

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fifth Session — Eighteenth Legislature

March 28, 1978

The Assembly met at 2:00 o'clock p.m.

On the Orders of the Day

QUESTIONS

Withdraw Support from CPN

Mr. J.G. Lane (Qu'Appelle): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of the Environment, the Minister responsible for Sask Tel.

In light of the announcement over the weekend that Cable Regina has finally put a deadline to Sask Tel to get CPN off the air and in light of your earlier stated position that because the convertors are handmade the inability of Sask Tel to supply convertors by the deadline given by Cable Regina, will the minister now be prepared to firstly admit that the cable policy of the Government of Saskatchewan, backing closed circuit cable, is in fact an error in judgment and secondly, that you are now prepared to withdraw support from the CPN, at least as it pertains to Regina, so that the people of Regina can immediately get cable television without the harassment that is going on?

Hon. N.E. Byers (Minister of the Environment): — Mr. Speaker, my answer to the first question, was it all an error, the answer is 'no'. The answer to the second question, will the government withdraw support from CPN, the answer is 'no'.

Mr. Lane: — Supplementary to the Minister responsible for Sask Tel.

The press release indicates that Sask Tel is maybe subject to some legal action by Cable Regina because of the contract or agreement signed between Cable Regina and Sask Tel. We note the response today that CPN indicates that it, too, has an agreement with Sask Tel to channel accessibility. Is the government now prepared to announce changes in its seemingly duplicity policy of making two agreements with two different organizations to supply the same service, thus leading to a confrontation between the government and those services that had agreements?

Mr. Byers: — Mr. Speaker, no.

Investigation into Prescription Practices

Mr. A.N. McMillan (Kindersley): — A question to the Minister of Social Services.

With respect to the report which was made public yesterday or today by the Alcoholism Commission with respect to the prescription of CNS drugs and mood modifying drugs, I would like to ask the minister if he is prepared, as a result of the disturbing evidence that has been made public by this commission study, if the minister is prepared to initiate an investigation into the prescription practices of CNS drugs and mood modifying drugs as they affect senior citizens, who as the study points out, have received more than 50 per cent of the prescriptions for mood modifying and CNS drugs, - if he is prepared to initiate an investigation into the prescription practices for those senior citizens who live outside of institutions today and, as well, an investigation into the prescription practices as they apply to those senior citizens, who are within our

level I, II, III and IV institutions in Saskatchewan.

Hon. H.H. Rolfes (Minister of Social Services): — Mr. Speaker, again I find it difficult to answer the question of the member, since I'm not responsible for the Alcoholism Commission. The Minister of health is. Also I'm not responsible for the Prescription Drug Program; the Minister of health is. I will admit, however, that I have responsibility for senior citizens in levels I, II, and III, and because I do have, I will certainly take the question under advisement. I have not seen the report, by the way, that you are speaking of but I hope to get a copy of it and peruse it in some detail so that I can make myself familiar with the problem that you are bringing up today.

Mr. McMillan: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister not agree that, as a result of the fact that the report states that a great many of the prescriptions issued to senior citizens are issued to try to cope with social problems, would the minister not agree at this time that your programs as they apply to senior citizens have been a dismal failure and that the health institutions in Saskatchewan have been forced to try to pick up and cope with some of your problems by the prescription of mood modifying drugs for social problems and not health problems?

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, the logic of the member opposite just escapes anybody's reasonable and sensible mind. I am not responsible for prescribing drugs to senior citizens. The doctors of this province are. I'm not going to stand in judgment here today to say that the doctors are prescribing drugs because of some social ills that may befall senior citizens. That responsibility lies with the doctors of this province. Mr. Speaker, certainly, if the member opposite is saying that he wants to criticize the doctors, and that's what the intent of his question is, we will certainly take it on on advisement and take it up with the SMA (Sask Medical Association) but it's not for me, as Minister of Social Services, to judge the doctors and their motives as to why they're prescribing drugs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Payment Due Creditors – Construction of Motel

Mr. W.C. Thatcher (Thunder Creek): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister in charge of SEDCO. On several occasions in this House, the minister has publicly or on the record, stated that in the case of Golden Acres Motel in Moose Jaw or Fairview Developments, personal guarantees were taken. But I ask the minister, in reference to Queen's Bench Order No. 42 dated in Moose Jaw, February 17, 1978 which names a list of creditors in Moose Jaw who have not been paid and who were involved in the initial construction of Golden Acres Motel. May I therefore ask the minister, why in the light of this document which I am sure he must be aware of, why the personal guarantees which he has made reference to on so many occasions, have not been called?

Mr. Vickar: — Mr. Speaker, at no time are personal guarantees called upon until the need arises. Golden Acres Motel is standing there; we are now in possession of it and until such time as the Golden Acres Motel is sold and if it will be in default, then the guarantors will probably be called upon to make good their desire to make the necessary payments. If in fact SEDCO realizes enough out of Golden Acres Motel to pay all of the creditors, then of course the guarantors will not be called upon.

Mr. Thatcher: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. I feel obligated that I

should tell the minister exactly what a Queen's Bench Order number 42 is but I know he would rule me out of order.

May I respectfully ask the minister once again to consider since Queen's Bench Order number 42 tells these creditors there is no money for them, why in goodness sake haven't you called the guarantees so that these people can be paid off? If you don't know the answer to that why don't you get out of the job and let somebody in who can handle it?

Mr. Vickar: — Mr. Speaker, it is just an indication of jumping the cart before the horse. I think the member opposite is continuously raised this question for personal or political gain because of some particular people as a guarantor on that particular list. The guarantor as I have said before, will not be called upon until absolutely necessary, and until that time SEDCO will have the authority to decide whether they should be or should not be.

Reparations Proposal – Government Insurance

Mr. S.J. Cameron (Regina South): — I want to ask the minister in charge of government insurance a question with respect to the reparations proposal which the minister knows would strip the people of the right to have their damages as a consequence of automobile accidents, assessed by the courts. I gather, Mr. Minister, and I want to ask you whether this is correct, if you have in fact, shelved the plans for the reparations proposals?

Hon. E.C. Whelan (Minister of Consumer Affairs): — No.

Mr. Cameron: — Can you tell me then, when you propose to proceed with these odious proposals, when we might have them before the House? The second question is, in the meantime are you prepared to do something about the benefits under the Automobile Insurance Act which meantime are badly eroded, and virtually stripping the Automobile Insurance Act of any real value to people anymore?

Mr. Whelan: — An announcement will be made in due course.

Chairmanship – Liquor Licensing Commission

Mr. H.W. Lane (Saskatoon-Sutherland): — A question to the minister in charge of the Liquor Licensing Commission.

Immediately on the heels of the revelations in the Leader Post of the licensing of the A&W Root Beer establishment and the subsequent raising of that matter in the House by the Progressive Conservative caucus, the department that you are in charge of issued a press release and I note in it, the demotion of George H. Burns from the chairmanship of the Liquor Licensing Commission. My question is this, why are you now trying to make this man who is a long time civil servant and has a great deal of experience and is noted for his fairness in the liquor licensing business. Why are you now trying to make him the scapegoat for your decision to licence that establishment against his advice?

Mr. Byers: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Burns has been chairman of the Liquor Licensing Commission for a number of years. He has given very good service. Mr. Burns has a great many days of unused holiday time and he is eligible to retire within the next six or seven weeks. He is presently a part-time member of the Liquor Licensing Commission.

We have had Mr. Hugh Thompson, who is a senior public servant, with many years of experience in this province as an administrator, working as a special advisor to the Liquor Licensing Commission since July 1977. Because the appointments to the Liquor Licensing Commission expired on December 31, or thereabout, 1977, it was considered appropriate to appoint Mr. Thompson as the chairman, to retain Mr. Burns as a part-time member of the Liquor Licensing Commission.

Mr. Burns is retained as an advisor to Mr. Thompson. Mr. Thompson and Mr. Burns are, together, reviewing a good number of policies and programs and the liquor laws of this province. Mr. Burns is being retained at his former salary until retirement. He will, in 1978, have worked 50 years for the province of Saskatchewan and has given very creditable service. I felt that it was appropriate that a transition, a smooth transition, be made to work Mr. Thompson into the job and to keep Mr. Burns on staff as a part-time member of the commission until his effective retirement date, which is just a few months away.

Cost of Living Increase

Mr. G.H. Penner (Saskatoon Eastview): — Mr. Speaker, in light of the figures released last week by Statistics Canada, which show, again, that Regina leads the nation in the cost of living increase and that Saskatoon is third highest of all cities in Canada, I wonder if the Minister of Finance would indicate what action his government is intending to take to relieve Saskatchewan's citizens of this problem, one that they have faced now for the last 12 months?

Hon. W.E. Smishek (Minister of Finance): — Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about the rise in the cost of living. Might I also inform the hon. member, in case he is not aware, Saskatchewan has the lowest cost of living in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Smishek: — Saskatchewan has the lowest cost of living in Canada of any province in the Dominion. I invite you to check the facts with the federal government, the Bureau of Statistics. While it is true that we have had sharper increases, the facts remain that the cost of living in Saskatchewan in the area of housing, and whatever items are taken into consideration to compute the cost of living, Saskatchewan is a good place to live. We also have the lowest rate of unemployment. I think Saskatchewan is the envy of all provinces in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Penner: — The fact is, Mr. Speaker, we in Saskatchewan have experienced the highest increase in consumer price index over the last 12 months period and for many months prior to that. I want to ask the minister if he would not agree with Statistics Canada when they indicate that prices for utilities are among the most important factors in the fact that we have the increases that we had. Would the minister not agree that the increase in gas of 104 per cent over four years, of 57 per cent in electricity over two years, are not significant contributing factors to the fact that we have had the highest increase of any city in Canada?

Mr. Smishek: — Mr. Speaker, in the area of utilities, I invite the hon. member to do some research, some meaningful research. The electrical power rates in Saskatchewan are the lowest in Canada. There will be no increase in electrical power rates for 1978. I

think that is unique for the rest of Canada and I invite the hon. Member to check them. In the area of natural gas, Mr. Speaker. Since 1971 natural gas increases to the province of Saskatchewan (we acquire two-thirds of our natural gas from the province of Alberta), have gone up from 20 cents MCS to \$1.30 MCS from Alberta – and we have to acquire two-thirds of that. Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, had it not been for the sales that were made by the Liberal administration of natural gas, which were really giveaways of the Hatton Fields, the people of Saskatchewan would be able to enjoy even better rates.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Motor Licences for the Young

Mr. D.M. Ham (Swift Current): — I would like to direct a question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister in charge of the Motor Licence Office. One of the greatest thrills of a 16 year old is to pass his written and driving tests. After paying a fee of \$17, our young people are waiting up to one year for their official driver's licence. Can the minister give reasons for these long delays?

Mr. Whelan: — If the hon. member would give me the specific case. I think he must realize that part of the program is Highway Traffic Board and part of it is Motor Vehicle Registration. If you give me specific details, I will chase it down for you.

