ask Opposition Members what their solutions are. Would they increase taxes as most imply by their statements? Or would they, like certain Tories have suggested, decrease benefits to the elderly and the physically and mentally handicapped in order to spend more on health care?

Mr. Speaker, anyone can criticize, but only responsible people come up with responsible solutions to problems. And so I say to Tory Members opposite, when are you going to come up with something constructive in this area? How long are you going to be led around by your noses by your Leader who hasn't come up with one constructive idea on how he would improve health care? To Members opposite, especially Tory Members, I say, go forth and tell our citizens what you would do. Shake off that millstone you have around your neck and tell him you want to be positive from now on, that you now realize that you have been led astray because one among you is so power-hungry, and I have evidence to prove this.

To Tories, I say, lay down your nasty little cudgels. Help this Government and the citizens of Saskatchewan to maintain the best medicare program in the world. Think positive, and some day you will be positive. Some of you have the capability to be positive, although, I grant you, not many.

Think before you suggest cutting out the many needed programs offered. Think before you tactfully condemn our doctors in the future. Think before you attack the integrity of citizens who have occasion to visit doctors or be hospitalized.

To Tory Members opposite who support the principle that the richer you are, the healthier you have a right to be, and to all confused Liberals, but that's only 12 of them, I say, stand up for Saskatchewan.

A change in attitude on this issue, a change to truth, can only enhance your position, something I, with charity in my heart, would like to see come about for the good of Saskatchewan and its citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I so move Resolution No. 14.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

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**MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Indian Head-Wolseley):** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I was making a few comments in response to the Resolution introduced by the Member for Saskatoon Centre (Mr. Mostoway) that I referred to as a joke, and I related to him as being the clown prince of the NDP, because only someone like the Member for Saskatoon Centre could bring forth a resolution congratulating the Government of Saskatchewan or the NDP for their provision of health care services in 1976.

I pointed out that every single professional and everybody interested in health care in Saskatchewan had been extremely critical of the NDP over the past year about this integration of good quality health care that has been traditional in the Province of Saskatchewan. I also pointed out the fact that the only defence the NDP ever had when it came to talk about health care, was statistics. And you know, statistics are a funny thing. They talk about free health care. They talk about the removal of deterrents. They talk about the removal of the head tax, some of the very steps, Mr. Speaker, some of the very steps that may well have caused the deterioration of health care in Saskatchewan today.

They turned around, Mr. Speaker, and they relate to the proliferation of programs. They talk about dental care. They talk about the prescription drug plan. They talk about SAIL. They talk about hearing aids.

**MR. ROMANOW:** — Frills.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Yes, Mr. Minister, they may well be frills when it comes to talk about the basic services of hospitalization and medicare. They may well be.

Let's look at what happened in the prescription drug field. In two years it has gone from zero to \$20 million, and that is a lot of money.

**MR. ROMANOW:** — What would you do?

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Well, I would not be keeping old people from hospital beds. That is one thing I would not be doing.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP has turned around and by proliferating programs in this province, has completely distorted the priorities in health care. They have turned around and sacrificed the good, basic services of medicare and hospitalization.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that there will be many more people who will want to speak on this Resolution, and I therefore, would like to move an amendment, and then we will hear what some of the other Members have to say about the ridiculous Motion of the Member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Speaker, it is moved by myself, and seconded by Mr. Cameron that all the words after Assembly be deleted and the following be substituted therefor:

condemns the Government of Saskatchewan for its misplaced priorities, preferring to purchase potash mines before providing quality medical care and continuing to treat the suffering with statistics instead of quality treatment.

Mr. Speaker, before I move that, I want to talk about this business of potash. An NDP keeps saying, "Oh, the relationship of potash has nothing to do with medical care." And yet, Mr. Speaker, they took \$35 million from the Energy Fund to put into the consolidated revenue to pay for health services. And, Mr. Speaker, if they hadn't completely dissipated the Energy Fund, and if they purchase Alwingsal for the same price as they purchased Sylvite, the Energy Fund will be bankrupt. And instead of being able to provide some additional resources for the starving hospital boards and for the medical equipment that the Saskatchewan Medical Association says you are denying them, you are turning around and using all that money to purchase potash mines. Mr. Speaker, that is providing not one new job, not one new job. It does not care for one old person. Mr. Speaker, I think when we get down to talking about potash, I am going to prove that when you talked about the maximization of benefits to the people of Saskatchewan that the purchase of the potash industry is the worst possible way to maximize benefits of the resource industry for the public of Saskatchewan, and I think it is very easily proved.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am saying again that this Government has sacrificed quality medical care for its citizens, for quantity. They have turned the medical care into a public, political issue, and they have used statistics to try to justify the sacrifice of what they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore, so move the amendment.

**HON. W.E. SMISHEK (Minister of Finance):** — Mr. Speaker, I first of all want to congratulate the Hon. Member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. MacDonald). One thing about him is that he is a very consistent man. He consistently rises in this House, makes a lot of noise. He consistently tries to confuse the issues. He consistently does not want to talk about what is really in front of us, but tries to mislead and steer debate into many directions. Very seldom is he prepared, doing homework, learning and finding out the facts is not something that he has really got a great attribute for.

Mr. Speaker, one other thing that I want to congratulate the Hon. Member for is that he is consistently wrong about his facts.

Mr. Speaker, before 5:00 o'clock, the Hon. Member said that Regina and Saskatoon communities had fewer beds than any other city of similar size in Canada. Mr. Speaker, there is nothing worse about distorting that kind of a thing because, Mr. Speaker, the facts are obvious, they are there and they are proven, that Regina and Saskatoon . . .

**MR. MacDONALD:** — On a Point of Order, I would just like the Member to give the entire quotation, "when it takes in the rural population of Saskatchewan that it serves."

**MR. SMISHEK:** — What are the facts about the hospital situation in Saskatchewan? We have in Saskatchewan, about 7.8 beds per 1,000 population. In Regina and Saskatoon we have four beds per 1,000 in one case and something better than four in another case, compared to less than three in places like Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal, compared to about three beds per 1,000 in Winnipeg.

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Mr. Speaker, we have a very comprehensive study of that particular area on the number of hospital beds, which I will be glad to provide this House with. The Hon. Member may recall, about three years ago we had commissioned Doctor Clarkson to do a very thorough investigation about the hospital needs in the city of Regina and Saskatoon. That report contains a comprehensive documentation of beds per thousand population, city by city, community by community, Mr. Speaker.

I will be glad to table that report. In fact, it has been made available and I am sure that the Opposition has a copy of it, because I had tabled that report a couple of years ago.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — They never read them.

**MR. SMISHEK:** — The problem is, as my colleague says, they never read them, because they want to confuse the issue.

Mr. Speaker, then to further confuse things — for a long time, the Liberals were saying that we are not providing enough money for hospital care. Well, Mr. Speaker, I invite the Hon. Member to take a look at today's Leader-Post. In the case of Regina, the two hospital systems that are operating, the Regina General Hospital under that board — what does the paper say? They ended up the year with a considerable surplus. In the case of the South Saskatchewan Hospital — two out of three hospitals the board operates — ended up with a surplus, Mr. Speaker.

Now, let me remind the Hon. Member during the days of the Liberal administration, hospital after hospital in this province operated at a deficit and the hospital boards were required to go to local governments for assessments, for municipalities to place assessments on the ratepayers in order to bring hospitals out of deficits.

Mr. Speaker, what is the story since 1971? It is, in fact, a great story to be told about hospital care. Today the hospitals do not have deficits. There are more hospital beds; employees in hospitals are better paid than they ever have been, Mr. Speaker. Hospital employees, that is the non-professionals, have had their wage increased by 150 per cent since 1971.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — And you are proud of that?

**MR. SMISHEK:** — Yes, I am proud of that, because I think it is time that hospital workers received a decent wage, and we are proud of that, Mr. Speaker.

In the case of nurses, when we took office, what were the nurses getting? Maximum rate under a Liberal administration — \$500 per month. What do the nurses get today — \$1,220 per month, Mr. Speaker. That is a record of which we are proud. It seems to me employees who get decent pay do better work.

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member further tries to confuse things by talking about quality care. It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Member for Indian Head-Wolseley becomes an authority on the quality of care. It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, because I do not know of two medical doctors or specialists who will agree on how to define quality care. Yet here sits an authority on quality care. Mr. Speaker, does the Hon. Member say to us in this House that it is good quality care

when based on studies conducted by the medical profession in the city of Moose Jaw in the one hospital, some 52 per cent of the hysterectomies that were performed were unjustified. Is that good quality care? Mr. Speaker, or in the other hospital, about 45 per cent of the hysterectomies that were performed in Moose Jaw were unjustified. Is that good quality care? Or in the case of Weyburn again, this was a study done by the medical profession not by the Department of Health. It is true that the department and the MCIC did co-operate in providing certain information. In case of Weyburn we had three times as many appendectomy operations as we had throughout the province. Is that good quality care, Mr. Speaker? Or let me ask the Hon. Member, is it good quality care when we find that in the case of one physician in the one hospital keeps patients for gall bladder operations, on the average and this is over a year's average, under eight days, and in another hospital, another physician on the average over a year's period keeps his patients for 22 days. Is that good quality care?

Mr. Speaker, I doubt it. I doubt it very much, because you can't judge quality on the basis of length of hospital stay. This Government is concerned about quality care. This Government is concerned about quality care. We have co-opted the medical profession, Medical Care Insurance Commission and the Department of Health, all of whom have been working on this question of quality care. But, Mr. Speaker, to define quality care is just not that easy. And, Mr. Speaker, the medical profession itself concedes that the question of quality care is something that is very difficult to define. Yet there is the Member for Indian Head-Wolseley trying to be an authority on quality care. Mr. Speaker, I will have more to say about quality care when I re-enter this debate later.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to make one comment about the Hon. Member inferring that money is not provided for equipment.

Mr. Speaker, the whole question of equipment in hospitals is a matter of concern to every jurisdiction — of what to buy and what is needed today and how soon it will become obsolete. Mr. Speaker, this province does not have to take a back seat to anybody, in terms of equipping our hospitals. Our hospitals are as well equipped as any in the world, Mr. Speaker. There are, from time to time, new pieces of equipment that come into being that we do not buy immediately, and properly so. But, on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, let me also point out how advanced Saskatchewan has been.

For example, what the Members of the Opposition and I think, at times, the media, do not recognize is that Saskatchewan on various pieces of equipment, particularly in cancer treatment, has led North America.

For example, you may recall that in 1971, we purchased and installed a betatron. Mr. Speaker, the betatron that was installed was one of only three installed in North America, one in Boston, one in Montreal, the other one at the University of Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. It is still one of the unique pieces of equipment. Mr. Speaker, I know that the Liberals, when they were in office, tried to buy the betatron from Germany by trading wheat, but that did not work. The Germans wanted hard cash and we provided hard cash, in order to have that equipment. It has been a very useful piece of equipment.

In the area of cancer we take no back seat. Mr. Speaker, I



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invite the Members to visit the Plains Health Centre. It is recognized to be one of the most up-to-date hospitals in North America.

True, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals finally did get construction started. But we completed it and we put that hospital into operation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan again has become a leader in the health field. That is really what the Liberals and the Conservatives dislike. They do not like this province providing first class care to its people. They would like to have us return to the days under the Liberal administration where inadequate financing was provided in support of health care. That is not saying that our medical profession tried to do anything less than provide first class work under difficult circumstances. They have always done first class work, but, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to support from a Liberal government for health services they have always been caught wanting.

Mr. Speaker, I will have much more to say about this matter and I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 26 — CANADIAN FARMERS PREVENTED FROM BUYING CHEMICALS AND PESTICIDES IN THE UNITED STATES**

**MR. E.A. BERNTSON (Souris-Cannington)** moved, seconded by Mr. Birkbeck (Moosomin):

That this Assembly condemns the federal Minister of Agriculture for his announcement of March 4, 1977, which will prevent Canadian farmers from buying agricultural chemicals and pesticides in the United States.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Resolution is to call upon the Minister of Agriculture of Canada to reconsider his announcement to prevent Canadian farmers from buying agricultural chemicals and pesticides in the United States.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — What . . .

**MR. BERNTSON:** — Pay attention; you may exercise some influence there.

For the past several years the costs of certain pesticides has been cheaper in the United States, sometimes as much as 40 to 50 per cent cheaper than the price of the Canadian equivalent. As a result some producers have taken advantage of these price differences by buying the cheaper US chemicals for their own use. As of March 4th the Minister has now banned this opportunity. One of the problems with this ban is that many producers have already ordered and paid for and are simply awaiting delivery of the US pesticides. If these producers cannot import their previously ordered pesticides and farm chemicals they will suffer a significant economic loss. I would ask the Minister to suspend any restrictive actions against these farmers who previously ordered and paid for chemicals. These chemicals should be allowed to cross the border subject to the regulations

in place prior to the announcement of March 4th. The Minister said that there has yet been no decision made regarding the entry into Canada of previously ordered pesticides. Such a decision should have been made much earlier; it should have been considered with the Minister's announcement. His game playing is putting Canadian farmers at a disadvantage. This is but one criticism of the Minister's announcement. On the whole I would question the wisdom of banning the purchases of US chemicals in any case. The arguments for this ban are very weak.