Mr. Ham: — Mr. Speaker, there are specific cases, a number of specific cases. Did you not hear the question, Mr. Minister? I will repeat the question then.

One of the greatest thrills of a 16 year old is to pass his written driver's test. After paying a fee of \$17 our young people are waiting up to one year for their official driver's licences – the pocket-size driver's licences. Can the minister give reasons for these delays?

Mr. Whelan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think there is no reason for that because there is a procedure that could easily be followed that will give them instant attention. If they want to make a call collect they will find out exactly what the problem is, we will chase it down. There is no reason or justification for their waiting that long. At one time these came to my desk. There are very, very few of them now. I think that the employees of the motor vehicle licence operation have done a yeoman's job under very difficult circumstances and I think you may be able . . . of course, when you are shifting this kind of a program you find problems and this kind of thing shows up. But I am sure that if you follow the procedure that is set out by making a direct call this sort of thing could be cleared up by the young person in 48 hours.

Blacktop Contracts for Contractors

Mr. E.F.A. Merchant (Regina Wascana): — A question to the Minister of Highways. The minister will be aware, no doubt, that many hundreds, 600 or 700 small contractors – independent truckers depend on highways' contracts being let – I ask the minister whether it is not true that some of the largest contractors don't even have a blacktop contract yet and that that is because your department gave most of the contracts this year to BACM operating out of Winnipeg and I ask the minister whether you will be taking any steps to ensure that Saskatchewan trucks and Saskatchewan companies are protected in a time of high unemployment when people from out of the province are taking Saskatchewan jobs?

Hon. E. Kramer (Minister of Highways): — It's not true, your statement is not true and it is therefore impossible for me to answer your question. There are a number of blacktopping contractors that have got their contracts. There have been more contracts let at this time — nearly 100 per cent more — than were let at this time last year. BACM, who also does business out of Saskatchewan, have an office here and they have equipment here, and I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, what the members recommend. Whether or not we are going to break the rule that is agreed to interprovincially, was agreed to by the former government, that there should be no provincial preference except in extreme circumstances, where the differential is no narrow that you can justify making a Saskatchewan preference, which we have done on some very exceptional occasions. But, this last contract of BACM was a \$75,000 differential on an \$800,000 contract. The spread was too great, especially when they can justifiably be called a Saskatchewan contractor. We have a number of others that are doing business in Saskatchewan, both from Alberta, but because of the very, very tough circumstances that the contracting industry has undergone in the last six months in Manitoba they have no alternative but to seek work elsewhere.

Mr. Merchant: — I ask the minister as I have asked other ministers, whether you would not initiate within the Cabinet a Saskatchewan first policy in highway construction so that Saskatchewan contractors would receive a form of priority not on the by-guess-and-by-golly-system of just deciding whether the differential is too large but a system that is formalized as Alberta's is formalized so that, for instance, Saskatchewan independent truckers cannot go into Alberta unless there is a shortage there and when that shortage is made up Saskatchewan independent truckers are sent out of Alberta.

Mr. Kramer: — As usual the member for Wascana indicates to us that he never has a thought his mouth can't use. Now, the fact of the matter is that the Road Builders' Association of Saskatchewan has specifically asked me as the minister and I meet with them on a monthly basis, not to institute a Saskatchewan first. Those are the road builders of Saskatchewan that you are referring to. They have in conventions said, no, we don't want a preference.

Farm Ownership Board

Mr. L.W. Birkbeck (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, through you I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, the Farm Ownership Board recently overruled the objection of the city of Saskatoon and allowed Gemstar, a large multinational, to acquire 320 acres of prime farm land supposedly for development purposes. The question, Mr. Minister, will the government agree to review the decision of the Farm Ownership Board and put a stop to this encroachment on productive farm lands?

Hon. E. Kaeding (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, the decision by the Farm Ownership Board to allow Gemstar 640 acres of land in Saskatchewan is actually a request on the part of the Farm Ownership Board for Gemstar to divest a substantial amount of holdings that they have in the province. Gemstar now has close to 1,000 acres of holdings in the province of Saskatchewan and the Farm Ownership Board requested that they divest down to 640 acres, not more than 320 of which should be in the immediate area of Regina and 320 in the immediate area of Saskatoon. The Farm Ownership Board in its deliberations considered many of the considerations that were brought before them and felt that it was not their job to determine where development should take place and that there should be probably at some point in time a land use

policy which would determine whether certain lands should remain in agriculture or whether it should go into development, but it was not the job of the Farm Ownership Board to make that decision.

Mr. Birkbeck: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, will your government not admit that the practice of the Farm Ownership Board in this case and in many other cases, seems to be contrary to the expressed concerns of the government concerning protection of productive farmlands and are these concerns, in reality, not sincere?

MR. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, I think again you must recognize that we have required them to divest land which they already own, down to a certain limitation. Also, in the decision of The Farm Ownership Board was the decision to reduce the amount of land which they had previously allotted to Cairns Homes. Cairns Homes was given an exemption for 960 acres, that was reduced also to 640 acres so that there is a determination on the part of the Board to try to retain these down to a fairly minimum level and 320 acres is not a lot of farmland.

Quality of Regina Water

Mr. E. Anderson (Shaunavon): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Environment. In view of the recent article in Macleans where they rate the quality of Regina city water the poorest of any city in Canada, is the Department of the Environment considering taking any steps in the clean-up of Buffalo Pound Lake which our supply comes from?

Mr. Byers: — Mr. Speaker, the staff of the Water Pollution and Control branch in Environment are continuously working with the board that is in charge of the Buffalo Pound water treatment facilities and the quality of water is considered satisfactory. There have been some problems in the last year because of the low run-off in the lake of last year to try and pin point some of the specific problems with respect to that water supply, but to answer your question specifically, our Environment staff do work closely with the Buffalo Pound Management Board.

Mr. Anderson: — Mr. Speaker, as the problem arises in the fact that the pollutants in the water are chemical and also some live organisms that cannot be filtered out by the existing filtering plant, that the only recourse would be to clean up the source of the water supply. Is the minister considering doing the check and the clean-up of the Buffalo Pound problem?

Mr. Byers: — Mr. Speaker, I thought we had just spent about 9½ hours in this Legislature in Estimates discussing that subject and the various methods that are being taken under the Qu'Appelle Implementation program, the identifying of intensive livestock operations and a program to relocate those that are considered to be adding to the water pollution problems, the proposed effluent irrigation works for Moose jaw and the like. I put on the records of this House a long list of initiatives that are planned in the coming year and in the years ahead by the government through the Department of the Environment, through other agencies of the government, to deal with that particular problem.

Point of Order on the Question Period

Mr. H.W. Lane (Saskatoon-Sutherland): — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. On

question period, Mr. Speaker, over the months that I have sat in this House I have tried to take note of Mr. Speaker's rulings from time to time as to how questions are to be phrased and how they are to be put. In endeavoring to keep the question concise and to the point, I felt that my question to the Minister in charge of the Liquor Commission, today, was a very concise, short, to the point question. Now what in fact happened was that the answer was not short, concise and to the point . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! If the member wants to make a point of order I will let him stand, but if he is going to get off into an area of discussing the answer of the minister then he is not making a point of order.

Mr. Lane: — My point of order is briefly and succinctly this, Mr. Speaker. It is very difficult to put forward questions in this House if, 1, for no apparent reason one is not allowed to bring in supplementary questions which, in fact, delay the ground work in the initial premise or initial question and then you come in with your supplementary questions and you are allowed to put some meat onto that question. I am quite absolutely astounded at the fact that that particular question was cut off and I would like to hear the ruling for it, the reasoning behind it.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! I listened to the question of the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland I thought rather closely and I wasn't impressed at the time with the urgency of the question as it relates to an urgent matter of public concern in the question period and I was even less impressed after the minister had completed his answer, so I moved on to the next question.

I was back to the hon. member's caucus two or three times after that and if the member had thought it urgent he should have raised the question again, because I certainly would have allowed him in with another question later on.

Mr. MacDonald: — Mr. Speaker, I am going to bring up, on a point of order, the length of the minister's answers today and the fact that you cut off three opposition members and let the garbage that flowed from the Minister of Environment proceed without cutting it off and I would invite you, Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order. Order! I think the member doesn't have a proper point of order. I think that the minister's answer was long. I allowed the minister to get his answer out and I, as a matter of act, did cut a minister off today if it is worth anything to you.

Mr. MacDonald: — When he sat down.

Mr. Speaker: — No, I cut the minister off and I think it is quite clear that I did cut the minister off and I will continue to cut ministers off that give answers that are too long and I will continue to cut members off who give questions which are debatable or seem to lack urgency on the face of them. I would warn the members, and this point was raised by the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland (Mr. Lane), that he has a misconception of the question period. The basic misconception he has is that he can put something forward in the form of a question and then later embellish that item that he put forward in the form of a question. I will tell the member now, and I thought this was clear before, that questions must be of urgency on the face of them and not later on when the member decides to bring in a supplementary. Now if the question appears to be of a certain amount of urgency on the face of it, I'm going to let the question go ahead and I'll let supplementaries go ahead as well.

Mr. Lane (Sa-Su): — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I would appreciate being allowed to pursue this point. I have not risen on points of order in the past and I would like to at this point in time make my case to you, Mr. Speaker. Now what your honour has said is that on the face of it the question did not appear urgent. I suggest to you that on the face of it the minister did not deny that there had been a demotion to the chairman of the Liquor Commission. He did never come to grips with the fact of what the qualifications of the new man were. Now how do you decide whether . . .

Mr. Speaker: — It must be rather apparent on the face that the question is urgent. It is not up to me to decide how the member should phrase his question. If the member doesn't phrase his question so that it is readily apparent and it is not up to me to decide whether the minister's answer is an urgent answer to what the member thinks is an urgent question. I didn't think the minister's answer was that urgent if in fact the member thought it should be but by the same token I didn't think the member's question was that urgent as well.

Mr. Thatcher: — Mr. Speaker, I don't very often speak on points of order but I'm asking this strictly as advisement. Mr. Speaker, I had a question in the House and as you know I don't very often get up at this time of the day, but I was rather stunned by the minister's lack of knowledge on this particular subject and as I got up to make a final supplementary I was not allowed to make it. Now, Mr. Speaker, might I respectfully suggest to you that because of the situation the document which I had and because of the minister's complete lack of knowledge on it, I thought that was a matter of rather strident urgency and, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I ask your advisement if urgency is some important criteria as to whether you allow a question to progress. I am afraid somewhere along the line that you are leaving me. I do not say that to be sarcastic, believe me. I'm very confused by some of the rulings that you have made. I am asking only clarification, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — Well, I guess everything is relative. The member asked a question about Golden Acres, SEDCO, etc., to which I permitted a supplementary and after the minister had answered the supplementary and, incidentally, I can't claim responsibility for the minister's answer whether it is a good answer or a bad answer. It's not my responsibility so, therefore, it's not part of my ruling whether . . .