First, he suggests the Canadian Pesticide industry is being hurt by purchases in the US; however, figures show that United States purchases have only accounted for three per cent of the total sales to Canadians. Is the Canadian industry in such bad financial shape that a three per cent loss could spell doom? The Minister seems to think so. Producers in the past could see price competition from the United States keeping Canadian prices competitive. Now with no competition many producers will see an increase in input costs and reduction in net incomes. The second argument is lack of detail and labelling and lack of bilingual content on the labels and this is a very weak argument. Many products are brought into Canada in bulk and have no label. I wonder if the Minister and the Cabinet could strictly enforce The Labelling Act to see that a product brought into Canada has bilingual labels no matter what form of packaging it is in. Rather than taking any action in protecting the producer from a drop in income because of the ban, the Minister has only issued a challenge to the chemical industry to price its products competitively throughout the North American market. In this regard what measures will the Minister take to ensure Canadian pesticides compete with US pesticides? If the pesticides are not priced competitively what action will the Minister take to rectify the situation?

Surely these are two questions which every producer would want to know the answer to. Producers want to be assured that the Canadian pesticide industry will not try to squeeze the domestic market to the limit. Unfortunately the Minister has not yet seen fit to answer these questions. Instead he only responds that he has had discussions with farm organizations about the ban leaving the impression and the inference that those organizations supported it. This is not the case.

Among others, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the United Grain Growers have all opposed the ban. Consequently our hope is that the Minister will reconsider his ban or at least take measures to minimize its impact. What has happened is the Minister of Agriculture of Canada under the federal Cabinet has capitulated to big business and used gimmickry to give them embargo protection for imports in the disguise of safety and labelling, a definite ruling against the Canadian farmer.

**MR. CAMERON:** — What percentage . . .

**MR. BERNTSON:** — Three.

Mr. Speaker, I now move this Resolution.

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**MR. J. WIEBE (Morse):** — Mr. Speaker, a few brief comments in regard to this particular Resolution and I sincerely hope that they will be brief tonight. First of all let me say in starting my comments that I hope that all Members of this Assembly will vote against the particular Resolution that has been presented. I can see some concern being expressed by the Member for Souris-Cannington in regard to the particular actions of the federal Minister of Agriculture in that they relate possibly to some of the large farmers who are located within his constituency, as his constituency of Souris-Cannington does border on the American border. But by going along with the recommendations that are being presented by the Member for Souris-Cannington, we are saying that we are in favor of protecting or leaning towards a select group of farmers in the Province of Saskatchewan; that select group of farmers are those located close to the American border. Secondly, it protects those who are large enough and wealthy enough to drive across the state line and purchase enough chemical in the US to make it economically feasible for them to do it. It is not economically feasible for anyone from the area of Weyburn, Regina, Saskatoon, Swift Current and so on to take advantage of any particular saving that might be made by driving across the US border and picking up these chemicals.

It is important to note as well that American firms demand cash upon delivery of their particular product which in turn means it rules out any possibility of one ordering that particular chemical by mail or by freight and I understand that there would be other technicalities involved as well. The freight and cost involved would not provide any advantage to the farmer living in a situation other than close to the American border.

But let's look at the short term and the long term effect of the actions taken by the federal Minister of Agriculture. What he is saying is that he is not in effect banning the sale of American chemicals in the Province of Saskatchewan or any province in Canada. He is saying that any chemical manufacturer or any person who manufactures or produces or sells chemicals in the US is quite able to sell them in the Dominion of Canada as long as he has those chemicals registered with the Dominion of Canada. What is the reasoning behind this?

First of all, it is the legal constraints that might be applied to the use and abuse of chemicals in this country regarding safety, environment and health. What's the reasoning for regulating those products or to have them registered? First of all if there is a major accident with one particular kind of product from the US, the provincial and federal authorities by having it registered within this country know immediately what action has to be taken to prevent any further damage by that particular accident. If the chemicals are not registered in this province or in this country and an accident does occur it means having to try and contact someone in the US to find out where that product was made, and find out as well whether any kind of preventative action can be taken. As far as having any effect on the cash output of the farmers in the Province of Saskatchewan and Canada, let's look at the total amount of chemicals sold within Canada.

Last year, a total of \$120 million worth of chemical was sold in the Dominion of Canada. Of that, \$80 million was related towards agriculture. Of that \$80 million there might have been close to \$2 million in imports and the majority of that was not in the Province of Saskatchewan, but in the Province of Ontario.

Most farmers will find that the majority of the products that we produce within the Dominion of Canada such as 2-4-D, is much cheaper than what we can obtain them for in the States. Your teflons are equitable in price, so there is basically no savings whatsoever by going across the border and buying these chemicals there.

Again, looking at it from the long term aspect, the majority of chemicals are made from petroleum. I think we have to protect Canada's availability of that petroleum. What would happen in the event of a petroleum shortage in the US? You can rest assured that if we relied in Canada strictly on the Americans providing us with our weed sprays and our chemicals that in the event of a petroleum shortage in the US, imports would be cut off and we would not be able to purchase any of that needed and I must say much needed chemical for our fields and our crops.

What we are saying to our producers in this country is, yes, go ahead and produce the chemical that we need, if you can produce it on an equitable and even basis with that in the US.

What is happening, Mr. Speaker, is that the position taken by Mr. Whelan is a position that I would hope all politicians, those who are in government and those who are in opposition throughout this country would take in looking at problems. It is not necessarily what is best for their re-election or election in four years but looking at and solving the long term problems of this country is important. By keeping the borders open in terms of chemicals may garner some politicians a few more votes in the next election, but it will certainly not protect the agricultural industry in this country in the long term.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. WIEBE:** — By supporting this particular Resolution you are saying, look, I want some particular political advantage in the next three or four years, and am not concerned about what may happen in the future to the agricultural industry in this province. For that reason I ask all Members of this Assembly to reject this particular Resolution.

**HON. E. KAEDING (Minister of Agriculture):** — Mr. Speaker, I should like to put in a few words with respect to this Resolution. Far be it from me to spend a lot of time defending the federal Minister of Agriculture in some of the things he does. I would suggest that in this particular issue, I would find myself somewhat in support of what the federal Minister has done. I agree with the statement which was just made by the Member for Morse, that not very many people are really able to take advantage of this kind of chemical which is being brought across the border, unregistered chemicals, incidentally, being brought across the border from the United States.

It is true that a few people who are large operators are able to go down there and take advantage of that market or some of those immediately across the border are able to take advantage of that market.

I think we have to recognize that there is a problem with regard to our chemical industry in Canada. Out of the total

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chemical sales in Canada of about \$120 million, about \$65 million is imported from outside of Canada. That amount is increasing as time goes by. The percentage of chemical which we are producing in Canada for our own use is decreasing. I think it is important that we not become entirely dependent upon the rest of the world for our chemical supplies.

I would agree with the Member for Morse that in times when there is oversupply in the United States or an adequate supply of these chemicals, that they will be pushed into Canada at probably some very low prices. However, if there happens to be a shortfall on supplies in the United States, these supplies could very easily be cut off, and our farmers would find themselves in very difficult and very expensive replacement situations.

I would suggest also that the Member for Souris-Cannington was somewhat irresponsible when he said that we should let these chemicals come across the border, whether they come in in bulk or however they come in, whether they are registered or unregistered, and that we shouldn't be concerned about that. I think of some of the experiences we have had, not only in Canada, but in the United States with regard to the chemicals getting into food supplies, especially in terms of feed additives, and we are talking now of chemicals in all forms, particularly in feed supplies where there have been many serious accidents with regard to improper chemicals getting into food supplies. I think if we leave ourselves open to unregistered chemicals, certainly we are leaving ourselves open for those kinds of accidents happening here in Canada. These can be very expensive to correct. I really don't want to say any more about it, Mr. Speaker. I think that I would take the position as taken by the Member for Morse that we should defeat this Resolution. I think that the importance to Canada and to the Saskatchewan farmer of getting these kinds of unregistered chemicals across the border is not sufficient for us to be taking the kinds of risks we would take if we were to allow the unrestricted imports.

**MR. L.W. BIRKBECK (Moosomin):** — Mr. Speaker, obviously the Member for Morse and the Member for Saltcoats, the Hon. Minister of Agriculture were not listening very carefully when the Hon. Member for Souris-Cannington proposed this Resolution.

The Hon. Member is not trying to open up the borders for chemicals to be coming in from the United States; that is not the intent of the Resolution at all. I can assure the Minister of Agriculture that our Member for Souris-Cannington is not irresponsible in any manner or way. Of course, the Hon. Member for Morse wants to make a political issue out of it. That isn't what we are trying to do here. Quite simply, Mr. Speaker, we want to protect those farmers that have already purchased chemicals. We want them to be able to bring those items across that they have already bought and paid for. That was the intent of this Resolution.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, the Members need to be informed a little more on this Resolution and I therefore, beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

## **RESOLUTION NO. 28 — IMPOSITION OF THE METRIC SYSTEM IN CANADA**

**MR. BIRKBECK (Moosomin)** moved, seconded by Mr. Berntson (Souris-Cannington):

That this Assembly condemns the Government of Canada and the Government of Saskatchewan for its imposition of the metric system in Canada and Saskatchewan without the consultation of people affected.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that the intent of this Resolution is not lost as well. I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the Motion which I have placed before the House and I am sure that any reasonable thinking Member of this Legislature would support this Motion. Mr. Speaker, I will just go back a few years to try to give an explanation as to how all this came to pass.

In 1970, the Federal Government set up a metric commission to plan for Canadian conversion to the metric system in the interest of world trade. This commission worked out what they thought would be a good plan. Then they proceeded to get things in motion. Provincial governments were informed to prepare supporting legislation and companies were advised that metric conversion would take place on or about February 1, 1977. Grain companies and business began to change over at a considerable cost. The conversion would be affecting the train trade, packing and the oil and gas distributors. All this was done before legislation was passed in Parliament. As I understand it this particular legislation came in for real debate in the House of Commons on January 26, 1977, only five days before the system was to go into effect.

The Government seemed to feel the grain industry was for the metric system based on the expressed views of grain companies who were representatives of a sub-committee set up by the metric commission. Some other representatives of that sub-committee were the Canadian Grain Commission, the Canadian Feed Manufacturers' Association, the Canada Grain Council, the Pioneer Grain Company Limited, the Alberta Wheat Pool, the United Grain Growers, the Canadian Wheat Board, the Ontario Grain and Feed Dealers' Association, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the Anglo-Canadian Grain Company and the Department of Agriculture for the Province of Saskatchewan, and the co-ordinator for the metric commission. I don't feel any of these representatives of this sub-committee that were appointed or set up by the metric commission really approached their membership, the people they represented. I think if they had, in particular the farming industry in Saskatchewan, they would have found out that our farmers did not want a metric system in their business. Yet every one of the organization's representatives on that commission had a vested interest. The problem was there was not one producer represented on the committee. The committee was supposedly set up to advise the metric commission which in turn would advise the Minister.

I can honestly say that I have not had one person come up to me and tell me that he thought the conversion to the metric system was a good idea, and that is in or out of the agriculture industry in this province. I would estimate between 90 and 95 per cent of farmers in western Canada are opposed to metrication.

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Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say at this point that I think all people understand that we are gradually moving to the metric system throughout the world, and that it is a good system mathematically speaking. It is a simpler system, but that depends to a large extent on what age you are. Our young people learning this metric system now in our educational system will have no problem with it. But as it pertains to agriculture in Saskatchewan the average of our farmers is well over 45 and this system is not something that they are totally incapable of accepting, but it is a matter of giving them time and of using a dual system to allow them or afford them that necessary time to make the conversion. This way the older farmers could use the old system and the younger farmers who have studied the metric system in school or were more familiar with it could use the metric system. Eventually we would end up with a situation in which all farmers in western Canada would be using the metric system.

Very simply, the Government's position whether it be federal or provincial should be to respect the wishes of the majority of the people. In western Canada and in particular Saskatchewan, the majority of people are farmers and producers and are happy with acres and bushels, but as I say they realize we have got to progress and they say we shall progress, but let's try to do it in some easy stages and let's not just go bang right into this new system.

The basic argument is that we must make the change to the metric system for the sake of our trade with other parts of the world, our export market. But let's be sure of one thing. We may export a lot of things, but we do not export land. Therefore, I think my argument is very simple. There is no reason why we cannot use a dual purpose system, in particular, at the farm level as it pertains to bushels and acres being converted to tonnes and hectares respectively.

Mr. Speaker, this New Democratic Government put this legislation through by Order in Council without telling the Legislative Members that all land surveys had to be done in future in metric. They did not consult with the farmers in the Province of Saskatchewan in a real and meaningful way. There was no reason in my mind, why this Government could not have brought this legislation before all Members of this provincial Legislature. That would have given the people of this province a real and meaningful way to express their views on the conversion to metric.