Mr. MacDonald: — The quality of it is.

Mr. Speaker: — If the member for Indian Head-Wolseley has a point of order he can make it at an appropriate time. And at that point I decided after allowing the member a supplementary that we would go on to something else and if it was still a matter of urgency, well it can come up later. But I owe a responsibility to other members as well in the House, in that they may feel that they have something of urgency which they just feel they have to ask in the question period and I have a responsibility to try and spread the question period over as many members as I can.

Mr. Lane (Qu'Ap): — Perhaps Mr. Speaker could clarify the situation when a member asks and you decide that the question is not one of urgency but after four and one-half minutes of reply you are unable to determine whether the reply was in fact a matter of urgency and the minister was not cut off. Then you have just indicated that you were prepared to let the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland get back in and ask another question. Now seemingly there is a strange inconsistency there, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps you could clarify that.

Mr. Speaker: — Well, I see the member for Qu'Appelle had a question, the first one in the question period today and the member for Qu'Appelle had a supplementary to his question. I just felt that at that point it wasn't urgent and that happened to be in the same category as I put the question from Saskatoon-Sutherland, that after one supplementary it wasn't apparent that we should go on any further.

Mr. Lane (Qu'Ap): — I'm talking about the question that the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland . . . the minister spoke for four and a half minutes in reply. I find it difficult to accept that you could not determine in that four and a half minutes that in fact the question wasn't a matter of urgency, he should have been cut off earlier. Surely there was ample time to determine the urgency?

Mr. Speaker: — Well, I wasn't aware that anyone today took four and a half minutes to answer a question. As a matter of fact I had my watch off keeping track of some of the answers that were going on. I wasn't aware that any minister had gone over four and a half minutes or even up to four and a half minutes in answering a question. I would agree that I thought the minister's answer was rather lengthy, however, I hadn't reached the point where I was going to cut him off.

Mr. C.P. MacDonald (Indian Head-Wolseley): — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You keep referring, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that you have a responsibility to determine the urgency of the questions of the opposition. You are not responsible for the quality of the answer of the government. I'm suggesting to you that you have an equal responsibility to determine the quality of the answer of the ministers as you have the urgency or the quality of the questions of the opposition.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Well, I think that . . .

Mr. McMillan: — . . . just apologize . . .

Mr. Speaker: — If the member for Kindersley has a point of order, the member could arise at an appropriate time and make it like the other members are attempting to do. I think the members of the Chamber should be aware of the rules governing the question period. They are laid out for all members to see, the Interim Report of the Special Committee on Rules had them. It's in Beauchesne's Fourth Edition and it says how the questions shall be if they are to be acceptable to the House. It says, they must be brief, they must be urgent, they must not offer information, they must not repeat questions which have been asked previously. It gives a number of rules which govern it. It gives some rules which govern the answers that the ministers are allowed to give. The ministers may answer the question, they may refer the questions, they may not answer them at all. But as long as the minister is attempting to talk about the subject matter which the member has brought up in his question, I will allow the minister to go on. However, I will at times, interfere with ministers when they are putting questions forward and cut them off if I feel they have gone on too long.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. R.N. Nelson (Yorkton): — Mr. Speaker, before the orders of the day, I wish to ask leave of the House to make an introduction. Through you and to the House, I would like to introduce the former member for Yorkton, who was member for Yorkton from 1960 through to 1971, when he retired. I would like to say that he had done a very good job

for his constituents. I would like to ask all of those who are here to join with me in welcoming that member to the House.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. C.P. MacDonald (Indian Head-Wolseley): — Mr. Speaker, I just want to join with the member for Yorkton and say that the former member for Yorkton was a seatmate of mine and contributed very substantially in the House. I know that all members will welcome Mr. Gallagher back again.

MOTIONS FOR RETURN

Return No. 18

Mr. A.N. McMillan (Kindersley), seconded by Mr. Wiebe (Morse) – moved that an Order of the Assembly do issue for a Return (No. 18) showing:

The date of, the departure point, the destination and the passenger list of all Government of Saskatchewan aircraft flights, with the exception of Government of Saskatchewan water-bombers and Government of Saskatchewan air ambulances, from July 1, 1975 to January 1, 1978.

Mr. Robbins (Minister of Revenue): — I just wish to inform the Assembly that we require a bit of time to assemble this information because we have to not only check CVA records but we have to check records in relation to DNS. That is, of course, not related to water-bombers and the air ambulance but for flights in the north and there have to be a large number of flights in the north obviously. Because we will require some time in relation to this particular one I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Resolutions

Resolution No. 2 – Compensation for Injured Workers

That this Assembly urges the Government to more fairly compensate injured workers and bring compensation awarded by the Workers' Compensation Board to a level comparable to court compensation awarded in the courts.

Mr. E.F.A. Merchant (Regina Wascana): — Mr. Speaker, this Resolution asks for increased compensation for injured workers, the removal of the shroud of secrecy which surrounds the operation of the Workers' Compensation Board but most of all asks why workers must bear the punishment of society for their injuries created by an industrial world, while others who are injured in other sorts of accidents are compensated for pain and suffering in the ordinary way. The question asks why the workers punished for their involvement as productive people in our society while others are in who are involved in accidents are so punished. The motion deals with the operations of the Worker's Compensation Board but there is a formal basic question involved and that is the question of compensation. Why, Mr. Speaker, should workers face the risk of damage for a lifetime of pain and suffering while others involved in similar accidents, in automobile accidents or caused by other forms of negligence are compensated for pain and suffering while workers are not. The basic

policy, I suggest, has to be changed and I ask the members to listen in relation to the requirements for that basic change as well as listening to a recounting of the Workers' Compensation Board as it now operates.

Let me begin at the simpler level, Mr. Speaker, namely the workings of the current Board. This government deserves congratulations for increasing the basic level of compensation; we are leaders in Canada in that area. All that remains is to lift the level of compensation to a more appropriate amount for people who have been hurt at some time in the past and ensure that for workers hurt now and in the future, their level of compensation will rise as the cost of living rises. If that argument against that concept is that today's workers and today's employers can only insure us against today's standard of living and today's costs, then I say we may do one of two things or a combination of both. That, Mr. Speaker, is in relation to ensuring that as the cost of living rises, the benefits would rise. Either, I suggest, we have to include in the cost of worker's compensation a protection factor which ensures that payments will be raised with the cost of living, or as a society, we must accept that people hurt while providing goods and services for the economy are entitled to look to the public purse for that increased cost as the cost of living changes. I think the best solution would be a combination of both, with some increased charge assessed against workers and their employers to look after future expense which one can anticipate as the cost of living rises and a guarantee by government that they will pick up the deficit which may arise out of general budgetary revenues. The worker is providing goods and services for all of us, all of us should be expected to pay some of the cost if the worker is hurt, either through an increased cost of the product or through general tax revenues. Workers' Compensation, after all, is just an insurance scheme and I suggest that every worker would want to know that if he were injured he would be properly compensated now and fully compensated in the future against the effects of inflation. I also believe that every worker would be prepared to pay his part of the cost ingredient to ensure that this became possible. Mr. Speaker, that would involve a change in the approach. It is a change, which I suggest is long overdue. Where this government deserves congratulations for raising the general levels of compensation, they deserve criticism for failing to look to the kinds of basic changes that have to be made in the workers' compensation concept in general.

The second crucial area of criticism against the operation of the Workers' Compensation Board deals with the needless secrecy which shrouds board operations. I have spoke, in the House, about this in the past.

The Workers' Compensation Board relies on general practitioners employed by the board rather than the specialists seen by the worker. It steadfastly refuses to open its operations to the eyes of the world. If the Workers' Compensation Board were, indeed, dealing fairly with the vast majority of workmen, the board would have nothing to fear from an appeal procedure, which I advocate, but when that is advocated the Minister of Labour always seems to argue that there would be a cost to the workmen in terms of legal expense, because there would be a tendency to needlessly appeal. I don't know why the Minister of Labour has so little confidence in workmen and in the legal profession to think that the worker would needlessly throw away his money if fairly treated, nor to think that the legal profession would lead him to needlessly throw away his money.

I suggest that the incidence of appeal from decisions would not be high. The incidence of appeal from decisions of the courts of first instance on automobile accident claims is very, very small. If the Workers' Compensation Board were dealing as fairly with people

coming before them for compensation then the incidence of appeal would be at a rate which would not, I suggest, be expensive.

There is secondly, Mr. Speaker, a refusal by the board to release medical documents either to counsel or to the worker. Again, I suggest, that this creates a lack of confidence in the operation of the Workers' Compensation Board and that there can be no reason for the maintenance of that rather outdated rule.

The minister is apt to say that he has available a workers' advocate, who can deal with these matters. The fact is that the workers' advocate is a person paid for by the government, is not a graduate lawyer and is rightly seen by the worker as being nothing more than another functionary of the government. I say to the minister that I have appeared before the Workers' Compensation Board close to a dozen times. I have never been paid by any of the people for whom I have appeared before Workers' Compensation. I say to the minister, the fact that I can't get that information is an indication to the workers that I have been able to represent, and an indication to me, that the Workers' Compensation Board has something to hide. If that is not the case, what possible reason can there be for not giving up that information?

I say to the government that the workers' advocate is better than nothing. I am pleased they brought it in, but it is not perceived as really representing the worker in the way that a counsel of his choice would be perceived.

The minister says that medical documents cannot be released because they want to be sure that doctors in private practice will candidly deal with the Workers' Compensation Board. The courts, in automobile accident cases and in other similar court cases that involve doctors, rely on medical information even though that information is made known to the litigants and that information comes in a candid and an open way. If what the minister is saying is that he does not trust doctors to write truthful reports, because they are afraid that their patients will see them, then I suggest that the minister's lack of confidence in the medical profession is badly placed. For the minister to say that this would be necessary, I say, to the minister means that he lacks faith in the medical profession.

It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that ministers of the Crown have so little confidence in the honesty of lawyers and others of professional standing – lawyers and doctors – and so little confidence in the workers, who they think would be dumb enough to throw away their money needlessly on appeals and other procedures, which the minister in his standard know-it-all manner of the NDP say, well we know better than the worker. We know better than the worker and we know that the worker would make mistakes, so in the standard error of the left, they say because we know they will make mistakes we take away from them the freedom to choose whether they will have an appeal; we take away from them the freedom to choose a lawyer; we take away from them the freedom to see the information about them from their own doctors. Whatever the reason . . .

Mr. Kramer: — Yes, how lucky!

Mr. Merchant: — Whatever the reason, Mr. Speaker, for the shroud of secrecy, and I suppose the minister and I could argue about whether the shroud of secrecy is necessary and I say it isn't, but their sort of know-it-all attitude makes them compelled into that trap. Nonetheless the fact is that the worker, even when fairly dealt with, feels suspicion of the board and suspicion of the process in large part, because of the shroud of secrecy. Even when the worker has been dealt with by a specialist the

Workers' Compensation Boards relies on its own doctors and refuses to give up the information that it sees.

In essence the government is saying to the medical profession that it doesn't trust them or trust medical specialists, that it prefers to always trust its own general practitioners, and those medical practitioners, Mr. Speaker, are hired by the government. Surely members can readily see that if the Workers' Compensation Board says they will only trust the doctors who are on their payroll, then the worker must look at that doctor on the payroll of the board and have little faith in him.

The distrust of the medical profession and the legal profession by this government has so contorted the operation of the Workers' Compensation Board, which isn't all that bad, that it has resulted in the loss of confidence by the workers in the board and the vast percentage of working men and women (though they very likely may have been fairly dealt with by the board) leave that board shrouded in secrecy with suspicions about its operations. Unfortunately absolutely . . .

Mr. Mostoway: — Did you ever take a look at the former Liberal . . .

Mr. Merchant: — Well we appointed a former Liberal . . . a former Cabinet minister. We had to find a man of compassion so we took an NDPer who had seen the light.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, absolutely crucial subtleties of the nature that I have been describing here, so often elude the grasp of ministers of the government. It is not so much a question of fair or unfair, but a question of perceptions and, Mr. Speaker, I have never seen a group of people so little interested in the perceptions that they create by the form of government that they give. How much better to open the operation of the board, allow an appeal from board decisions as we have with other cases which come before the courts which involve bodily injury, allow counsel to appear before the board with a full disclosure of documents and have the board acquire the appearance and fairness which it now lacks.

Even if justice is being done by the Workers' Compensation Board, the fact is that justice is not being seen to be done. Those are the changes, Mr. Speaker, that I suggest in the current operation of the board. Let me now address myself to the change of approach which would begin to compensate a worker for payment, suffering resulting from an injury in a work place. There are all kinds of negligence cases — slipping on a step, tripping on an ice puddle in a bank, being hit in an automobile accident, being caught in a hidden well on someone's land, negligence in hunting accidents, improper removal of a leg or a scarring by a patient or a doctor, faulty manufacture resulting in shattered glass or metal, loss of the sight of an eye or injuries of those sorts. Those are the standard sorts of negligence cases that come before the courts.

In all of those kinds of cases the courts take into consideration pain and suffering, the loss of enjoyment of life, loss of pleasure if the injury involves the loss of a limb or an eye or an arm. The courts take into consideration, embarrassment, disfigurement, change of life circumstances. The courts, though they may know that money can never compensate for a leg or an unattractive face, still the courts will award something in recompense for those kinds of losses.

Where does the money come from? The answer is simple. The money comes from all of us. It doesn't matter if there is insurance. The costs come in the amount of money that we pay for our insurance. If there is no insurance the cost comes in the amount that we

pay for the product. In some cases costs come from taxes. In the case of businesses having to pay a claim, clearly that expense is passed on to us. Doctors and lawyers pass on their expense. The doctor who cuts off the wrong leg (that's common), doctors who have cut out the good eye and left the malignant and have had to go back and cut out the malignant eye. An unfortunate doctor in Nova Scotia cut off the good testicle leaving the malignant testicle and then had to go back and cut off the malignant testicle. These kinds of mistakes are made by doctors. Mistakes are made commonly, mistakes are made, I suggest, commonly by lawyers and when lawyers make mistakes they pay for them, they pay for the mistakes. How do they pay for the mistakes? They pay for them through insurance and they pay for them by charging on to all of the people that they serve and then they pass on the cost of the mistake.

How does Imperial Oil pay for a mistake, or a car company? If a car company manufactures a product and there is a problem with it, it is faulty, they pay for it by passing on the cost in the product.

Now, in essence, with all of the negligence cases that I have cited we really have a form of an insurance scheme where each of us, through one form or another, pay for that. We all accept that. We all accept that if somebody is going to lose both legs in an automobile accident they really do deserve \$225,000 or something like that. The only person in Saskatchewan who doesn't accept that is the minister responsible for SGIO who thinks that what we should do is strip everybody down to the workers' compensation system, instead of compensating people in a broad way by passing on the cost of products and so on.

Now, what I am suggesting is that what we do in other forms of accident and other forms of negligence case, we should also do for workers. Why the different system for workers? Why do we have a prejudice against workers who are injured in the work place? Why do we punish people who are producing? The working man would be only too pleased, I suggest, to pay his share of the increased cost of workers' compensation. Business would be reluctantly, I suggest, prepared to pass on the cost in increased expensive products, but certainly they would be able to pay the additional cost of compensation and they would pass it on to all of us. If necessary I believe that government, through general taxation, should take some part of insuring full compensation for workers, not the level that we have now. To do anything else is to regulate the working man to some kind of second class citizen. Is there a reason why, if you become a paraplegic in the work place all you get is 75 per cent of your salary for the rest of your life, but if you become a paraplegic in an automobile accident case you will get \$300,000 to \$750,000? Is there some reason why, if you lose your arm in the work place you get a couple of hundred dollars a month and if you lose it through some freak accident in a movie theatre you get \$50,000 to \$75,000? I think there is a reason. I think that reason is that governments have developed almost a prejudice against working men. Governments have sort of said that injuries to the working man are something that they believe working men just have to accept, it goes with the job. It is as though we say that they believe working men just have to accept, it goes with the job. It is as though we say that the guy that goes out and contributes to the gross national product of the country should be expected every once in a while to lose an arm or get a broken back. Why, I ask, Mr. Speaker, if (as I do) sit in a desk, probably contributing little to the gross national product, do I deserve big compensation for the loss of my arm but I would get small compensation if I lost my arm working at IPSCO?

Is there some reason why a young woman scarred in the work place will get \$400 or \$500, but if she is scarred in a car accident she might get \$20,000?

Those aren't just abstract examples. I know the comparisons of which I speak. They tell a shocking and I suggest, shoddy story, about the treatment of workers by our system. Not so much, Mr. Speaker, the treatment by this government. This government does a better job than other governments throughout this country, but a treatment of working men and women which has developed because 200 years ago we very much said if you lose your arm at the work place that's your tough luck, that's one of the things you can expect to do when you go to work.

I acted, Mr. Speaker, for a postman with a badly slipped disc. He went on working, he is working today. I'm quite sure – I'd have members of the press contact him if anybody cared. He got \$26,000 from the courts a few years ago. He's probably get more today. He doesn't wear a brace. To the best of my knowledge he is fully recovered. He goes to a chiropractor every few months; he can dance; he can bowl, etc. Mr. Speaker, \$26,000 and it would be \$40,000 today. Compare that to a friend of mine from the east of Regina who hurt his back working in a drugstore. He hurt his back and he hurt his knees. He can't even bend any more. He has lost his job. He can't do the work that he has always done. Workers' compensation told him he could get a job as a commissionaire. He can do some menial task that he does not want to do and he does not know how to do, and for which he is over qualified. Workers' Compensation pay him \$220 a month and he is hurt a whole lot more than the five year old \$26,000 back injury case. I am not complaining about that particular treatment of that case. I think they were fair enough within the particular rules with which we operate. What I say is the system is wrong.

A woman that I represented earlier this year, used to teach school. Her husband farms. Some doctors say that within a couple of years she will go back to teaching – she was badly hurt, but she can go back. She can walk. She has lost none of her limbs. She has had one serious operation, a lot of physiotherapy. She has a bit of a limp - \$173,266 bucks. That is what she got from SGIO. She was hurt in an automobile accident case. Compare that to a journeyman electrician whom I have known for years. He lives on 20th Avenue and has his own electrical firm. His earnings worked out to over \$2,000 a month before taxes. He gets some tax advantages in addition that the company brought him. He wears a back brace now attached to an aluminum metal plate which pushes his lumbar forward and his chest back. He has problems with headaches and dizziness. Workers' Compensation told him he could get a job as a commissionaire (they must think there are a lot of commissionaires). He is a tradesman. He was a business man. He does not want to do that kind of menial work. Workers' Compensation pay him \$400 a month and he is hurt a whole lot worse than the woman that I represented.

A widow that I represented in Alberta, where her husband was a printer – I already said to an insurance company on that I would not accept \$225,000 for her husband – but if her husband had been killed in the work place, she would get peanuts in relation to what she is getting now. Another friend of mine, 19th Avenue, fell while working at the old City Hall (Mayor Baker said there was nothing wrong with the way City Hall was operated). He fell while he was working on city Hall – I think I may have said killed. I did not mean that. Basically he is an asbestos worker. I don't know what he was doing particularly with City Hall. His accident occurred there. He broke his back; he hobbles around; I don't think he will ever work again. He'll certainly never work with asbestos. He is talking about going back to Scotland. He has lived here for about three decades; he has been a long time suffering with pain and suffering; he can expect that for the rest of his life. His life expectancy is shortened considerably. He is in a lot of pain; he's lost any sexual ability that he had. The nerve connections are gone that gave him his sex drive

and all of this results from his back being broken. He is in his early 40s. He find himself restricted in a multitude of ways - \$800 a month. That's about half of what he now would be earning if he were able to work and doesn't include anything for pain and suffering and I suggest, Mr. Speaker, he'd get \$300,000 or \$400,000 if he had been able to sue.

I can go on with those kinds of examples. They are all from my experience. They are all accurate examples. I think that anybody who does a lot of automobile accident work and collision work would have the same kind of list of examples and perhaps any member of the Legislature would have the same kind of list of examples of dealings with the Workers' Compensation Board.

All of them tell us one thing. It's as though we have said to the workmen, we know that you face the possibility of injury and we punish you because you are going to face the possibility of injury. I say that we should pass on those costs and give proper protection. Surely, we as a society, should be treating the working man in the same way we treat everyone else when injury befalls.

If I had had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to serve the people in public life at a time when the Workers' Compensation concept was brought in I hope I would have had the ability and foresight to support the concept and make it a reality.

Having said that, nonetheless, I now see the Workers' Compensation system in many areas to be a shield against proper compensation and that has to be changed.

I spoke to a woman about a month ago who was off work with simple whiplash. She was in front of a bank making a delivery for her employer, in a company vehicle, on company time. She was hit by somebody else in a truck, working for his employer, at work at the time. She got \$80 a week for her time off, namely \$160, rather than the \$2,000 or so she would have received, had she been able to sue. She got nothing for her pain and suffering which will continue for six or eight months, just another example. \$160 versus \$2,000. The legislation takes away her right to sue another worker, just as we have taken away from the worker the right to sue his company or to sue another company. In the case of the friend of mine who fell from City Hall, his employer, incidentally, pleaded guilty under The Labour Standard's Act, to a charge of negligence. So the man's injuries flowed from the negligence of the employer, yet the man cannot sue. I don't propose that the legislation be removed; I don't oppose the legislation. I only say to this government, of all governments, very likely the last NDP government in history, that you've got to take a look at this problem, because this is an opportunity for you to bring workers' compensation up to the same kind of level that exists elsewhere.