Of course, as I said before, it is very difficult for this Government to explain why it is necessary to change acres to hectares when we are not selling land in the world trade.

Now then, why Pierre Trudeau and his centralist Liberal Party, could not consider amendments by the Conservative Opposition to allow the use of both the metric system and the imperial system is beyond me. The only answer is, of course, that they, like the NDP in Saskatchewan, are centralist in their policies and believe that they know best what is good for the people and to consider a meaningful amendment by Opposition, either in Ottawa or in Regina, in our Provincial Government, would be absolutely out of the question.

I would like to say that a reasonable argument can be made for leaving our land system with the imperial system of measure.

The land adjustment in the three prairie provinces, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta will be a fantastic cost. I don't know whether the provincial governments are going to pay for it or who is going to pay for it. The registration of titles of land will affect the oil and gas industry as well as our agricultural industry.

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure this House that I am a supporter of the good characteristics of this metric system. As I said before it is a simpler and better system, mathematically speaking.

Canada and the United States for that matter should be in harmony if you like, in their measuring system with the rest of the world. Both these countries must trade internationally and it is the pressure from big companies, automobile companies, the grain trade, machine companies and generally speaking, international companies of the world, that has brought this metric system to Canada.

Now Canada needs to trade internationally and it is much simpler and cheaper for us to use the same system of weights and measures as the rest of the world. But I might add that it is little consolation to our consumers who go to the store and pick up a package that is measured in something that they don't even know what it is.

Mr. Speaker, to this point, the trading companies have been making the calculating changes. Now this legislation will relieve these trading companies of that duty and place it squarely on the shoulders of our farmers and individual citizens of our province.

Mr. Speaker, I am a farmer myself and I can assure you that this is going to require some extra time in the field. You will think of it some of those spring days, not when it's warm, but kind of dirty and dusty out there and you are standing there trying to figure it out with a piece of paper and a pencil. If you are lucky you'll have one of those little computers. Again, if you are lucky and the people of this country are lucky, it will not result in a crop failure, because if we had a crop failure we would certainly have some second thoughts about converting to the metric system.

Mr. Speaker I will close my remarks on this Motion by simply saying that surely the Liberal Government in Ottawa and this New Democratic Government in Saskatchewan, could have taken some time to consider the total ramifications of this conversion to the metric system. It will have a tremendous effect on the people and we must have some feeling for people and understand that people do not adjust quickly to change and that surely for these reasons alone there could have been amendments accepted. Debate could have been taken into consideration in this Legislature. There was no need for it to have been passed through Order in Council. This would have given the people an opportunity to express their views on this matter and we could have considered some educational programs in the conversion to the metric system.

As I have said before, I agree with conversion to the metric system, with the exception, in particular, of land. Taking these things into consideration we should have allowed the dual system, at least for a short term. If the Government would have been so considerate to have brought it before the



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Legislature, the length of time could well have been decided as to how long it was necessary to go with a dual system to give our farmers in particular, and our consumers, an opportunity and the necessary time to make the adjustment to these necessary changes from imperial measure to metric.

I, therefore, Mr. Speaker, move Resolution 28, seconded by the Hon. Member for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson).

**MR. S.J. CAMERON (Regina South):** — Mr. Speaker, I want to make some extensive comments to this Resolution, but I understand we want to get into some other business. I want, in addition to that, to draw to the attention of the Member for Moosomin, what his counterparts in the Conservative Party in Alberta are doing in this connection. They are farther advanced than the Province of Saskatchewan in their conversion to the metric system and many people think that they are very wise in doing that and indeed in leading the way in many respects to the conversion that's going on.

The Member for Moosomin, in speaking to this Resolution and indeed their party in moving the Resolution, demonstrates again the old dinosaur attitude of the Conservative Party. The moment you have the least hint of change in any respect, they cower and run for cover. They always want to preserve every last vestige of the status quo. That's not so bad, but what they always do in the process is spread their political mischief. They know that some people are opposed to change and when there is a change it opens up the political opportunity to spread mischief. I'm not surprised it's this Member that puts the Resolution on the Order Paper, because he's following in the footsteps of Alvin Hamilton, who has been doing his best these last several months to spread around myth and mischief in the same way this Member is doing about the conversion to metric.

If I asked the Member to tell me what an acre is, Mr. Speaker, what would he tell me? He would scratch his head for a few minutes and he would say, why an acre is 16.5 feet by half a mile. I would ask him what is an acre in terms of the metric system and he would say, I don't know, even though it's a hundred feet north by a hundred feet east, or rather a hundred paces north, a hundred paces east and you have a hectare. He says it's so complex nobody can figure that one out. What he does is always makes the assumption, as they always do in their arrogance is assume that the population is so stupid, so opposed to change that we can't somehow convert in due course to the metric system.

The Resolution says, there has been insufficient consultation. This thing has been around for six years. I don't know what kind of consultation the Member wants. If he doesn't understand after six years, is there any prospect of his understanding in six more years? I doubt it.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. CAMERON:** — Then he says if we convert to the metric system, why we may have a crop failure. Well, I suppose if we had a good crop, he'll say it might have been so much better if we hadn't had the metric system. That's the sort of mischief and myth that they spread in connection with some of these proposals.

The Member says, well we should have a dual system, where

we convert slowly over the course of time to the metric system in the grain industry, so that farmers can understand. Once again, he's way behind the times because that's the very policy that's being pursued at the moment.

There is very good reason for converting to metric in the grain industry. I remind him of only two facts. One is that it now requires in Canada 16 conversions from imperial to metric to get grain from Saskatchewan to a ship in Thunder Bay, sixteen, and a cost in excess of \$1 million annually, to the Wheat Board to do those conversions.

I mention only two of those facts. The Member says we ought to have a dual system for a period, so farmers can understand. That might have been a useful idea, had it been expressed six months ago, before we implemented a dual system instead of expressing it six months later after it's already in effect. The Government of Canada has indicated to producers that it too is concerned that producers should understand and have a gradual period to work into the use of the metric system. They have therefore, said that we are going to continue to use the dual system. You will have quotations made to you in the metric system and they will be accompanied by traditional quotations in the imperial system. And over the course of time we will slowly adjust to the new system and save a million dollars annually that we are currently losing and avoid these conversions from metric to imperial so many times in the course of shipping grain from the prairies.

And, as usual of course, the Member speaks on both sides of the issue. He tells us on the one hand how foul it is that we should be requiring these poor, ignorant people, as he describes them, to convert to this new system. He moves a Resolution to condemn the two governments for moving in this progressive way, and then, on the other hand, of course he is careful to say in ten minutes, 'but I appreciate the need for all this metric conversion; we live in a real world; other nations use the metric system; we are one of the few who no longer do; we have to over the course of time convert.' He spends ten minutes of his time telling us about the value of converting to metric, and then moves a Resolution and condemns the governments for doing it, in face of the fact that it has been around for six years.

I am going to tell the Member the next day I speak to this, about what they are doing in Alberta, which as I said earlier, is farther advanced even than is the Province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, for these reasons and because I want to speak to the Resolution at greater length, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

**RESOLUTION NO. 30 — PENSION PROVISIONS  
FOR SASKATCHEWAN GOVERNMENT SUPERANNUATES**

**MR. E. ANDERSON (Shaunavon)** moved, seconded by Mr. Cameron (Regina South):

That this Assembly urges that a full examination be made of the pension provisions currently in force for Saskatchewan Government superannuates with a view to determining: (a) whether Saskatchewan Government superannuates are

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receiving fair pension benefits relative to other groups; (b) whether such pension benefits should be indexed as are Federal Government superannuates' pensions; and (c) generally whether fair and equitable pension provisions exists for the former public servants of Saskatchewan.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in moving this Motion I would hope that the members of this House will look upon this Motion in view of the fact that the time has come to review and examine the pensions in force now for Saskatchewan Government superannuates.

There certainly can be made a good case for what this Motion requests, and that is a full examination of these pension provisions. I am not, at this time, judging the pensions as to the benefits compared to other pension funds. There can be no doubt that many pensions fall far behind in serving the needs of those who receive those pensions.

The shortfall in providing a decent standard of living for those on pensions is apt not to fall to anyone in particular, it is rather a result of inflation and the resulting increase in the cost of living. Many of these inequities are now being covered in negotiations between employers and employees and it is now a fact that the Federal Government superannuates have their pensions indexed to the rises in the cost of living.

The people who are now on pension are the ones who find themselves trapped. They find that they have no way to negotiate a better deal on their pensions as they are no longer involved in the collective bargaining process. Therefore, their only recourse can come through a full examination being made of these pension plans and efforts made to correct any deficiencies that this examination might prove that exists in these pensions at this time.

I do not bring this Motion forward with any intention of starting a political debate on the pensions that have been available throughout the years. I would rather put this Motion forward in this light, and that is that we, in this Legislative Assembly, in urging this examination can offer assistance to these superannuates that they cannot achieve in any other way.

Therefore, I ask Members on both sides of this House to accept this Motion in the spirit that it has been presented and I ask that all Members support this motion.

**MR. S.J. CAMERON (Regina South):** — Mr. Speaker, I want to speak briefly to this Resolution, in seconding it. Its origin lies in this history. The Saskatchewan Government superannuates currently look about and see pension provisions that have been made for others, principally teachers, but other groups as well, and they think rightly or wrongly, most likely rightly, that the provisions in respect to pensions, which have been made for other groups are more liberal and more generous than what has been made for them. They have, over the course of time, been meeting with the Minister responsible trying to impress upon him their case. In addition to that they have been meeting with some Members of the Legislature. They have circulated some material to us, asking us simply to get on with the process of examining the provisions that have been made for them, to determine whether or not they are fair as to the three respects that are mentioned in the Resolution. But while they continue to get

a sort of sympathetic ear from the Minister responsible, and continue to get some general sympathy from Members, they feel that their cause is not getting the kind of attention that it ought to be getting and, therefore, the Resolution is put on the Order Paper for the purpose of sparking some debate among Members and to bring to Members a greater awareness of the issue that these people are raising with us in their efforts to get to the Minister responsible and the Government and get, perhaps, some concrete action.

The Resolution requires nothing of Members in the way of decision, but requires some thought about the plight that they indicate they have. The purpose, in addition to that, is to get Members of the Assembly beginning to think seriously about some of the issues that these people are raising and in an effort to persuade the responsible Minister of the Provincial Government to get the examination on and over and bring to some resolution, the problems and the issues that these people are raising.

I am happy, Mr. Speaker, for those reasons to be seconding the Resolution.

**HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General):** — Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 31 — SUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR PROBATION SERVICES FOR JUVENILES AND ADULTS**

**MR. E.F.A. MERCHANT (Regina Wascana)** moved, seconded by Miss Clifford (Wilkie):

That this Assembly urges the Government of Saskatchewan to provide sufficient funds to permit a renewed emphasis on probation services for juveniles and adults.

He said: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that I have nothing but respect for the people now working with juveniles and working in probation services in the employ of the Provincial Government. The reaction of the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Rolfes) whenever suggestions are made to him about spending priorities of the Government is to bawl like a weaned calf over what his employees, in some way, have been attacked, that any criticism of the spending priorities is tantamount to criticism of the workers within the department.

Mr. Speaker, the Motion that is coming deals with the problem that exists in probation services, which is not due to the people, but to the lack of money and the lack of people that the lack of money causes for probation services. The problem is not a result of what they do, but their inability to do enough.

The Social Services workers are highly skilled professionals who are extremely interested in the field and they understand the problem better than we do in this House. They are, unfortunately not given sufficient funds to adequately perform their functions.

Saskatchewan has a higher crime rate than Manitoba, higher than Ontario, higher crime rate even than the Province of Quebec. We have one of the highest per capita crime rates in Canada and, in fact, Mr. Speaker, the only area that I can think of in the

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country where a higher crime rate, in fact, exists is in Tory Alberta. Of course, the Hon. Member for Nipawin (Mr. Collver) would be quick to point out that they balance the problem in Alberta by saying that, even though they have such a high crime rate, that that very high crime rate is balanced, one supposes, by balancing the budget and by saving money for the taxpayers.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that crime is a very serious problem and I don't agree with the Member for Nipawin that it is something that should just be ignored by this province and ignored by governments throughout the country. I say, Mr. Speaker, that it is something that deserves our attention in this House and this Motion deals with the problem of crime and deals with the problem of crime among young people.

It would appear that the spending priorities of the Provincial Government on dealing with crime are to put the prevention of crime very low in the priorities of this Government. We spent 1.5 per cent of our Budget on matters related to the prevention of crime to the Attorney General's Department and under two per cent of the entire provincial Budget is spent to protect Saskatchewan people in this way.

I suggest that we underspend and as a result we spread the RCMP too thinly around the province; we compel the city police forces to operate with the barest minimum of personnel and though the officers involved throughout the province do, I believe, a very good job within those constraints, still when the court system and the policing functions are financially restricted the high crime rate must necessarily follow.