I'm saying to Gordon Snyder or Walter Smishek, to Bill Allen and John Skoberg, people who know something about the work place, know something about the union movement; you, of all people, should be looking at protecting the men and women of this province. You know better than I do that it is the working men and women of this province that make Canada what it is and I simply ask, Mr. Speaker, why do we go on treating working men and women differently from the way we treat other people who have been injured? Now with those remarks, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member for Regina South, I so move.

Hon. G.T. Snyder (Minister of Labour): — A few words, Mr. Speaker, with respect, first of all, to the remarks of the hon. member for Regina Wascana. The way the hon.

member started his remarks, with such indecent haste, I thought perhaps he was late for an appearance in court or was due to be out door-knocking or canvassing this afternoon but I was appreciative of the fact that his remarks were somewhat more modified and that he slowed his delivery to the point where he could be understood during the latter part of his remarks.

I have to make some comment, first of all, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the remarks of the hon. member for Regina Wascana relative to the problem which he seems to believe is a significant one, relative to the confidentiality of medical reports which he maintains are not available to him in the event that he wishes to represent a client.

I think I attempted to make my position as clear as I could during estimates, about a year ago, in this House, when I indicated to him that we had received, from the Saskatchewan Medical Association, indications of concern because of the nature of the problem which medical people are obliged to deal with, on numerous occasions, when reporting to the Workers' Compensation Board.

Following estimates last year, I made a particular point of being in touch directly with the Saskatchewan Medical Association and I have to apologize for not having their response available to me but I'll table it at a later point in time. At that point, the Saskatchewan Medical Association reaffirmed its position and indicated, quite precisely and quite clearly, that they felt that their position would be in jeopardy, that they would be very definitely compromised in putting into medical reports some very frank exchanges of views and medical opinions, which would then be made available to the injured worker through his advocate or by some other process.

The motion itself gives me some real problems, Mr. Speaker. The resolution itself urges that the Assembly or the government, more fairly compensate injured workers and bring compensation awarded by the Workers' Compensation Board to a level comparable to court compensation awarded in the courts. I don't know exactly what this tells me, Mr. Speaker. It seems to indicate quite clearly that the member for Regina Wascana is prepared to jettison a function of the Workers' Compensation Board that has been established for something over 50 years. It's about a half a century ago, Mr. Speaker, that we decided in this country in every province of the Dominion that we would forsake the archaic principle that the only way that a worker could receive justice from his employer was to prove first of all that the employer was at fault and secondly, to gain some award in the courts of the land. The question arises in my mind as to whether the hon. member's actual concern rests with the best interests of the injured worker or whether his concern rests with the best interests of the legal fraternity of which he is a part.

Mr. Speaker, as hon. members are aware this government has in the past promoted what I believe to be some of the finest and the most progressive labor legislation to be found in the whole of Canada. Of the numerous and well known programs that we have initiated I think the Workers' Compensation program as it has been amended over the last number of years in particular, has probably benefitted more people, employers and employees alike, than any other compensation program across the country. I think you will remember, Mr. Speaker, that when this government came to power in 1971, one of our first actions was to establish a task force to do a thorough examination of the Workers' Compensation program in this province. We knew that this was a trouble area because literally hundreds and hundreds of complaints were being made, not only to those of us in the New Democratic Party but also to the new board itself and through the media. At that same time an Injured Worker's Association through utter frustration

grew up because they had no place else to turn. Now, Mr. Speaker, even though we anticipated problems we couldn't have imagined a program in such total disarray as was the Workers' Compensation Board back in 1971. Those were pretty grim times for anyone unlucky enough to be injured at work. Fortunately the government of the day had wisely refrained from removing the citizens' right of appeal or rights to medical care and rehabilitation, but they had done nothing. I say they had done nothing to guarantee him adequate compensation for income maintenance. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it looked to us as though they had entirely lost sight of the philosophy behind the program, if indeed they really ever understood the philosophy behind the program. I question today, Mr. Speaker, whether the member for Regina Wascana has any dedication to the principle of the no-fault arrangement where the employer and the employee are protected equally under this program; with the employer paying an assessment on the basis of so many dollars and cents per hundred of payroll, he is protected against ruinous lawsuits. By becoming a part of the program the injured worker is guaranteed prompt payment of compensation benefits.

Now, Mr. Speaker, some seven years later after having taken office when I had thought that we had left that nightmare behind I'm forced to wonder whether abysmal ignorance still plagues this House and some members opposite. I sincerely hope I'm wrong. Yet there are those in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, who apparently still have no understanding at all of the Workers' Compensation program. They even go so far as to imply that compensation awarded in the courts would be greater and presumably more fair to the injured worker than awards made by the compensation program. This seems to be the inference that was made today. The idea is patently ridiculous and I hardly know whether it deserves to be dealt with seriously or not, Mr. Speaker.

Perhaps the members will forgive me if I try to make this very simple to grasp. In that way, I hope we can be sure that all of us understand what Workers' Compensation programs are and were designed to do. To being with, Mr. Speaker, the philosophy upon which our plan of compensation is based has not changed since it was introduced into this Legislature in the 1930s. There was then and there is now a social contract between employers and employees whereby the employers agree to pay their share to support injured workers and the dependants of those injured and deceased. At the risk of oversimplifying let me say that it follows then that two of the objectives of the program should be (1) medical care and rehabilitation where required and (2) there should be compensation or income security provided during the period of disablement. In Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, both employers and employees established these principles and agreed upon them nearly 50 years ago. They agreed that employers had a responsibility to provide protection and that workers had a right to be compensated. They further agreed that the fault principle upon which court settlements are based was not the primary consideration. Instead they said that caring for the injured worker swiftly and equitably was the most important consideration.

At this date, Mr. Speaker, I find it a little difficult to explain the attraction of liability settlements made through the courts but I will try. It seems to me that the attraction lies in two directions, neither of which are admirable. The first is in the area of financial gain for some members of the legal fraternity. I believe most of us here today understand that possibility and the label for what it really is. The second may be the beady-eyed fascination which some people have with catching a wrong-doer and making him pay. The fact is that it's very seldom that a case arises where an employer deliberately sets out to hurt an employee and going to court is simply not the most appropriate way to meet the injured worker's problem. Not only is it inappropriate, as I have suggested, it is also costly. Furthermore, it is plagued with delays, often inequitable and completely

inflexible to the extent that apparently adequate settlements reached in our courts 10 years ago would look ridiculous today because of inflation.

An Hon. Member: — Tony wants deterrent fees for legal aid.

Mr. Snyder: — By contrast under the Workers' Compensation Board system we have a system of no fault insurance, apart from determining whether or not it was a work related accident, that's the only judgment that has to be made. Instead of seeking revenge we are looking at helping the worker. His or her claim is handled quickly and payments are generally made within weeks. Furthermore, there is a built-in escalator clause designed to cope with inflation. Each year the board looks at the average salaries of claimants and wherever 10 per cent or more have salaries in excess of the current income ceiling then the ceiling is raised the following year for subsequent injuries which take place in that year. For example, Mr. Speaker, in 1974 the ceiling went from \$8,400 to \$10,000. By 1977, Mr. Speaker, it had gone up to \$16,000 and by this year, 1978, the ceiling upon which assessments are based and upon which claims are paid has increased to \$18,000 per year.

This level, Mr. Speaker, assures that 90 per cent of those injured receive compensation on the basis of their full earnings.

Another important feature is the fact that files are kept open, Mr. Speaker, unlike the once-and-for-all settlements that are made in court awards. It should be known by the member opposite who raises this question that when a court award is made it is final and binding and he should also know that the files on the Workers' Compensation are never closed. The reason for this is that we know that changes in the condition of a worker can occur and do occur from time to time. We know this can mean that he needs increased benefits by way of payments. He may need further medical aid or even nursing home care. Court settlements cannot and do not provide for any such flexibility as is possible with the Workers' Compensation Board.

Perhaps the most unfavorable aspect of all where courts are concerned is the fact that the present court awards do not generally compare favorably with compensation board awards for similar disabilities, which I think disputes entirely the suggestion made by the member in his resolution. I can give the member some comparable figures between court settlements and compensation awards by way of illustration, if I may.

As you will understand, the courts provide a one-time award with no increase possible in future years to account for inflation or deterioration of a person's physical condition. By contrast, compensation is usually a weekly amount which may be increased in the future should the extent of the disability increase as a result of a compensable injury.

To make the comparison easier I'll quote a capitalized value of the compensation award. This is the amount the board sets aside to provide the weekly pension. The court awards I will mention were made within the last two or three years so they are fairly accurate and fairly recent for purposes of comparison.

The first example is a young person age 18 who lost an arm two inches below the shoulder. The courts awarded that individual \$30,000. By comparison, another young person, age 21, lost an arm below the elbow. In this particular case it was a WCB (Workmens' Compensation Board) assessment. The award was over \$49,000, plus an amount for medical aid worth some \$887. Get the comparison, Mr. Speaker? Almost

two identical cases, a court award of \$30,000, a WCB award of \$49,000, plus an amount for medical aid worth \$887.

Another example of how the courts deal with victims who win their case was that of a 20 year old who had an amputation below the knee. The settlement in this case was \$42,000. Compare this with a Workers' Compensation case – same injury, but the settlement was approximately \$43,000, plus medical and rehabilitation worth \$12,245. This adds up to a total of over \$55,000. Quite a contrast. And it should be said too, Mr. Speaker, that of the \$55,000 there was no member of the legal fraternity that skimmed any milk off the top.

Here is another comparison, both severe cases because of injuries which made these two particular cases quadriplegics. The court settlement in question was \$282,500 for an individual in his 50s. The Workers' Compensation claimant, in a similar condition, but in his 40s, was granted compensation, plus medical care and rehabilitation totalling about \$190,500. But in addition to receiving that, he is receiving an allowance of \$550 a month for the home care which he will receive for the balance of his life. The capitalized value of this is another \$100,347.

Mr. Speaker, there may well be some individual cases that the member for Regina Wascana or some of his friends in the legal fraternity may be able to trot out. There may be some individual cases where a court award may be higher than is the compensation award. The system of court liability has often been referred to by members of the legal profession, themselves, as a kind of forensic lottery. What that means, of course, is that the injured party has an outside chance of winning something but he can't ever be sure. If that is the way society thinks it should treat some of its unfortunate citizens, then I for one am prepared to resign from the human race.

As I pointed out earlier, Mr. Speaker, the Workers' Compensation Board provides ongoing benefits and protection not available in court action.

I also want to bring to the attention of this Assembly that there is no deduction from the board's award for legal fees. In a court settlement these would have to be paid by the worker or to his lawyer and might well amount to as much as 15 per cent of the settlement I am told.

I need not tell members of this House that the inflationary spiral which has caught us all in recent years has not made the work of the Workers' Compensation Board any easier. Those responsible for the program since 1971 have shown outstanding ability in being able to rescue a floundering grossly underfunded scheme and guided toward what has become known as the best compensation program in Canada.