Mr. Speaker, I say all of those things by way of a preamble to a specific request and specific suggestion to the Government. I believe that far more money has to be put into probation services. The recidivist rate once a person has been in jail is extremely high in North America. We don't do the rehabilitation job that European prisons seem to accomplish. We have more people in prisons in Canada than they have in Great Britain though Britain has more than twice the population that we have in this country.

The British borstals deal with the young offender and the Minister would be wise to study the British borstal system. They deal with the young offender and have a very satisfactory success rate in terms of rehabilitation. We aren't doing the jobs in the prisons of reforming people who get there, and that means that we have to do an even better job of keeping young offenders from getting to prison.

Because we lack a borstal system, because our boys' centres are not as effective as their European counterparts, we have to win the battle at the probation level. We have to do even better with probation services and we have to do better in dealing with juvenile offenders before they get to jail.

While it is true that sending someone to jail accomplishes the aim of punishment which perhaps is some deterrent for that individual and others, at the same time the jail experience hardens the mind of the young offender against society, allows for the formation of strong friendships analogous to the kind of friendships that you develop when you face adversity together in the military. And what we are really doing with the prisons, to some extent, is training the young offender in the criminal subculture.

A young man having gone to jail through stupidity or ignorance or bad casual friendships may well come out hardened against society, embittered by his experience, with a whole new range of friends, who to varying degrees are involved in criminal activities. He acquires, in prison, a fair degree of knowledge about crime.

Now incarceration may be worth that price because of the deterrent effect, but because we are not successful in rehabilitating the criminal in the prisons, I say we have to do the best job we can to rehabilitate the criminal before that young offender is, in fact, incarcerated.

What kind of a job are we doing then with our probation services? If the stakes are so high how capably does the system deal with the young offender on probation or the juvenile offender working with the probation officers?

Since the cost to society, if the young person becomes a confirmed criminal, is very high in both financial and personal terms, how much effort do we make to ensure that the young person does not go to jail, which from experience we know will probably confirm him in the criminal subculture.

As a society we spend a great deal of money on the national parole service. National parole officers tend to be very well paid. Promotion within that service continues to involve the excellence within the service at the client level and the caseload of the national parole service is small.

They deal with the confirmed criminal, someone who has been sent to a penitentiary. Pen time begins with a sentence of two years or more so they very rarely are dealing with someone who has not been convicted of four or five previous offences. Because their caseload is small, they are able to work with the parolee on a very personal basis. They will seek employment for him; they are available for the kinds of lengthy discussions which are often necessary for people who have difficulty facing the problems of life, credit, marriage difficulties and peer group disagreements, the kinds of life support problems which the rest of us take for granted and deal with in an adequate and automatic way. Those kinds of problems dealt with by the national parole service, because their caseload is small, have received that kind of attention and it means that the national parole service is doing a far better job with their caseloads than the probation services do with theirs. It is those kind of problems that may trigger a return to crime.

The work of the national parole service, in solving those problems, frequently averts a return to crime by the parolee. We give excellent probation service to confirmed criminals, two years and plus, who are trying to break what is often a 10 or 20 year criminal habit and we are right to give that kind of attention, in the first instance, to the young offender and to people dealt with by the people under the provincial probation services.

We would, more appropriately, give the special kind of attention that the national parole service affords to 16 and 18 year olds if, indeed, we have to choose to give that kind of service to one or the other.

Unfortunately, for Saskatchewan at least, probation services come under the Provincial Government and, unfortunately, probation services are under financed while the national parole service is

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national and is properly financed. It is no answer to say that the NDP is spending as much as or more than the Liberals. That is the kind of answer that we always get when Motions of this nature are brought before the House. It is the kind of answer, Mr. Speaker, that the Member will rise in his place and say, well we are spending more than the Liberals spent. It is the kind of answer, Mr. Speaker, that seems to forget that the Liberals were in power a whole generation ago. The Liberals were in power when Mr. Speaker's father was in this House, when three Members of our Liberal caucus had their parents in the House. A whole generation is gone.

I heard one of the Members talking about something in 1936 the other day, when my grandfather was in the House. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that in response to this kind of suggestion that we don't hear the Minister rising and saying, well we are spending more money on probation services than the Liberals spent, because the fact is that you are not spending enough and I think you know it.

The current spending is insufficient in absolute terms and the result is that, to some extent, probation services have become a joke and most probation officers would probably agree with that appraisal. Young offenders now know that they will get a suspension on their first offence almost as a right. They know that being on a suspended sentence involves no responsibility and that they get a free ride on their first offence. The pre-sentence reports that are prepared are usually of excellent quality, but because the probation officer is so overworked he is not able to follow up on the plans that he laid in the pre-sentence report. The hands of the probation officer are economically tied and a natural progression develops from minor criminal behavior to probation to further involvement in crime and ultimately to jail and then to the penitentiary. The probation service which does not have adequate staff to respond quickly to requests for pre-sentence reports finds itself putting most of its effort into preparing pre-sentence reports and little of its effort into reforming the young people with which it works. Reporting by the clients on probation is typically monthly and frequently seldom on the basis of whenever the client can make it into the office. Effective community supervision requires frequent contact. Frequent contact builds a rapport between the probation officer and the young offender. It provides an opportunity for surveillance in monitoring of behaviour and it allows for regular counselling. With adequate time the probation officer can assist in finding employment, advise on the myriad of life support questions which we deal with on our own if we don't have the kinds of problems that the young offender particularly faces.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think it is up to me to talk about the size of the caseload, but I think that each probation officer should be in a position to spend something in the neighbourhood of about an hour a week dealing with each case, either in a conversational way or dealing with the problems of that case, finding them employment, trying to deal with some of the problems that they may have with creditors and others. And that may mean that a caseload of about 25 to 30 appears appropriate. My information is that the current caseload in probation services is 48 so that even when the Government includes supervisors and others who don't work directly in caseload the ratio is alarmingly high. As the system now exists the NDP Government is foisting a hoax on the people of Saskatchewan. The Government pretends that we have adequate probation services to offer

protection as an alternative to jail while, in fact, there is no significant protection because there is no real supervision. We are allowing criminals to go free without the benefits to society of seeking to rehabilitate them nor the benefit to society of the deterrence and temporary safety that flows from incarceration. The only purpose in allowing the first or second case to go unpunished and to become a suspended sentence with probation is to afford an opportunity to rehabilitate and under our current system we are not using that opportunity to rehabilitate and we are endangering society at the same time. The probation order needs teeth. Those probationers who violate their orders should be breached and incarcerated. The judge when passing a suspended sentence tells the young offender that if he breaches the probation order he can be sentenced for the original crime and he will have committed an additional crime for breaching the original order. In practice the judge, the probation officer and the criminal all know that nothing much happens if another crime is committed. The criminals know that almost no probationers at all are ever breached. I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that the Government would be afraid to indicate the scanty number of breaches that have taken place in this province because that number in itself indicates the weakness of the system in its under financed form. When the criminal knows that he will never be breached the authority of the probation officer is destroyed. The longest possible sentence for breach of probation is six months which in itself is probably inadequate but when no one is ever breached even that six months becomes a joke.

Why are there no breaches? It is not because of the inadequacy of the probation officer. Again it goes back to the priorities of this Government in failing to provide sufficient funds for the administration of justice. To breach someone the probation officer has to take the case back before a judge which is almost never done because probation officers are too overworked to know that their cases have deteriorated and require the action of a breach. But even when the individual commits some other crime the probation officers simply don't have the time to become involved in the paper work of breaching an individual who may be in question. Deterrence is lost and the protection for society is lost in the process. If probation is to be truly effective in helping people to develop a responsible attitude and thereby truly effective in protecting the public, then probation must hold clients accountable for their actions and probation officers must be given the freedom from time constraints to react quickly. This is important to the individual in terms of rehabilitating that individual and rehabilitating that individual is important as well to society as is reacting quickly important to society in terms of protection to society.

The parolee may have become a danger to society and the probation services must be able to react quickly to protect the community. If the parolee now poses an undue risk we cannot give the probation officer the freedom to move. We con the public into thinking that they are protected and these potentially dangerous criminals are being adequately supervised. The number of individuals who commit crimes while on probation or on bail is in itself an indictment of the Government's financial constraint against the probation services. It is not good enough, as the Hon. Attorney General tends to do, to simply say that our crime rate isn't growing as quickly as it used to. It is time that the Government faces its responsibilities in the area of safety to the public. Our loss in crime, in financial and personal terms is too great. Our level of crime in Saskatchewan in absolute



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terms is unacceptable and the office of the Attorney General and that of the Department of Social Services simply has to do better than it has been doing in this area.

Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in moving this Resolution.

**MISS L.B. CLIFFORD (Wilkie):** — Mr. Speaker, I have previously spoken on this matter. I have talked about the probation system being understaffed and cumbersome and as having lack of structure and again because it is such a serious matter I would like to speak at a greater length and I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

## SECOND READINGS

**MR. S.J. CAMERON (Regina South)** moved second reading of Bill No. 87 — **An Act to provide for an Economic Impact Statement to accompany Government Bills when introduced in the Legislature and to accompany Statutory Instruments and Regulations when issued, made or established.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — I ask the hon. Member and the Members of the House to stand this item to give me a further opportunity to look at it. It arrived on the Order Paper yesterday and I haven't had an opportunity to make a judgment on it.

**MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Indian Head-Wolseley):** — May I rise, Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order? Are you considering the fact that it may be out of order? May I ask then when we can expect a decision on this matter?

**MR. SPEAKER:** — On the next Private Members' day.

**MR. E.C. MALONE (Leader of the Opposition):** — Mr. Speaker, has anybody raised a Point of Order on this particular Resolution or have you taken it upon yourself with this particular Bill?

**MR. SPEAKER:** — At this point no one has raised a Point of Order. However, I wish to have an opportunity to examine the Bill.

**MR. MALONE:** — Do you examine all Bills that come in by all Members? I would find it somewhat unusual if you did. I can see you asking for leave or to ask the Member to stand it if there has been a Point of Order taken. I may have been out of the House when such a point was taken, but I don't recollect any Point of Order at all being taken on this particular Act being submitted by the Member.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — I examine all Bills which may possibly be money Bills that are not put forward by members of the Executive Council.

**MR. MERCHANT:** — On a Point of Order, Mr. Speaker, with respect, is Mr. Speaker not an umpire, an arbitrator analogous to a judge and the Members of the House analogous to the Council who brings matters to your attention to be decided. You are not with respect, Mr. Speaker, designed to go on an investigation to decide whether you feel that something is improper or not. In the absence of any Point of Order being raised, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that my colleague from Regina South should be permitted to proceed. If no Point of Order has been raised he should be able to proceed.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — If the Member will bear with me for a moment, I refer Members to Rule No. 30 with regard to Money Motions in the Rule Book for the Legislative Assembly:

Any vote, resolution, address or bill introduced in the Assembly for the appropriation of any part of the public revenue or of any tax or impost to any purpose whatsoever, or to impose any new or additional charges upon the public revenue or upon the people, or to release or compound any sum of money due to the Crown, or to grant any property of the Crown, or to authorize any loan or any charge upon the credit of the province, shall be recommended to the Assembly by message of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor before it is considered by the Assembly. The consideration and debate thereof may not be presently entered upon but shall be adjourned until such further day as the Assembly shall think fit to appoint.

There is a very important principle involved with regard to any money Bills and the Members will be aware that I have cited that principle before when Bills came forward which I considered to be money Bills. Members will also realize that first reading of a Bill has a caveat on it automatically with regard to whether it is a money Bill or not. This is the first opportunity I have had to have this Bill before the House in second reading and consequently I am not prepared to make a decision at this time. I have reserved decision and will bring forward a decision as soon as possible.

**MR. MALONE:** — Mr. Speaker, I just want to point this out. I agree with everything you say about money Bills and I am not being critical in the sense that you haven't had time to examine the Bill, if indeed that is the function you are to perform, but I bring to your attention that there is nothing that I can recall in the Bill that in any way would directly suggest that there would be any expense on behalf of the Crown. The Bill is quite clearly worded. There is no suggestion that I recollect of any possible government expenditure and I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that unless the matter is brought to your attention by a Government Member or any other Member that on the face of it the Bill is completely in order. It is not your function, with respect, to go behind the apparent face of the Bill to see if there is some conceivable way that there could be an expense put upon the Crown. I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps any Bill that comes before this Legislature if scrutinized carefully enough would show some expenditure i.e. the very fact that the Bill is being printed is an expenditure in itself. I raise a Point of Order now to question just how far Mr. Speaker's jurisdiction in this regard goes without the matter being raised on a Point of Order by any other Member in this House because I

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feel very strongly that if private Members' Bills either from the Opposition or from Government backbenchers are going to be scrutinized in detail by the Speaker, it certainly infringes upon the rights of the Members of this Legislature to put those Bills into effect to begin with or to propose them.

I think there is a distinction between a Bill that on its face would show some expenditure on behalf of the Crown, and Bills such as the one introduced by my colleague the Member for Regina South, which as I recall it, shows no possible expenditures at all on the face of it. As I indicated too, Mr. Speaker, any Bill, if scrutinized in detail would likely result in some minor expenditure of some kind being involved. I merely rise at this time to question your prerogative of rising and declaring a Bill of this nature, perhaps, to be out of order, when on the face of it, to me and to other Members here, it is completely in order.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — I think the Member is to be commended for examining the Bill and coming to his conclusions of whether or not this is a money Bill. Unfortunately, I have explained to the Member that I have not had the opportunity to determine whether this is, in fact, a money Bill or not. I think the Member is wrong to suggest that I have suggested in any way that it is a money Bill.

I think in theory I am in a position to examine any or all Bills that come before the House. The fact of the matter is, I think, the Speaker usually routinely examines Bills put forward by Members who are not of the Executive Council to determine if they are, in fact, money Bills. If a Bill is brought forth by the Executive Council and doesn't have the money recommendation on it, and some Member draws the Speaker's attention to it on a Point of Order, then I would automatically reserve judgment on that particular Bill until such time as I had determined in my mind whether it is a money Bill or not.

With regard to the expenditure of funds to print a Bill, that is altogether a different thing than that to which I am referring. There is a provision in the legislation under which this Assembly operates to print as many Bills as Members wish to bring forward and that doesn't represent a charge against the revenues of the province.

I think I have made the point that I have to acquaint myself with the particular Bill. If Members will go back one number on the Order Paper, they will see Bill No. 82 which I held in the same position. However, I had more time to examine that Bill and I didn't raise any question with regard to whether it was a money Bill or not. In fact, I determined in my mind that it was not. No Points of Order were raised, therefore, it didn't become an issue. I haven't had the same opportunity with this Bill.

**MR. MALONE:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to say one final word. I am not trying to put you in the position of being on the defensive or anything else on this particular point. It may very well be that you are right. But, I wonder, if in your examination of the Bill and when you rule on this, if you would be good enough to refer to us, the Members who sit on your left, the authority that says that you should examine all Bills submitted by private Members. I am sure there must be such an authority. I am not aware of it in our own rules in the House of Commons rules or in Beauchesne. I would be pleased if Mr. Speaker would direct me to that authority so that we will know where we stand on future occasions.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — I will take that under consideration. I think we have discussed the Points of Order with regard to this Bill sufficiently at this time. I will take them under consideration.

**MR. CAMERON:** — I am going to rise then on a Point of Order if I may, a new point. There is an aspect here which concerns me.

I want very much to get this Bill before the House. I did it, I drafted it, I drafted it with the point in mind that Mr. Speaker now raises. I consulted with the Legislative Counsel in doing it and paid particular attention to Mr. Speaker's ruling last session which was very wide in this respect in drawing up this Bill.

What troubles me is that Mr. Speaker will go away and in the course of the next week come to a decision on whether or not the Bill is in order or whether it isn't, never having given me the opportunity to address some argument to Mr. Speaker to persuade you that the Bill is in fact in order and is no charge upon the public purse. My question, Mr. Speaker, is when will I have the opportunity prior to your making a decision to address some argument to you in an effort to persuade you not to rule it out of order in the event that that is your inclination.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — It is quite clear that the Speaker is in a position to make a judgment on a Bill whether it is in order or not. It is sufficient that the Speaker at that time cites precedents to support his argument with regard to the orderliness of the particular Bill. There is no opportunity to appeal a Speaker's ruling. The Member is saying that he has very carefully drafted the Bill. That may be so. But he should not put me in a position of saying that it is out of order, because I have said nothing of the kind. I am neutral on the matter. I think the Member owes me the opportunity to examine the Bill and bring forward a ruling. The ruling will have citations attached to it and the Member has to accept that.

#### **COMMITTEE OF FINANCE — DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH — VOTE 32**

**HON. W.E. ROBBINS (Minister of Health):** — Mr. Chairman on my immediate left is Mr. Mel Derrick, Deputy Minister of Health; on my immediate right, Mr. Ken Fyke, Associate Deputy Minister of Health; behind me Mr. Carm Feader, the Administrative Officer, Director of Administrative Services; and Mr. Lawrence Krahn, Budget Officer.

#### **ITEM 1**

**MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Indian Head-Wolseley):** — Mr. Chairman, I should like to begin the Estimates of the Department of Health with a few very general comments about the state of the Department of Health and of health care in the Province of Saskatchewan, and perhaps generate some intelligent debate on this very important subject.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — When I say intelligent debate, I do respect the Minister of

Health much more so than the Attorney General as far as responding in an intelligent fashion.

I do want to say, Mr. Minister, that as you know and as I am sure your staff is aware, there has been a great deal of controversy in the Province of Saskatchewan over the past year about the standard of health care or the quality of health care or whatever word you want to use. I think also . . . if the Attorney General would . . . You know, I would like to be very quiet and polite and courteous in this particular opening remark. As long as the Attorney General doesn't stir me up I am sure that I will remain that way.

I want to tell the Minister of Health that this is not a problem that is native to Saskatchewan. It is a problem that is right across the country; it is Canada-wide and probably world-wide. What is different, what is distinctive to Saskatchewan and I think the thing that must be debated here tonight is the perspective by which the NDP views the problem and also the method of attacking the problem or to finding a solution to that problem.

Let me give you a couple of examples and I think a very obvious one. In 1971-72 the health budget was something in the neighbourhood of \$151 million, give or take \$100,000 or so. In 1977-78, the budget for health is \$404 million, almost an astronomical climb in a period of five or six years, the kind of a climb and the kind of ascendancy in spending that this province or country cannot continue to expect or to prevail in. As a result the Federal Government has now placed some severe restrictions and some limitations on increasing health expenditures and their contributions thereto. We could go on and give you some specifics.

When we talk about \$404 million, we are talking over \$1 million a day of taxpayers money to maintain our health programs in this province.

Hospitalization for example has been the biggest one, going from \$78 million to something in the neighborhood of \$232 million this year; medicare from \$30 million to \$75 million. I don't have to tell the Minister the percentage of increase is something in the neighborhood of 150 in one to 200 per cent in the other.

I want to try to examine, perhaps very briefly, what the NDP has done and summarize in their term of office, the five years since they have been the Government and managing the health affairs of the province. First of all, of course, they took great pride in the concept of freedom from cost individually for an individual citizen of Saskatchewan. They eliminated all user pay, and whether we call them utilization fees or deterrent fees, they immediately removed those. I am not sure whether they were right or wrong; there has been debate on both sides. I was one of those who supported the concept of utilization fees and probably the only Member in the Legislature now that did. I don't make any apologies for that.

The second thing they did, they immediately removed the head tax, first of all from the senior citizens and second of all from all people.

The interesting part about those particular directions as far as the financing of health care is concerned is that they did not make any distinction in relation to ability to pay, no

distinction whatsoever. In other words it made no difference whether you were a millionaire or a multi-millionaire or whether you were a pauper. Each of you were given free, free as they called it, free medicare. Of course you and I know that free medicare is not possible. We are just talking now about \$404 million.

The second thing they did, of course, is they then began to take medicare as their personal prerogative and their means of political survival. They felt that quality of medical care or the standard of medical care, if you prefer the word better, my friend the Minister of Finance doesn't like the word quality, he likes to make a distinction, their idea of quality or continuing high standard of medical care was the introduction of a vast number of new programs.

I think all of us will recognize in health care in Saskatchewan or in Canada that there are two specific areas of health care; one is a basic program, and I suggest to you that all of us will agree that the basic components of health care programs in Canada are hospitalization and medicare, those are the basic components. The second component of the health care programs in Canada, the supplementary or additional programs, the NDP went about introducing a vast number of them very, very quickly. Denticare, Hearing Aid Plan, the Drug Program, the SAIL, you could go on and on in the smaller more minor items in those programs. They did that without any idea or any cost impact. Had the people of Saskatchewan had a long term view as to what those programs might do to the expenditures of dollars in Saskatchewan, we might have had some very serious reservations about them. So all of a sudden we had two areas; we had the removal of all user pay in Saskatchewan and the second thing, the proliferation of all general programs in health care.

We now have to assess what is the result of those two directions that the NDP initiated in 1971-72 when they became the Government, coupled with the fact that costs have risen so dramatically. Now all of a sudden governments at every level are immediately putting the brakes on, the Federal Government and provincial governments, including the Minister of Health in this Government. I respect his attempts and I say that in all honesty to try to control them. I don't agree with the direction he has gone and I am going to discuss that. But I do respect the fact that he does realize that Saskatchewan is in a serious problem. So is Canada, because we may not only be costing the taxpayers a great deal of money, but we may be seriously jeopardizing the very fundamental basic health care programs in Saskatchewan and in Canada, and I refer to hospitalization and medicare. That is the real issue that we have to face here tonight.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. MacDONALD:** — What was the Minister's dilemma? He was faced with what one could honestly say is a hell of a problem. What was the dilemma?

First of all how was he going to control expenditures, realizing that the Federal Government is putting the squeeze on, which was their responsibility perhaps, just the same as he was putting the squeeze on. What was his dilemma? Should he tackle first of all the basic programs, health care or hospitalization and medicare? Should he leave alone the supplementary or frill

programs and continue to spend the dollars on them because they are politically palatable and politically popular. That was the decision he faced. What was the answer that he came to? Well, I think we are all very well aware because it is only about a year ago, in fact, if I can remember it was April 9, about one year and three days ago, that the Minister came out and brought about his statement and his press release on how he was going to tackle the problem of controlling health costs in the Province of Saskatchewan.

Of course, I don't know if I have to remind the Minister but I am going to read it for the benefit of the House, because I think it is important to get the background of how the Minister attempted to tackle the problem in Saskatchewan. The headline of course is, "Hospital Patient Days To Be Cut Back By Five Per Cent". The minute we take the hospital patient days, we recognize automatically that we are attacking the basic services, the basic components of health care, hospitalization and medicare. The minute you reduce the patient days you influence the entire hospital and medical program, simply because a hospital is funded on a patient day basis. In other words the money that the hospital receives is related to the per patient days. And to reduce it by five per cent reduces the opportunity of expenditure in every area of hospital services by that five per cent. That is what is important. So the first thing he did was cut the hospital per patient days by five per cent. What else did he do? He terminated the financing of regional hospital councils after September 30. I am not really familiar with hospital councils. I did have the opportunity of meeting a couple of them, but surely at this time of increasing costs and expenditures perhaps those regional hospital councils could provide some good economic and good basic financial information and advice to the Minister. Instead of that he did away with them.

I am not sure that I disagree with the restriction of all capital grants unless previously approved in principle. I think it was an area of stand pat, let's take a look to see where we are going, let's try and find some area of control.

Curtailement of equipment grants to Crown owned hospitals except the most essential items, Mr. Chairman, is something I do disagree with. We come back to talking about the differences of the health component, the basic services and the supplementary services. The fact is that the Minister had decided to zero in his restraints on the basics and then we start talking about health costs or equipment and equipment restrictions.

What I am trying to point out to the Minister is that the decision of the NDP Government in 1975-76 was a very simple one. They faced a very serious problem which all of us admit. They decided that they would tackle that problem one way, for they had a choice. Either they would attack the basic services or the supplementary services. They decided to attack the basic services. And those basic services are the important component of health. I don't think anybody would deny that, not even the Minister. That is where I question the priorities and that is where the people of Saskatchewan have questioned the priorities.

Let's go on and look. Many of us could argue about where and what is the impact of these cuts. First of all there is no question about it, hospital beds were closed, no question about it, staff cuts and reductions were made in various hospitals, no doubt equipment was not purchased that should have been purchased in the eyes of the professional.

I am not here to suggest that I am a professional expert in the field of health or medicine or hospital care nor are any of us in this particular area except perhaps the officials. But I do know that there is one group in the Province of Saskatchewan which is orientated strictly to the benefit of providing care for the sick, and that is the medical profession. And they also have an association, which is called the Saskatchewan Medical Association.

They presented a brief to the Government a few weeks ago, that if it is valid, and I have absolutely no reason to question its validity, its honesty, its truth or its motivation, if it is valid, it is a screaming indictment of the Department of Health, of the NDP Government and the direction of health services in the future in Saskatchewan. Let's make no mistake, it is an indictment no matter how many speeches the NDP make, no matter how many speeches the Minister of Finance stands on his feet and makes about the expenditure of dollars, and statistic study quotes. I can go on. I have read it and I have some experience in the Department of Health, very limited I will admit, but for example I fought the recommendations in the areas that they pointed out made eminent sense, eminent sense to me. For example they zeroed in immediately on the age old problem of the location of hospital beds in Saskatchewan, despite what the Minister of Finance says.