You may recall that I spoke in this House last spring when we amended The Workers' Compensation Act, in order to raise pensions which had been eroded by inflation. Before that pensions had been raised during the 1974 session for the same reason. We could not and we will not abandon the previously disabled or their dependents to the ravages of inflation. I think we have made that clear. Last spring we raised the pensions of those totally and permanently disabled by \$80 per month. Others received a percentage of that raise in accordance with their degree of disability. We also increased the minimum level of compensation by \$80 so that it became \$405 a month for dependent spouses. There was an increase of \$50 to \$325 per month for each dependent child. For each dependent child then the increase was from \$65 to \$85 a month and for orphans from \$80 to \$110 a month.

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The cost of funding this increase was and is significant as I pointed out to the House at that particular time. However, good management over the past few years has resulted in a situation, Mr. Speaker, whereby our compensation system is now capable of handling these adjustments.

Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan we have the best funded compensation scheme in Canada and will continue that way as long as this government is in power.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Snyder: — This program, Mr. Speaker, will continue to be carefully and equitably administered in the interests of all our working people, employers and employees alike. I sincerely hope that all members here, today, can grasp the fundamental principle behind the program, which apparently has escaped the member for Regina Wascana. Those who seem to believe that the capricious costly and often long delayed settlements, which our courts mete out to injured persons, represents something better, cannot be in possession of the facts, Mr. Speaker, not to mention the basic idea of the system.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I propose to amend the motion by moving:

That all the words following the word 'Assembly' in the first line, be deleted and the following be substituted therefor:

Commends the government and Workers' Compensation Board for the fair and just manner in which compensation is provided to injured workers and for the efficient mechanism which has been developed to ensure that Workers' Compensation fund payments are more equitably and more flexibly awarded than compensation awarded by the courts.

I so move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by Mr. Mostoway (Saskatoon Centre).

Mr. P.P. Mostoway (Saskatoon Centre): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on this particular motion . . .

Mr. Merchant: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The minister, during my remarks, said something about my hurrying and I, therefore, respond to that with what I believe is a point of personal privilege, only to say that I am leaving and I am leaving to go to a hearing of the Social Welfare Board, where if it mattered, I appear for nothing for somebody that arose out of this business. I waited until the minister finished speaking. I now have Judge Andreychuk and the Board waiting for me and . . .

Mr. Mostoway: — Is that all? (Laughter). Mr. Speaker, I have a few words that I would like to say on this motion and also the amendment. I'm a little afraid of some of the subtle suggestions made in the member opposite's speech and as far as I can determine I think the essence of his speech was that possibly we should go back to the old system of letting the courts decide what kind of compensation should be given our workers. Now I am extremely opposed to that. I have some other choice words I want to say in this whole area and consequently I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Resolution No. 3 – Grants to Level IV(b) Nursing Care

Mr. E. Anderson (Shaunavon) moved, seconded by Mr. Wiebe (Morse):

That this Assembly recommends that the Government of Saskatchewan make grants available under Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Commission to any hospital for beds that they wish to allocate for level IV(b) nursing care.

In moving this resolution I don't want to intimate that the moneys and the efforts that the government has put into level IV(b) care in the designated hospital, of which there are 6 in the province, hasn't been well received and that they don't do a good job. The problem arises that when you are in a rural area such as I am from, these designated homes are from 130 to 180 miles from where people live. In moving people once they go from level III to level IV(b) care this far from home removes them from their families and the grandchildren and children and the people they grew up with. In fact, if you realize that these people chose to live in small towns in the rural areas their entire life to raise their family there and make a living, we are now, when they reach level IV(b), forcing them to go into the larger centres for their remaining years. With this removal from their immediate families they feel deserted and when this happens we find they have a very, very short life span once they have been moved. Therefore, what's happening is that in knowing this a lot of the level III homes in my area are keeping people in level III who, if there were level IV(b) facilities closer, would move them into them. We find that there are hospital beds available in the smaller towns in my area such as Shaunavon and Maple Creek which have beds available. The only problem is they can designate these beds for level IV(b) patients but they don't receive any granting. Unless you are a designated hospital you don't receive this granting so they can't afford to keep them there. Some of the patients who need rehabilitation and who realize that their families do, don't mind being moved into Palliser Hospital for rehabilitation if they could be moved back. What happens now is people who could not benefit from any rehabilitation don't receive rehabilitation, are moved in there for the level IV(b) care. The level IV(b) facilities in Swift Current and in Wascana are taxed to the limit right now; there is a waiting list for the Swift Current level IV(b) home and you just can't get in there. If you declared a level IV(b) and there is not room you can get permission to keep them in the hospitals beyond the 30 day limit but they usually will move them on or you start paying your own way.

I feel and I would urge the government to consider making grants – the grant system available – to the hospitals who wish to designate any beds that they have available above the ADC to these hospitals that they could keep level IV patients in. The problem, I know, doesn't arise in more populated areas where your homes aren't spread that far apart. It is not a problem closer in to Swift Current or closer to Regina where you are moving from one home to the other but it is a terrible problem down our way when you move the elderly person this far from his family. As I say, I don't mean to insinuate that the care in the level IV(b) designed hospitals is not good; it's not the level of care that is the problem, it is the proximity – the no proximity – the furthest away of these facilities. The beds are available in enough of our hospitals now to take care of our level IV(b). the capital costs would be low, the beds are there, the registered nursing staff are there. What we would need are the grants so they could hire nursing care assistants to take care of these elderly people. I would urge and I would urge the members to vote for this motion. I would hope that in passing it, the government would consider the problem and would realize that the problem is unique to rural areas. Therefore I so move, seconded by the member for Morse.

Mr. Wiebe: — It is not my intention to adjourn the debate. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to add my support, not only in seconding the motion but also in speaking on behalf of this particular motion.

I think it is something that we in the province of Saskatchewan have to take a very serious look at. I think it is the wish of everyone to try to provide this kind of care to our senior citizens and I think it is more important to the senior citizens and to all of us, that we make a real concerted effort to try to provide that service to them in the communities in which they live.

It is becoming very, very difficult for the province to be able to afford the construction of invalid homes or senior citizens homes for that purpose only. I think we have to realize that and I think the people in these smaller communities themselves, where a hospital is located do realize that they cannot in a concrete way, present a proposition to the government to build special homes for level IV care. This is why the suggestion made by the member for Shaunavon, I believe was an excellent one in which we can sit back and ask ourselves, why can we not provide that type of service in the small communities when we do have beds available for them.

Let me just quote an example: The town of Cabri which is located in my particular constituency – it has a hospital, a fairly new hospital. Its rated capacity is rated somewhere in the neighborhood of 21 beds; it is presently only making use of somewhere in the neighborhood of 11 beds, so in effect there are 10 beds there - there is the room, there is the building that could be made available, 10 beds for level IV(b) care. It would also help the hospital board, it would also help the functioning of the hospital if grants could be made available to the local hospital board to provide the additional care. The kitchen facilities are already in the hospital. The only extra dollars that would be required would possibly be for the extra staff that is required to look after the extra level IV(b) care within that hospital.

There is going to be some opposition to his particular recommendation from some doctors because some doctors would like to see hospitals used strictly for patients whom they could put into the hospital. I think as well, there is some problem involved between the Department of Social Services and the Department of Health in regard to whose responsibility it is to actually pay for level IV care. I think this is something the departments themselves are going to have to work out. I hope that they will get down to the job of actually working it out and saying, look level IV(b) care is the responsibility of the Department of health, not the responsibility of the Department of Social Services and allow the use of these beds for level IV(b) care.

I don't want to take up too much time of the Assembly except to add my support to the member for Shaunavon in this particular resolution. It is something the government may not wish to do immediately but it is something that I hope the government could possibly take action on within the next year or two to allow our senior citizens the opportunity to remain within the communities which they helped to build, to remain in the community where their family is. It means a lot to them to have that family drop in to see them once or twice a day, whereas if they had to go to other areas, the family may be able to see them only two or three times, or maybe only once a week. It would help in the twilight years in their lives to be closer to their homes and, for that reason, I would urge all members to add their support to this particular resolution.

Mr. W.A. Robbins (Minister of Revenue): — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to make a few remarks with respect to this particular motion and I want to inform the Assembly that I will beg leave to adjourn the debate at the conclusion of my remarks because I believe the Minister of health, who is unavoidably absent this afternoon, would like to make some comments on it as well.

I have a good deal of sympathy too, with the remarks made by the members opposite in relation to keeping level IV patients in their own localities. I think every member would agree that that is a proper approach in relation to those people being in proximity to their friends and families and I might tell the members opposite that we've made some very strenuous efforts. I know they were made when the present Minister of Finance was Minister of health and they were made while I was Minister of Health. They are still being made in relation to attempting to get level IV patients into rural community hospitals. There are 116 of those hospitals in this province and if we had been able to get even an average of three per hospital accepted in those localities, we would have in large measure solved the pressures under level IV. Basically we were unable to do so, often not because the local hospital board felt that it shouldn't be done, but often because of the medical profession. I think the member for Morse put his finger on it. I think it's important that a realization of that fact is available to all the members of the Assembly but because I do want to give the present Minister of Health an opportunity to discuss this further I would like to make one other comment just before I go to that.

I note that the resolution talks about grants available from the Saskatchewan Medical Insurance Commission, to hospitals for beds. The Medical Care Insurance Commission doesn't make any grants for hospital beds at all; therefore I think the resolution is incorrect in that regard and perhaps improperly drafted. It should really talk about the Saskatchewan Hospital Insurance Plan but in view of the fact that Mr. Tchorzewski will be making comments, I then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Resolution No. 9 – Orderly Marketing of Feed Grains

Mr. G. McNeill (Meadow Lake) moved, seconded by Mr. P.P. Mostoway (Saskatoon Centre):

That this Assembly deplores the continued inadequate performance of the existing Federal Feed Grains Policy, and urges that, in the interest of orderly marketing of feed grains to the best advantage of western producers, the sole responsibility for the marketing of feed grains be returned to the Canadian Wheat Board.

He said: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in rising to put forward this motion, I want to tell all members of this Assembly and the press and the other present, that my constituency of Meadow Lake is an area very much affected by the National Feed Grain Policy. My riding has, on an average, more feed grain grown than in other parts of Saskatchewan. There are also more mixed farmers and ranchers per capita in Meadow Lake Constituency than in the rest of the province. Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that neither one of those groups are satisfied with the present grain policies of Otto Lang and the Trudeau government. Otto Lang was faced with a tough job in the fall of 1973. On the one hand he was faced with the western Liberals traditionally set against intervention in the market place, and when that market place involved beef production any tampering by the government was about as welcome to the free enterprise western Liberals as a platoon of Vietnam dropping in for a Sunday dinner. That western, highly intellectual wing of the Liberal Party was amplified by the member for Thunder Creek, himself a

rancher. On the other side of the issue was Eugene Whelan, who broke himself away from hugging hogs long enough to realize that there were some votes to be had in eastern Canada and in his riding too, if cattle feeders there could be given cheap feed grain. Otto Lang took his time deciding what to do and then, in the late 1970s, unveiled the interim feed grain policy. Some western farmers described the move as a falling between two stools. Others realizing that politicians were going by the western Liberals and their eastern counterparts, referred to this exercise as a stalling between two fools. However you look at it, Mr. Speaker, the interim Feed Grains Policy and the national producers. In fact, thousands of dollars have flowed out of the pockets of farmers in western Canada and into the pockets of eastern feed operators. The federal legislation, which its author said would protect the farmer against depressed feed grain prices and allow western beef producers to exploit the advantage they have, to increase their production, has failed to do either one.