This is a problem that we have been discussing in Saskatchewan since I became involved in government in 1964. We did attempt to do something about it, much perhaps to our political demise, if you want to call it that. But we did attack the problem. We recognized that the area of population growth and the Medical Association pointed this out very clearly, the areas of political growth, or population growth in Saskatchewan were in the urban areas. The areas of decreasing population were in the rural areas, the small towns, the villages, and the farm lands. They pointed out that the areas where the beds were needed and utilized the most were in urban areas and regional hospitals or base hospitals and regional hospitals. They gave the example of Saskatoon, where because of the number of beds in Saskatoon, I believe they use, and I will look it up and give you the exact figure, about 127 people per thousand whereas in Melville it was over 300, because of the bad location of hospital beds. And what did the Department of Health and the Minister do about it? They treated Saskatoon the same as any other part of the province. They turned around and rushed out and opened a hospital in Elrose, that I believe is seven miles or 25 from another hospital; another one in Lampman, eight beds I believe.

Instead of turning around and directing their attention to the geographic location of beds and where those beds were needed they completely ignored the problem, completely ignored it and treated Saskatoon and Regina just the same, and you and I know, Mr. Minister, when we take the thousand or so beds in Saskatoon and realize that if you utilized them for the rural areas that it would be about 500 beds for utilization or what is 45 or 50 per cent of the citizens. In Saskatoon it comes to four beds per thousand, where in other parts the average is about 7.7 or 7.2.

So if you take the massive population in those two urban centres, what is it eight or nine in rural Saskatchewan and where people are using those hospitals for only minimum needs and requirements because believe me I know that the people in constituencies that have rural hospitals do use them, do



appreciate them and they are important. But when they are sick with any kind of a real problem they are in the cities of Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw or Swift Current. You know it and I know it, and somewhere along the line your Government, you Mr. Minister, should have had the courage to attack that problem.

I could go on and talk about the other things that they point out, for example when they start talking about the quality or the standard of health care. They point out that budget restrictions appear to have led to province-wide reduction in hospital staff, and this isn't the Liberal Opposition or the Conservative Opposition talking, this is the Saskatchewan Medical Association which says:

- (a) In an increasing number of rural hospitals only one registered nurse is on duty at night.
- (b) In urban hospitals where whole wards are left with only one registered nurse at night.
- (c) The morale of registered nurses across the province is dropping due to the frustration with increased work load.
- (d) Special duty nurses are being assigned to care for in-patients who previously were handled by the regular nursing staff
- (e) Well trained orderlies are in short supply.
- (f) Out-patient diagnostic procedures are being delayed; interns are asked to perform an increasing number of orderly duties at night and on weekends.

The staffing formula applied to Saskatchewan Hospitalization Services Plan in its funding of hospitals is to be ridged to provide for staff adjustments during the peaks and valleys of patient care.

I could go on and on. The conclusion, the initial statement is what is really frightening, and what they start off to say.

The Saskatchewan Medical Association wished to express its concern about the fact that the standard of health care in this province is and has been falling behind North American standards. This situation is being aggravated by the budget restrictions imposed by the Provincial Government during 1976, which included, and I could go on and enumerate them, which I did already at the beginning. They recommended one or two things, a co-ordinated approach between the Government and between the Medical Association and the public. The Minister has been very quick to accept the discussion between the Medical Association and the Government, but he has ignored the third person, the consumer of health services in Saskatchewan which is the public. And on two occasions I have asked the Minister if it would not be worthwhile at this time to have a public inquiry into the standard of health care in Saskatchewan, and its total responsibilities, the way it is financed, determination of priorities, because that is the problem. The priorities in this Government are determined for health care on a political basis, or you would not be tampering with the basic health service, hospitalization, and medicare that we aren't tampering with and that is a fact, and if it wasn't you wouldn't be tampering with it.

So, Mr. Chairman, I want to say that I have no objection and I don't think anyone in Saskatchewan, or anyone in Canada has to the attempts of you as Minister in your Government to control and restrain health costs. What we do object to, which I do

point out, is the fact that I think your direction in the restraint program is degenerating the standard of health care in Saskatchewan because it is attacking the basic services rather than the supplementary services. I would like to have the Minister's comments.

**MR. ROBBINS:** — Mr. Chairman, one of the problems we have, of course, is that the Member of the Opposition deals with the thing in generalities just the way the SMA brief dealt in generalities. They never get down to any specifics. They didn't provide any basis for a valid comparison to prove their allegations at all, and neither did the Member opposite. Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, if I could give a brief statement with respect to the situation it would solve all of the problems and there wouldn't be any more questions from the Opposition.

The Health budget, of course, has provided for major increases in the funding of health programs, and the Member admitted that. It provided for the reasonable sustenance of existing provincial programs and for the development and expansion of a number of new services which were needed and wanted by the people of this province. The 1977-78 Health budget as he mentioned provided for \$403,700,000 in terms of total expenditures, an increase of some \$65.8 million over the previous year, approximately 20 per cent. Funds provided for the Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan will rise by 20.3 per cent to \$232.4 million. Included in this total is \$615,000 for the purchase and installation at the University Hospital of a computerized Axial topography scanner, a sophisticated piece of x-ray equipment, and we do not apologize for delaying it because the obsolescence factor in that particular type of equipment is extremely high. It was reasonable to wait in order to make a more intelligent decision a bit later on. That scanner will help to maintain the University Hospital as a major Canadian teaching hospital and treatment centre. Mr. Chairman, \$23.5 million will be provided for hospital construction and equipment. I want the Hon. Members to note that the University Hospital construction project will cost about \$41 million and will be completed in 1978. \$3.1 million has been budgeted for the beginning of the regeneration of the Regina hospitals. Regeneration is expected to total almost \$66 million over the ten year construction period. In spite of the continually increasing amount of funds provided by this Government to the hospital sector, that is something the Member touched on, we continue to hear complaints by health interest groups who believe that the hospital sector needs many millions of additional dollars to enrich its programs.

The Saskatchewan Medical Association alleges that Saskatchewan's standard of health care is falling behind North American standards. Their solution to this totally unsubstantiated allegation is to spend extra dollars, almost exclusively, on institutional care. In our view we have provided generously for hospital services in the province. The portion of the health budget devoted to our hospital sector will approach 58 per cent in 1977-78 and almost 63 per cent if capital grants are taken into account. Fifty-eight per cent represents a significant increase in proportion to the total health budget devoted to the hospital sector.

In 1971-72, and you were talking back about those years, 53.2 per cent of the provincial Health budget was spent on

hospital care. It is now up to 58 per cent. When you look at the total figures that is an immense sum of money. If you want to compare these figures, compare them with oil rich Alberta. According to the latest figures released by Statistics Canada, the percentage of general hospital cost to total health cost for Alberta in 1971-72 was 45.3 per cent, that is compared with our 53.2 per cent and has fallen to 44.6 per cent in 1974-75 where ours has risen to 58 per cent. The pressures to provide ever increasing funds for hospital services is great. It is the hope of this Government that a healthier lifestyle will eventually reduce this pressure as well as reduce the demand on traditional hospital and medical services in the province.

Despite what the Member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher) says in defending alcohol and tobacco, I argue that in terms of lifestyles, in terms of changing our cost relation to health, we need reduced consumption of those commodities. We intend to make a serious attempt to reduce illness by promoting a greater awareness of the unfortunate effects of our unhealthy habits in daily living. We would like to keep the Member for Thunder Creek around for awhile to entertain us. We would like to convince him that he should stop smoking cigars so he won't end up as a cancer or an emphysema patient in the hospital.

The 1977-78 Health budget is designed to sustain and enrich the Saskatchewan health programs. Additional funds are being provided to the SAIL program. Our Government realizes that this program is one of the more important new health programs of direct benefit to handicapped persons. We hear a great deal of criticism about SAIL. Certainly you hear where errors were made and they do occur, but I would like to point out to the Members of this Assembly that from August 1, 1975 to March 31, 1976, 4,722 pieces of equipment were loaned on a long and short term basis to handicapped persons and 4,042 persons were beneficiaries of that plan, and most of them were satisfied with the materials supplied. I am well aware that the SAIL program is experiencing some difficulties; we expected that to some degree, but when the program started the expectations of Saskatchewan citizens and health professionals were raised suddenly to a degree which had not been anticipated. The demands for equipment and service greatly exceeded the known demands which had existed in Saskatchewan prior to the start of the program. As a consequence a situation developed where demand exceeded the supply for certain pieces of equipment. However, we have undertaken an exhaustive review of the supply, procurement and administrative procedures and the review will be completed shortly. When it is completed we can be reasonably assured that the stock will be adequate to provide improved service.

The Health budget for 1977-78 fiscal year will provide \$6.7 million to the Saskatchewan Dental Plan. Coverage will be continued to all children born from 1967-71 and extended to children born in 1972. And that, Mr. Chairman, is a preventive measure. Perhaps the Members opposite don't realize that, but in terms of improving the general dental health of a generation, you improve the general health of those people in future years. The Prescription Drug Plan through such measures as interchangeability, product substitution, effective price competition and large quantity discounts has achieved a reduction of the cost of drug materials to where those drug materials are the lowest in Canada, a reduction in the range of up to \$4 million per year.

These cost savings are of a direct benefit to the people of this province, particularly the chronically ill and the elderly.

Although the elderly constitute approximately 11 per cent of the population of this Province, 30 per cent of the Drug Plan expenditure for drugs go to people 65 years of age and over.

Prior to the plan we realized that a disproportionate amount of money was being spent by a segment of our people for needed prescriptions. Statistics from the Drug Plan confirm this. Fifty per cent of the prescriptions paid by the plan went to 8 per cent of the population. It is clear evidence that those people in Saskatchewan needing assistance in this area are getting it.

In 1977-78 the Health budget is designed to continue and enrich the benefits of that plan and it is done logically. It is done through a committee which looks at the therapeutic value of drugs and is not afraid to remove drugs when there is a need to be replaced by better drugs.

In 1977-78, 200 staff of the Palliser and Parkland hospitals do not appear in the printed Estimates. Hon. Members opposite refer to this as a "gimmick". Well, they took the Wascana Hospital out in 1968; was that a gimmick? There were 268 employees there at that time. They took the Alcoholism Commission out of the printed Estimates in terms of 17 employees at that time. Was that a gimmick?

Let me assure the Hon. Members that no tricks are involved. The Government recognizes the crucial role of the community in the provincial health care system. The shifting of responsibility for the administration of these hospitals entirely to community boards, is a further step towards community participating in the health care field.

I should like to make a few remarks specifically directed to some of the comments made by the Hon. Member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. MacDonald). He talked about what he termed frill programs.

The Hearing Aid Program helped over 4,800 people in this province last year in terms of proper audiological tests and fitting of proper hearing aids. All those people who got that assistance will not be completely satisfied, that is admitted, but the costs were lowered appreciably over going to the private market in terms of buying those products and in addition, we know that those people got a proper test in terms of being fitted for hearing aids and many of them, some 2,500 of them, didn't have to have hearing aids and were told so.

I mentioned the SAIL Program briefly. The Saskatchewan Drug Plan I have mentioned briefly. They talked about escalating costs. I heard comments about costs rising about 20 per cent. The budgeted estimate came out very closely, very closely, and the actual rise in cost was around the six per cent level.

We heard a lot of criticism about the Dental Program. I heard Members opposite get up and talk about treatment of each child, at a cost of \$158. Obviously those figures were rather meaningless because as you bring more and more children into the program, in terms of the total cost of setting up that program, the costs diminish. And if you will look at the reports you will find that the cost is down to \$107 and will diminish a great deal more next year and eventually will be down to a much lower level than those figures.

The Member mentioned cost-sharing. Obviously it has to be of concern to this province. We now get \$20 per capita on a grant basis, plus a transfer of tax points — 13.5 tax points. Now in prosperous times like 1974, 1975 and 1976 we may well be able to carry the cost of health in this province. If we get poor crop production because of dry weather or drought conditions and get declining market prices for grain, this has a major impact on this province, and everybody knows that. The total net earnings of farmers in 1975 was about \$1,470 million. It dropped roughly to the \$1 billion figure in 1976 and it will likely be down again in 1977. It is reasonable to expect that the net earnings of farmers because of rising input costs and declining market prices and perhaps lesser production this year, could bring the net returns to farms to half of what it was two years ago. That can't help but have a major impact on the economy of this province.

When you talk about transfer points and you look at the implications of that you can't help but be concerned.

Therefore, we had to take some action. The Member is critical of the fact that we took steps to reduce bed utilization, in effect, a five per cent reduction. We still have 1,823 patient days per 1,000. The average for Canada is in the 1,400 range. We are still 37 per cent above the average for Canada. Every other province in Canada took similar steps; every other province in Canada went to the hospital sector which is the major concern, because it is where the major costs occur. The total rise in hospital costs last year exceeded the cost of all the frill programs, as the Opposition Members see fit to call them.

The Hon. Member talked about regional councils. We saw regional councils and their budgets rising very rapidly. He seems to think the services are no longer available. They are. They are available through regional hospitals at half the cost.

I come back again to the SMA brief. I must repeat again that they talked in generalities. Obviously you are not going to satisfy everyone at all times. I have lots of letters here indicating satisfaction with our programs.