The major reason for the failure of the federal Grains Policy has been in the choice by Mr. Lang to again attack the Canadian Wheat Board and orderly marketing instead of securing the very benefits they offer to all concerned.

The Wheat Board, throughout history, has performed well for western farmers. During World War I the Wheat Board was set up to stop the world profits being made by speculators and wartime profiteers. It also helped farmers pass, what would have otherwise been a prolonged period of depressed prices, by storing grain when the markets were cut off.

In 1919 the Borden government ended the role of the Wheat Board. Every history book written about that time agrees that the Wheat Board was the Dominion Government's most successful venture in wartime economic planning. The Borden government, however, was every bit as willing a servant of the vested interests and the Winnipeg Grain Exchange power broker as the present Trudeau government is today. The first Wheat Board was done away with despite the outcry of the farmers. It was another Conservative government at Ottawa that was forced to bring back the Wheat Board after other halfway measures had failed to solve the serious situation during the depression.

In 1930 the Bennett government acquired a considerable quantity of wheat as a result of a half-hearted attempt to stabilize the wheat economy of the prairies. The Canadian Wheat Board was re-established by parliament in 1935 to dispose of the wheat held and to arrange for orderly marketing of new crops. The Board was a voluntary marketing organization which purchased wheat from farmers at the fixed price and issued them a share of any profits realized by the Board. That, Mr. Speaker, was obviously the best way to market grain then and I say, and my party says, it is still now today the best way to market grain.

Because of the shortage of storage space in the country elevators and terminals and the shortage of box cars for transporting grain, the Wheat Board during World War II instituted a quota system to regulate deliveries of wheat, barley and oats. The board administered its role so well that in 1943 trading in wheat futures was discontinued by an order of the federal government. The Winnipeg Grain Exchange and the grain barons who controlled it, again felt slighted that they could not make massive wartime profits while other Canadians were overseas losing their lives for their country. And

ever since that time the grain traders have brought pressure on the federal government to, once again do away with the Wheat Board.

Look at the record, Mr. Speaker. The Wheat Board sold the glut of the wheat which accumulated during the '30s when no country was buying. It solved the complex financial and organizational problems of space and carryover during the middle '40s. Later, the Board prevented a depression of the wheat marketing, during the sale of the frozen crop of 1950 and the damp crop of 1951. The Board stored grain during the world surplus of the early '50s to protect farmers from rock bottom prices and found new markets all over the world for the prairie grains of the 1930s. The Wheat Board got good prices for the western farmers all through the '40s and '50s and '60s and early '70s. Mr. Speaker, I am firmly convinced that the Board could handle better than anyone else, the crop that came off last fall, (much of it is going as feed grain), if it were given a chance to do so.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Wheat Board is the clear choice of the prairie farmer as an agency to which they wish to market their grain, including feed grain.

The referendum of the Saskatchewan grain producers conducted by the national Product Marketing Council in 1974 showed 93 per cent of the producers wanted to market their feed grains through the Canadian Wheat Board. The Wheat Board clearly benefits farmers in a number of ways. There is a protection from badly depressed local market that often exists for feed grains. The board operates on a broad scale and through price pooling, quotas and carryover treats the farmers all alike.

The final payment structure is important to farmers too. They have the assurance of knowing that if they feed grain brings a good price when it's sold, often thousands of miles away, they, the producer, will get the money not some grain baron in his riverside mansion in Winnipeg. The producer of the feed grain then would clearly benefit if the Canadian Wheat Board was allowed to market the grain.

But what about the livestock producers of Saskatchewan? Does the placing of the market arrangements with the open market help them? No, Mr. Speaker, it does not. The present national feed grain policy helps producers in eastern Canada but not out here in the West. Until a year and one-half ago the stock growers of Ontario and Quebec got feed freight assistance, they still get what amounts to millions of dollars a year in tariff protection. Because of discriminatory freight rates that hamper western Canada, eastern producers are guaranteed what amounts to a ceiling in western feed grains. Because the Wheat Board must offer the grain in eastern Canada closely related to US corn and soya bean prices, in times of glut for western Canadian feed grains the prices will drop and eastern livestock operators will forget all about American corn and take western barley, oats and wheat. Mr. Speaker, it is bad enough that the existing federal grain feed policy does not do anything for the western livestock producer except make him less competitive with his eastern counterpart and it is worse still that the Trudeau government decided not to build in any income protection for western feed grain producers that the Wheat Board would have provided. But what is the worst of all, Mr. Speaker, is that the federal government is once again trying with the willing assistance of Joe Clark and his Tories to dismantle the Canadian Wheat Board and in the process of doing that throw away millions of dollars of profit to the private grain trade, money that used to be returned to the farmers.

One is moved to ask why, Mr. Speaker, why, when the Wheat Board has proven itself

time and time again to be the best marketing agency, the best friend farmers have to sell the grain, why does the open market get the nod from both old line parties? Mr. Speaker, I think I know why, in the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada's recent report on financial contributions to political parties. I notice ample evidence that the Liberals and the Conservatives and the private grain traders are the warmest of friends. If so that money has been flowing, Mr. Speaker, money that should be in the wallets of the Saskatchewan farmer but it is flowing into the Liberals' and the Conservatives' bank accounts. Mr. Speaker, it was taken out of the pockets of the farmers when the Canadian Wheat Board was denied its rightful role as the sole marketing agent of feed grain.

Mr. Speaker, I ask Otto Lang and the Trudeau government to what extent was this decision to begin dismantling the Canadian Wheat Board based on the knowledge that the party receive sizeable financial contributions from corporations and individuals and private grain traders such as Parrish and Heimbecker, Continental Grain, Richardson Securities and I also ask the Conservative Party where Joe Clark's attack was laid on the Wheat Board. Where is this attack, the result being made aware of a recent \$2,453 payment to the PC Canadian fund by Cargill Grain Company. The Conservatives on the official audit record appeared to get more money than the Liberals from the grain barons and the companies so I ask them, do the Tories stand against orderly marketing as strong as it is because they refuse to accept the facts or is it a service for payment rendered?

Mr. Speaker, just a passing comment, I watched a TV show over the weekend called "Focus on Four", and three of our MLAs from this Legislature were on it. I heard the Liberal MLA for Kindersley distinctly say on that he was prepared to do away with the Crow rates and that that was the Liberal policy. Also I think this had some bearing on it, in the little town of Paradise Hill we have two elevators in there, one of Cargill and one of the Pool. The Cargill has empty grain cars at it and the Pool is not able to get grain cars. Is this another way that Otto Lang has got of doing away with the Pool?

Mr. Speaker, the stand of the New Democratic Party is clear. Point No. 6 on page 4 of the NDP platform booklet in 1975 election campaign says the following:

A New Democratic Government will urge federal government to restore to the Wheat Board the marketing of domestic feed grains and expand its powers to include the marketing of all grains.

That is the position of my party, Mr. Speaker, and in the moving of this motion I endorse it fully. Mr. Speaker, I do so move, seconded by my colleague from Turtleford, Mr. Johnson.

Mr. L.E. Johnson (Turtleford): — Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Wheat Board when one looks at it in comparison to the present federal Feed Grain policy, you see that there is no increase in the sale of grain. It only shifts the grain around in the storage and in fact, causes some difficulties for people that are wishing to sell to the Canadian Wheat Board, by filling up the elevators and therefore, using up the space. There is another particular thing about a feed policy when it is in an open manner and that is that there is speculation on foodstuff. This in itself is something which should not take place and you see that it doesn't take place in a lot of other areas where the product is controlled by a very few number of corporations or individuals. I would indicate that in the manufacture area you do not see any commodity exchanges functioning. The

consumer, through a marketing board system, receives a number of benefits, one of which is the continual supply of the goods, as well as the fact that when the board is in place, the price remains usually stable over a longer period of time. This allows the individual to plan his purchases in a much better manner.

Having a board in place has allowed certain things to take place which are of benefit to the Canadian farmer. I think that these should be recognized. Because of this it is possible to have a controlled price for milling wheat in Canada which is something that the producers of beef in Canada would very much like to have rather than being at the whim of the world market. I should also like to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that by having an open market system through the feed grains you do not increase the number buyers. They remain pretty well constant.

I would like to say a few more remarks on this. I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

SECOND READINGS

Mr. H.H.P. Baker (Regina Victoria) moved second reading of Bill No. 01 – **An Act respecting The Royal Trust Company and Royal Trust Corporation of Canada.**

Motion agreed to and bill read a second time.

Mr. H.W. Lane (Saskatoon-Sutherland) moved second reading of Bill No. 02 – **An Act to change the name of Bruderthal Church of Saskatchewan.**

Motion agreed to and bill read a second time.

Mr. J. Wiebe (Morse) moved second reading of Bill No. 03 – **An Act to change the name of Mennonite Brethren Church of Saskatchewan.**

Motion agreed to and bill read a second time.

Mr. W.J.G. Allen (Regina Rosemont) moved second reading of Bill No. 04 – **An Act to amend An Act to incorporate The Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association.**

Motion agreed to and bill read a second time.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTIONS FOR RETURN

Return No. 15

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Wipf that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 15 showing:

A list of all projects under the Department of Northern Saskatchewan with cost overruns for the period of January 1, 1974 to October 31, 1977 and the amount of cost overrun on each project.

And the proposed amendment thereto moved by the Hon. Mr. Bowerman:

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

A list of all tendered capital projects under the Department of Northern Saskatchewan with cost overruns for the period April 1, 1974 to October 31, 1977.

Hon. G. MacMurchy (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, I understand during the debate on this particular motion there was a concern with respect to the amendment. I would, therefore, like to amend the amendment further to provide the answer for the hon. member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake, that he has requested. The amendment would read as follows:

That the motion be further amended by adding to the amendment after the number '1977' the following:

And the amount of cost overrun on each project.

I so move, seconded by my seatmate the member for Saskatoon Nutana (Mr. Robbins).

Subamendment agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Resolution No. 7 – Migratory Birds Convention Act

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed resolution by Mr. Kowalchuk (Melville).

That this Assembly urges the federal government to fully accept its responsibilities under the Migratory Birds Convention Act and demands that the federal government take immediate action to initiate a program to compensate for migratory bird damage to Saskatchewan farmers' crops.