I should like to point out one or two of them, perhaps just to illustrate. I didn't solicit these; these are just letters that came into the office. Here is a reply going out today, and I will quote from it.

First let me congratulate; you on the excellent health care program we enjoy in this province. I know a few on this continent and several in Europe and there can be no doubt that this province has one of the finest in the world.

That is a person who lived in Europe for a number of years under various plans and moved to this continent and that is his comment.

Well, let's talk about the United States. Here is a letter in the Leader-Post, March 28th, by Mr. Claire Black and he says:

We are from the States and as outsiders we can compare the 'below the border' health plans with the one Saskatchewan has. The Government of Saskatchewan has given its people one of the greatest health plans in the world. I

would also praise Saskatchewan for the combination of car licence and insurance. Compared to Pennsylvania and Georgia where I have lived, it is extremely reasonable.

Here is one from a medical doctor in the United States and he concludes his letter by saying:

. . . on having seen the haphazard medical care in this free enterprise area of the United States I am learning how excellent our Saskatchewan system is.

He worked here for a number of years before he went to the United States.

There are a number more that I could quote, but I want the Members to realize that in terms of our treatment of hospitals, perhaps we could look at some of the things that are happening outside of our jurisdiction. Perhaps, they think we should be following the practices that are occurring in the United States. Here is an ad:

Sunrise Hospital Medical Centre. Win a once-in-lifetime cruise simply by entering Sunrise Hospital on any Friday or Saturday. Recuperative Mediterranean cruise for two.

That is all that there is to it; just schedule your admittance into Sunrise Hospital for any Friday or Saturday and you will be eligible to win a free recuperative vacation for two — nothing to do, no obligations.

On weekends Sunrise Hospital has an abundance of unoccupied beds, yet our facilities and staff must operate around the clock on a seven day schedule and that costs money. To reduce costs we must even out this workload, make greater use of our facilities on the weekends by shifting week day admissions to Friday and Saturday so that we can actually reduce per patient expenses. This will help hold down rates.

Mr. Chairman, we see bills coming out of the United States today for five and six days of hospital plus medical bills in the range of \$7,000 to \$12,000. I can quote you some of them. That is the kind of thing that the Members across don't realize or don't seem to put any credence in. They seem to forget that we have a health care plan that in the main works extremely well. We don't say that it works perfectly. We don't say that everything about it is correct; we don't say that it can't be improved. But when you talk about frill programs, we are saying that those programs are getting at some of the root problems. And we are not the only province that is attempting to get some control on costs in the hospital sectors. Every province is doing that. Some of them take totally different approaches.

I note the Member said, you know we removed the utilization fee, or whatever you want to call it, and we removed the health care premiums. We don't charge a youngster \$1 a day to go to school and health facilities should be available on the same basis. We could use the approach that Ontario is using. They charge \$384 per family. Wouldn't that create lots of problems for families in Saskatchewan? Obviously it would.

Now this is not an argument about attempting to get reasoned control over those costs. I agree with the Member for Indian Head that we have some problems here. It is obvious that we have some problems, but it is silly just to go around saying

that our quality of health care is going down. That is a generalization. It is like saying that the quality of the Opposition has gone down. I don't know how you would ever prove it. I don't know how it could go any lower than it has been for the last six years.

However, I don't want to stir up any difficulties; I want to get these Estimates through, so I will sit down and let's go on.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — You know the Minister reminds me of the person who has a problem, someone who breaks a leg and what does he do? He wraps it up in a dollar; he dresses it up in a statistic and says, please go away.

Nobody is criticizing you for cutting hospital cuts if you did it in the right place. That is what I told you, if you made some cutbacks in rural Saskatchewan instead of the city of Saskatoon and Regina.

The second thing that the Minister has really done is just exactly . . . look Paul you wrote that letter and you could even write it properly because the Minister read it properly. You have had your share of the Estimates tonight so now be quiet.

Mr. Chairman, what I want to say is that the Minister has really just emphasized everything I said. He immediately brings out statistics about the increase in the dollar and year after year, after year, after year, that is exactly what has happened in medicare and hospitalization. The taxpayers have put more and more and more dollars into health care. Then you enumerate how proud you are of the additional expenditures in your supplementary programs. What I am trying to say, Mr. Minister, is that it is time that you and the department got down to some real hard facts and some real hard decisions and made a decision as to what you are going to do and did a projection. I think that the Minister and the Department of Health have a pretty big responsibility.

What is going to happen in 1985? I read a report from The Economic Review of Canada that said that in the year 2000 there will be no money for anything else in Canada but health and education, and this was before galloping inflation. There wouldn't be a dollar for anything else! Surely you as a member of the Department of Health and as the Minister responsible for the Department of Health have the responsibility to tell us and to do some studies and projections and make some of those hard decisions.

We are the only province, I think, that I know of and I am not familiar with them all, that, for example, hasn't made a very basic decision in hospitals, in sparsely populated areas, about size, distance, qualities and so forth, but you refuse to do it. Then you point out the idea that as long as you have a program, that is real good. Let us not kid ourselves, the implementation of a program does not of itself read excellence and there is more than one alternative to implementing a program. You only have to look at Pharmacare in Saskatchewan and Pharmacare in Manitoba, look at the number of people who are used to run that program in Manitoba and the number of people who are used to run it in Saskatchewan. How many of the dollars of public expenditure that are used in Pharmacare are going to pay civil servant salaries? How effective is that program? Is that

the best kind of program to serve the needs of the people of Saskatchewan? Is that the most efficient? Is it one of those that adheres to the principle of the NDP? It has to be universal; it has to cover everybody; it is going to be equal for all but people aren't equal financially, economically or whatever it is.

Mr. Minister, I just don't accept that. You say that the brief from the Saskatchewan Medical Association is general. I don't know how general you can get. You talk about electro light machines. They talk about the scanner that they have been needing for years; they talk about laboratory equipment in hospitals that is outmoded and so forth.

Could the Minister tell me, for example, how many requests for equipment from the hospitals in Saskatchewan of over \$500 did the Department of Health refuse? And, secondly, could the Minister tell me how many total patient days were involved in the five per cent cut last April?

**MR. ROBBINS:** — I will have this information for you shortly. You must realize of course, that every hospital can buy up to \$5,000 of equipment without getting authorization from SHSP or the Government. We pay for that through the depreciation process.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — What about over \$5,000?

**MR. ROBBINS:** — Well, they have to get permission if they go above that figure. We will get that information for you.

I should like to point out one thing to the Member. He talked about saving money in the small rural hospitals and that is largely a figment of the imagination. Seventy per cent of the costs are in the cities. The three hospitals in Saskatoon, last year, cost more than the 11 rural hospitals put together, and a good bit more. Therefore, if you are going to have any control in terms of the rising costs, you must have it in the larger hospitals. You simply must!

**MR. W.C. THATCHER (Thunder Creek):** — Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Minister could, perhaps, be pardoned for some of the paranoia that he has been espousing tonight. He is very good at rattling off statistics with very little substantiation of source. I am afraid that the Minister is falling into a trap that this whole health program has fallen into, and that is strictly taking a look at a balance sheet. A balance sheet in this particular subject simply doesn't tell the story. The Minister can say that when we refer to the quality of our health programs that we are generalizing; of course we are. I don't think there is one person in this province who would generalize and tell you that the quality of our health programs haven't deteriorated year by year and week by week and day by day. Sure you can point to additional programs, but let's get back to the quality. Is there anybody in this Legislature who will stand up and say that our hospitals are better run than they were five years ago or ten years ago or twenty years ago? Is there anybody in this Legislature who will stand up and say the quality of our doctors is better today than it was five years ago, ten years ago or twenty years ago and if you do, you don't believe it because you know better. And this is what it is all about and it doesn't show up in a balance sheet.



Mr. Minister you have a very distasteful job because I really don't think deep down you really believe what you are saying. You are exposing what you have to say for your party. I happen to believe that you would like to bring health costs under control. I happen to believe that you probably would like to provide the kind of quality that we would all like to see. Unfortunately, you are ham-strung by that party of yours across the way which is forcing you to proceed in a very alien direction and I am giving you the benefit of the doubt in suggesting that deep down you really don't agree with it.

You foster a system which promotes abuse. I've got an abuse right in my family. I've got an Aunt who is about 89 years old, who devotes her entire week to going from one doctor to another in a hypochondriac fashion and she is delighted when one of them will finally prescribe her a sugar pill or give her a neck brace or give her some other silly thing and she bothers them incessantly and she keeps going until she finds them. How many other people are there like this? Mr. Minister, I suggest to you that this system cannot operate successfully under the method which you are using right now. I suggest to you today or tonight that it is ridiculous to have a Drug Plan that treats everyone alike whether he or she is earning \$4,000 a year or \$40,000 a year. Frankly, one of the few times I have had occasion to use your program, I went down to get the prescription and I was embarrassed to accept it at the prescription fee of \$2.25 or whatever the case may be. Frankly, I was embarrassed because I thought I was taking somebody else to the cleaners in this province.

Mr. Minister, I suggest to you very respectfully tonight that your system of universal medicare has failed and is continuing to fail. And I wish to goodness that there was a clear-cut, concise answer to it. Mr. Minister, you know full well that we cannot go on in perpetuity in this sort of a process; somewhere along the line those who use the system are going to have to pay more than those who do not use the system. There are a variety of forms that this can take and I honestly don't know what the best procedure is. You are better at numbers than I am; you tell us. And I think you know deep down that medicare has declined. Take a look around; you don't have to be an expert; just use the system occasionally and think back to those days when there was some sense. Granted there was a cost, but back in those days when you needed something done in a hospital you could get into that hospital and you could get it done. Back in those days when you wanted to see a doctor you could get to a doctor in some reasonable length of time without some absurd, ridiculous waiting period and without spending six hours in that office or taking up the time of the emergency ward which in this province is virtually being turned into out-patient centres.

I am curious to ask the Minister if he really believes that we can go on on this universal concept as we are now doing, and to some extent what we are now doing in education without those two areas ultimately consuming our entire provincial output?

**MR. ROBBINS:** — No, I would not agree with the Member that universality is bad; it must be universal otherwise you do not get reasonable care for people. That has happened in the United States. It's crystal clear. When we get people who go to the United States for holidays and come back and happened to be ill for over a five or six day period, they end up with bills in excess of \$12,000. It doesn't work. It might be all right for you, sir;

you might be able to get into hospital because you could afford the \$12,000, but most people can't. I don't know whether you have been in the hospital because you've suffered from silver dioxide poisoning from the silver spoon in your mouth, but the fact remains that universality is essential and necessary. I agree with you that there must be a good sense of social responsibility in the individual and that the system must not be abused, but I often find people who tell me that the system should not be abused are the people who abuse the system.

Incidentally, Mr. Chairman, I should answer a question; I don't know who asked it, the Member for Thunder Creek or the Member for Indian Head. In 1975 approved patient days were 1,840,695 days. In 1976 approved patient days were 1,774,734, a decline of 65,961 days. But I want to point out that the actual number of days used in 1976 was below the approved daily census by 37,000 in round figures.

**MR. MacDONALD:** — Mr. Chairman, oh, my goodness, you can walk up and see a vacant hospital bed in any one of these places. Of course, there are lots of hospital beds vacant because the only way you can get in there is through a doctor, because you have to have a certain degree of illness. There are beds taken in that hospital and you can't put a person in there. You can't get an elective surgery; that's another thing; it depends on what you have to go in for. So don't give us any of that malarkey about the number of approved days being below the usage or the usage was below the approved days because you know why and I know why and so does everybody else. Many times you are forced to be an out-patient. In elective surgery you are put on a long list. Some of them have had to wait six or eight months, causing psychological problems as a result of being very much afraid. If you gave them the opportunity to go in there tomorrow you would need 10,000 new hospitals and you know it.

**MR. E.C. MALONE (Leader of the Opposition):** — I would just like to say a few words on Item 1. It has been interesting sitting here listening to the Minister talk about the grandeur and the greatness of the hospital system here in Saskatchewan. One would think that everything is hunky dory and that there are no problems whatsoever. But to be fair I can see that the Minister has indicated that there are some problems. But I think the Minister is understating the case. I think the medicare system, the health care system in Saskatchewan regrettably is in a mess. I say it is in a mess because doctors tell me it is a mess. Patients tell me it is in a mess. People on waiting lists tell me it is in a mess. I don't think that there has been anybody except perhaps the Member for Wascana who has been around this province more in the past 12 months than I have, talking to people about the political issues of the day and believe me, Mr. Minister, if you think the people of Saskatchewan are feeling that your hospital system, your medicare system, your health care system is in good shape, you are very sadly mistaken indeed. The people that are around Saskatchewan now are realizing full well that the party that introduced medicare into this province has treated medicare in such a manner that they are not fulfilling the obligations that they have to the people of Saskatchewan. And I can tell you why, I can give you two reasons why. The first reason is the misguided priorities of this Government and the second reason is the politicization of medicare and health care by the NDP. Perhaps the second reason is the most important.

You are very proud of the fact that you introduced medicare to Canada and deservedly so. I give you full credit for that. But you now feel that every time you get into a political mess, you now feel that every time public opinion seems to be going against you that all you have to do is introduce another health care program, notwithstanding the cost, notwithstanding the service that it provides, notwithstanding that it doesn't help that many people. Take your Drug Program, your Dental Care Program, your Hearing Aid Program, your SAIL Program, nobody is suggesting that any of those programs weren't well meant and that you tried to help the people in need. But look at the Estimates for your Denticare Program. You see something like 336 people, 376 people required to deliver the health service of that program. It is absolutely mind-boggling. The dentists at the time you introduced that program to the Legislature told you that they could run the program in a manner that would be efficient, effective and at half the cost. Now you say today that the cost will become lesser and lesser as more people become involved in it. Fine, of course it will; but why not let the dentist do it from the start, the dentists who are prepared to do it at a guaranteed fee much less than the cost that the people of Saskatchewan are now incurring.

Your Government, and I am not suggesting you personally, but your Government is playing with the health care of Saskatchewan in a political way and I say that is improper. I say that is unfair and it is a bad way for any politician to act. It is to use sick people to get votes and that is what you are trying to do. I talked earlier about your priorities and I say to you priorities are misguided. You are so preoccupied with taking over potash mines, getting involved in the oil industry, getting involved in the mining industry, that you can't start doing the basics which you were elected to do, one of which was to deliver proper health care to the people of Saskatchewan. Your Budget this year, your Estimates this year, are an admission that in the past year you did not perform a proper service. They are an admission that last year our health care system was in a mess. I don't think what you are doing now is going to improve the situation in any way whatsoever.

You referred earlier with great pride to the additional equipment bought in Saskatoon, the axial topography scanner. I think the Minister will admit that you were pressured into buying that piece of machinery. The medical people in Saskatoon were outraged that they didn't have it and they put so much heat on you that you had to buy it to avoid the embarrassment of being called by those people as incompetent as you are.

Let me talk about another basic health care system that you have completely ignored and that is the medical school at the University of Saskatchewan. I asked the Premier the other day about an investigation that was being conducted in that medical school and the Premier sort of danced around a bit and he said, well there may have been and there may not have been. On further inquiries, I find that indeed there was an investigation, an investigation I believe, headed by a Mr. Adams, I am not sure whether he is in your department or in the Department of Continuing Education. The reason for that investigation was that the morale was so low at the medical school in Saskatchewan that there was a great danger that you were going to lose most of the staff at that medical school. I say if you want to start talking about preventive medicine, Mr. Minister, that is one place to start — the medical school at the University of Saskatchewan.

You refer to our criticisms of your programs as being frills and you say they are not frills to the people that use those programs. I suggest to you that there are some priorities that you should use in medical care in the delivery of medical care to the people of Saskatchewan. One of the priorities is the medical school at the University of Saskatchewan; another priority is proper health care at the hospital level; another priority is educated doctors, hopefully from Saskatchewan, to deliver that health care to the people of Saskatchewan. When you can come into this House and say that you have met those priorities and that the people of Saskatchewan can be satisfied because you have met those priorities, at that time you will have our full support to go into things like Denticare and Pharmacare and SAIL, but not until that time.

You talk about SAIL in your remarks earlier and say, oh sure, we can't get a few of the prosthetic devices that we need. I find it almost inconceivable that you can't get crutches. At one time the SAIL Program in Regina could not supply crutches. The reason I know about that is that Mr. Steuart, the former Member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake had an operation, got out of the hospital and couldn't be fitted with crutches. Now what could be more basic in a health program such as SAIL than the providing of a simple device like that, but he couldn't get them. I shudder to think about more sophisticated devices such as wheel chairs and other prosthetic devices the program was set up to service, if you can't get the basics. So, Mr. Minister, I, in no way speak of you personally in a disparaging way, but I do speak of the Government that you speak for in a very disparaging way because I say you have failed miserably to come up with meaningful programs that are beneficial and will help the people of Saskatchewan in the health care field.

**MR. ROBBINS:** — Mr. Chairman, Opposition Members say we are not giving the hospitals enough money. How can they explain that tonight the Regina Leader-Post reports that every hospital in this city had a surplus in the year 1976?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** — Hear, hear!

**MR. ROBBINS:** — The Member talks about the Dental Plan; he talks about private practitioners should do it. Well, let's look across Canada. Newfoundland has 110,000 eligible persons in terms of a dental plan for children. It uses private practitioners and fee for service. Utilization is 36 per cent. Prince Edward Island, a Liberal Government incidentally, has government employed teams of dentists, hygienist assistants and government clinics on a salary basis and they cover 85 per cent of the children that are eligible. Manitoba has a plan, a dental nurse program with clinics in elementary schools. They cover 82 per cent of the eligible children. We covered 86.1 per cent of the eligible children in our plan last year. Go to Quebec, which has 840,000 eligible children and uses private practitioners, fee for service and they cover 35 per cent. Go to Nova Scotia; they have 134,500 eligible children, private practitioners, fee for service and they cover 28 per cent. The fact of the matter is the system that you propose does not work; it doesn't get the service to the people involved.

**MR. MALONE:** — Mr. Minister, as I pointed out earlier, he is great at quoting figures but sometimes he is not so great as to what is

behind those figures. What would the cost be now, if you can tell me, if we had the private dentists operate the program as they wanted to do, as they submitted information to you at that time?

**MR. ROBBINS:** — The fact of the matter is that very large numbers of those children wouldn't get any service at all because there aren't dentists in a lot of those areas. You are comparing apples and oranges.

**MR. MALONE:** — You get up and say they wouldn't have the service. How do you know they wouldn't have the service? How can you stand up in this House and say they wouldn't have the service?

**MR. ROBBINS:** — They didn't have it before, that's obvious.

**MR. MALONE:** — Obviously they didn't have the service because there was no plan. How can you get up in the House now and say that if the private dentists had operated the plan as they wanted to operate the plan, they wouldn't have had the same service? You don't know.

**MR. ROBBINS:** — The statistics in other provinces clearly indicate they wouldn't have it — 35 and 28 per cent coverage.

**MR. MALONE:** — I don't care what happened in other provinces. I don't care what happens in the United States. What we are talking about is what is happening in Saskatchewan. You say that they wouldn't have had the services because they didn't have them in other provinces. I don't know whether that is correct or not. I am not prepared to accept those figures. You get up and speak with pride about the program with 376 people running it. I don't know how many are professional, I suspect a very small percentage. But when you are asked a simple question as to what the cost would be if it was run by professionals on a fee for service basis and a guaranteed maximum fee, you get up and say I can't give you the figure, but it wouldn't have worked anyway.

**MR. ROBBINS:** — I can't give you the figure because there is no actual experience to prove it and you couldn't give the figure either.

**MR. MALONE:** — The dentists made a proposal to you, did they not, about a year or two ago as to how much the plan would cost if they operated it. I assume you still have that proposal. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) just has to get in. I can't resist saying this, the Minister of Finance can't resist getting into health care. When he was Minister of Health he did such a job on it that people started calling him the Minister of Disease, so then he was moved over and became Minister of Finance.

In any event, Mr. Minister, why can't you give me those figures? I suggest to you that you were given a brief by the dentists. I suggest to you that you have the figures in front of you as to how many children are involved and now you get up and say you can't tell me.

**MR. ROBBINS:** — We have statistics on page 24 of the report if you want to take all the services which run from initial oral examination, down through dental polishing, amalgam, topical fluorides, nutritional counsel and all the rest of it. And you could determine what the fees are on it and multiply it out and I suppose you will get the figure. The point that I am trying to make is that in every province where they use private practitioners and fee for service, they are covering fewer than one-third of the children that are eligible. In every province and I am not talking politically, I am talking about a Liberal province as well, Prince Edward Island is included, where they have government employed teams, 85 per cent of the children get the services. I am simply suggesting that that should tell you something.

**MR. MALONE:** — I won't belabor the point. We will get to it when the Dental Care item comes up. You say that in Saskatchewan we have this coverage and I accept that. The point is how many of those children that were examined need treatment? And under a private program in these other provinces I suggest to you without knowing but just hearing the statistics you have read out, that likely the child was not given treatment unless somebody discovered that the child needed treatment. Now I am not suggesting for a moment that there wasn't. You can't get up now and say, well we did a great job because we have examined all children, because you don't know in other provinces whether they examined them or not, or whether there is an education program in effect. So my point is, don't get up and tell me what happened in other programs or other provinces and then say our program is better when you don't know what happened in those other provinces.

**MR. ROBBINS:** — This comes out of the Leader-Post, March 21, 1977. It is an item from Quebec where it talks about dental care for children under eight years of age and they use private practitioners and fee for service and this under the Dental Plan, a dentist would receive \$105.50 for a series of four visits by the child that included a complete examination, x-rays, tooth cleaning and filling of cavities, and that is in the range of what it is costing us in terms of treatment under the Dental Plan.

**MR. MALONE:** — Let me just ask you one other question before I sit down, away from Dental Care and that is Pharmacare. Has your department done any comparative study between the Saskatchewan program, which I believe takes something like 77 people to administer and the Manitoba program, which was instituted by an NDP Government, which I believe takes something like 22 people to administer? My figures may be slightly out in Manitoba, but I believe in Saskatchewan it is more than three times the people that are required to administer it. Have you done a comparative study and have you been able to determine whether the service provided, that is drugs to those who need them, is any better in Saskatchewan than it is in Manitoba?

**MR. ROBBINS:** — Well, I believe it was the Member for Wascana (Mr. Merchant) who back on March 17, talked about administration costs at large. The provincial costs are about eight times as much as they are in Manitoba; that was his statement. Manitoba doesn't maintain a formulary system at all. Therefore, it has not achieved any drug material cost savings which we have

achieved in the range of \$4 million per year. I don't know how many people they have working in the Drug Plan in Manitoba; I suppose we could find that out in time. I am not sure that we have it available immediately. But I can say that the cost for carrying claims in this province is good. It is low just like MCIC is low in terms of its administrative cost. In our hospital plan, administration cost is very low in relation to the plan in total expenditures. We have also been very, very instrumental in bringing down costs appreciably, and that can't be over stressed. I will cite a drug or two, Ampicillin; it used to be 11 cents a pill and now it is four. Here is another one, Diazepam; it used to be six cents a pill, but is now half a cent. I have no way of knowing how badly these drugs are needed, but I am telling you that the Formulary Committee made up of pharmacists, medical doctors and a pharmacologist are the people who make the decisions with respect to the therapeutic value of the drugs that will be on that formulary and they do a good job.

**MR. MALONE:** — What the Minister says, Mr. Chairman, is that you save some money buying drugs to run the formulary, and I would say obviously you should because you are buying them in bulk. What I am asking you, is how much money have you saved for the people of Saskatchewan? When I look at your Estimates and I find 77 people are involved in providing this service at a cost of, I am sorry I can't find the item, but it seems to me that the cost of 77 people to administer this plan weighed against the cost of 20 to 22 people in Manitoba is in itself reason for you to look into what is happening in Manitoba. Obviously their plan there is being administered at a great deal less money than the plan in Saskatchewan is being administered, formulary notwithstanding. And all I ask you to do is look into that plan and see if perhaps that plan would be just as effective in the Province of Saskatchewan in delivering the service that your existing plan does which requires 77 people.

**MR. ROBBINS:** — I think we can't give you very good comparisons with the Manitoba plan; we haven't looked at their report and it is really very minimal; it doesn't give much information at all. You are really comparing two plans that aren't comparable in many respects. I might point out to the Members that British Columbia is in the process of setting up a universal plan. They have, I presume, looked at both Manitoba and Saskatchewan plans. We haven't got any more information with respect to the Manitoba plan at the moment.

**MR. MALONE:** — You get up and you say you can't give us the figures and you don't know and then you say that the plans aren't comparable. Surely you are contradicting yourself right there. For you to say that they are not comparable, you should have some knowledge about the Manitoba plan.

I was recently in Manitoba and I inquired of pharmacists and people in Manitoba as to how their plan was working and heard nothing but good things about it. I have inquired of pharmacists in Saskatchewan, what they think of our plan and believe me, most of them are so sick and tired of the paperwork involved in it that they are ready to throw up their hands over it. I am concerned as well about the people that should be getting drugs pursuant to the formulary in the plan, and aren't getting them because those drugs are of an exotic type and aren't considered by the formulary. Those drugs are very

expensive. They are the people who are suffering more than anybody else, because of the unique nature of the drug. The plan in Saskatchewan doesn't cover them. My information is that in Manitoba the plan would cover them. I am not going to sit here and damn your plan. I am saying to you, I think it behoves you as the Minister of Health to talk to your counterpart in Manitoba, a member of the same party that you are a member of, and see how their plan is operating. I suggest to you that you will find that the plan is operating in a manner much cheaper than the Saskatchewan plan and is providing probably just as good if not a better service to the people of Manitoba than is the Saskatchewan plan.

The Committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:02 o'clock p.m.