Mr. Wiebe: — Mr. Speaker, just a few brief remarks on this particular resolution. It is my intention to adjourn debate at the conclusion of them but I was rather interested in remarks made by Mr. Kowalchuk, the member for Melville, as well I was quite surprised, or I shouldn't say surprised, it is a normal thing — it appears — for members opposite when there is a province within the province of Saskatchewan that deals in any way with agriculture to try to shift the responsibility of solving that problem on to the federal government. Here again, in this particular resolution, they are calling on the federal government to solve that problem. Now there is no doubt that there is crop damage by livestock in the province of Saskatchewan from the migratory birds. There was mention made, in the member's remarks, about crop insurance. There was also mention made by the member for Moosomin (Mr. Birkbeck) regarding crop insurance. Well, crop insurance is the answer to the problem in regard to bird damage to farmer's livestock if it is handled correctly. Our present system of crop insurance does not adequately compensate farmers. The reason why it doesn't is because the farmer's crop entirely must be wiped out prior to any loss being paid to him. My recommendation to the government opposite and to the members of this Legislature is that crop insurance can

be used as a real avenue to adequately compensate farmers for losses caused to them by migratory birds and that is if the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance would allow spot losses the same as they do for hail to be applied to game bird damage.

What I am saying is that if a particular quarter section of wheat, part of it were damaged by wildlife, if they paid for that damage the same way as they would pay for that farmer's crop had it been hailed, he would receive adequate compensation according to the insurance level which he purchased for that particular crop. This would solve your problem. As well, you would be having financial help from Ottawa because as you know, Ottawa pays for 50 per cent of the premium of all crop insurance. Saskatchewan's responsibility is only to administer the particular program. By the province making representation to Ottawa and by making that particular change in the crop insurance program could solve this particular problem at no extra cost whatsoever to the province of Saskatchewan or to the taxpayers of this province and I am sure that the insurance coverage presently given under The Crop Insurance Act would adequately cover any claim that crop insurance may have for bird damage or any wildlife damage for that matter to particular crops.

I am sure that all members will realize that when you total up the total bill in one year of damage to farmers' crops by wildlife, the total amount in comparison to the total claims paid out by crop insurance is relatively minute so it would not necessitate a change in rate structure of crop insurance through the province of Saskatchewan.

I have other words which I would like to say in regard to this proposal and I beg leave at this time, Mr. Speaker, to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Revenue Supply and Services - Vote 18

Item 1 (cont'd)

Mr. G.H. Penner (Saskatoon Eastview): — I know that this is a question that has been pursued by other members in the past. The minister has had the weekend to consider and his department has had the weekend to consider the implications of the difference of the price of gas in the province of Alberta as compared to the province of Saskatchewan and to realize that the comments we have made in this caucus and I think that members to my left have made, can in no way be described as being sensational kinds of arguments. In fact we have a situation where, because of the tremendous difference in gasoline prices per gallon between Alberta and Saskatchewan, particularly as it applies to city of Lloydminster but also as it applies to other communities within a radius, if you like, of the Alberta border that it is going to take in many other communities and many other service stations, whether the minister and his department has been able to formulate (maybe formulate is too much to expect in a short period of time because it is not an easy problem to deal with) but begun to look at solutions for those service station operators on the Saskatchewan side of the border who are faced with the dilemma of going out of business.

Mr. Robbins: — Yes, we have begun to look at it. We are attempting to arrive at solutions which we think will be fair and reasonable and at the same time will protect our revenues as best we can.

Mr. Penner: — I wonder if the minister would be kind enough to elaborate a little bit for

us and not only for us, but for the people who are directly affected. I am sure that the member for Lloydminster would agree that there are many people whose livelihood, whose bread on the table, whose money to buy clothing for their children is at stake because they seriously are in a position of going out of business. I know the minister may not be able to give us all of the detail but would he give us some indication of what it is that he and his department are looking at in order to solve the problem and still retain as he says, the revenue to the province?

Mr. Robbins: — Well, as I have said before, Mr. Chairman, we are exploring the probabilities and they will be announced in due course.

Mr. R. Katzman (Rosthern): — A question to the hon. minister. In the Budget Speech that was delivered the other day, the minister responsible for delivering the Budget indicated that effective that evening, midnight, the tax collected would not be on 15 cents but would move to 26 cents. In other words, the first cent of education and health tax would move from 15 cents to 26 cents. Has that been done to this time yet?

Mr. Robbins: — No, that is April 1. It applies on April 1 and the tax would be applicable at 26 cent level instead of 50.

Mr. Katzman: — It says here at midnight, effective at midnight tonight, not April 1st in the Budget speech. I think you are referring to the Alcohol Beverage Tax, page 30 of the Budget Speech.

Mr. Robbins: — That's applicable to the Tobacco Tax at that time, the other changes in the E&H Tax become effective April 1st.

Mr. Katzman: — Well then, once again, the Budget Speech doesn't indicate that; it says, effective at midnight tonight, page 30, the second last paragraph.

Mr. Robbins: — They stand correct, the effective rate is at midnight of the night of the day the Budget Speech was given, but the notices have not gone out to the vendors as yet.

Mr. Katzman: — But I noticed that the notices for the cigarettes and everything else are out immediately and how come when there is a saving to the public, that the notice is not out? Is this an example of the new department's efficiency?

Mr. Robbins: — Because with regard to E&H Tax we have 23,000 vendors, with regard to the Tobacco Tax, we have 10 or 12 collectors.

Mr. Katzman: — Ya, but the saving to the people basically there is an unfair tax being collected today that you have cancelled and it's being collected because of your neglect of doing your job. Am I incorrect in that statement?

Mr. Robbins: — We believe the vendors read the Budget Speech and that they are not collecting from that time.

Mr. Katzman: — Well, I'm glad the minister mentioned that. On the weekend, I happened to go to approximately 60 stores just to check that point out. They are all still collecting the tax on the area of 15 cents to 26. They have not moved up as you are indicating.

Mr. Robbins: — I don't know whether you checked on the actual items that are being purchased in relation to it. Obviously the tax does not apply to edibles like chocolate bars, etcetera.

Mr. Katzman: — Woolworth's and those types of stores that sell, you know, the 10 and 15 cent stores, are the ones I went to check with and I am talking about stuff that is non edible, no no those type of stores.

Mr. Robbins: — Give us a list of the stores and we will check them out.

Mr. Katzman: — Well, what I am saying, give us a list you say, but you haven't done the job and you have been telling us all through revenue, that you are going to cause savings, but yet your job, you are now collecting an unfair tax and I am just wondering; you don't waste any time collecting a tax where you are benefiting, but where somebody else benefits, you are not giving them the break back; and my question is very simple here, is how long until you're going to get this enforced and how do the people . . . if you want to talk to one very close for the minister for Biggar who never gets to his constituency just go down to the Regina Inn, the Cigar Store, I checked with them this afternoon, they're still charging it. When will I be notified so that the people get the break that you've been promising them you haven't delivered on?

Mr. Chairman: — I think we could do with a little less assistance here from some of the members on both sides and let the ones that are interested in this ask the questions and the others answer them please.

Mr. Robbins: — The budget came down on March 7, this is March 28, that's three weeks. We had to print 23,000 documents, they're now going out in the mail.

Mr. McMillan: — I'd like to pursue with the minister the problem that has arisen as a result of the reduction in sales tax or tax on gasoline in Alberta. I understand that the method that you have used in the Lloydminster area in the past to alleviate the differential and price has been a rebate to the dealers of 9 cents a gallon. Is that correct?

Mr. Robbins: — That is correct.

Mr. McMillan: — Are you planning to continue that program as it now stands in the Lloydminster area only or are you planning to extend it to other areas in the province or are you planning to both extend it to other areas of the province and increase the rebate?

Mr. Robbins: — We are examining all the alternatives and it will be announced in due course.

Mr. McMillan: — Well, are you prepared to tell the retail merchants in the Lloydminster area if they could even expect the 9 cent rebate they've been getting to continue. I mean, obviously, you people know how much difficulty you have in making a business decision, more than most, but these people have to do their forward quarterly planning on the basis of the information that's available to them. Certainly, if they're going to have a 9 cent a gallon elimination of a rebate that could really have a lot to do with the kind of decisions that they're in a position to make. Are you prepared to let them know at this stage if that program will be continued?

Mr. Robbins: — Not until the new program is announced they'll continue as they are. The Alberta Budget was introduced, I believe, one week ago today, we can hardly be expected to know in advance what's going to happen out of Edmonton.

Mr. Katzman: — On Item 1, Mr. Speaker, for a moment, the minister promised to supply a list which would break down from which departments Government Services or Finance, that the money we're showing in Item 1 under 78 and 79 comes from to give us a breakout of where we'll come out of the other departments. Is he ready to furnish that yet?

Mr. Robbins: — If you're talking about positions I can give you this sheet. It shows exactly where the people came from and where they went to, and there's no increase in the number.

Mr. Katzman: — Does it show the amount of money that goes . . .

Mr. Robbins: — No, because as I mentioned previously when we were on the review of estimates the other day the Department of Finance this year there are items like \$4.5 million extra for the setting up of the new public employee's pension plan. There's \$1.9 million for Taylor Field, there's \$625,000 for, I believe, an insurance program that weren't in the budgets at all a year ago. We see about \$8.25 million there that automatically makes that change.

Mr. Katzman: — You can indicate that as a footnote I am certain and could you give us a breakdown, for example, under Item 1, it says 40 positions, X amount of dollars. It says in the footnote, under the footnote it says it comes from certain areas. I'd like to know which ones come from where, so when I get into the other departments where you have taken them out of I can find them.

Item 1 agreed.

ITEM 2

Mr. Katzman: — Once again, all you are giving me is the amount of bodies that are moved but you are not giving me the money that moves so that when we are doing government services estimates, I can, you know, check them against, there should be a reduction of so much here, and a reduction of so much there. That is not included in this.

Mr. W.A. Robbins: — Based on 1977-1978 appropriations from Finance Administration \$358,440, you've got that figure? From Taxation Administration \$297,080; from E&H Tax \$1,357,050; from Motive Fuel and Tobacco Tax \$543,330; from Succession Duty and Gift Tax \$252,970.

The next item is the transfer to the Automobile Accident insurance fund of three cents a gallon which is transferable in terms of insurance \$11,675,000.

The next item is International Aid, that is the Saskatchewan Council of International Co-operation with matching grants, \$1,250,000; from Government Services Administration \$39,710 Metric Co-ordination which we inherit from Government Services which is a federal program as you realize, \$71,710; from Central Services which is the Central Services out of former government services handling CVA vehicles, postage

and all other items \$2,339,740, and a grant to the Cafeteria Board of \$15,500 for a total of \$18,200,530. Now that compares to \$20,511,080 this year. We will give you all the increases and how they occurred. A large portion of that is in postage alone, \$1,250,000.

Mr. Birkbeck: — Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister might give me that figure in regard to the transfer for the metric conversion. I didn't get that figure, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Robbins: — It would be \$71,710.

Item 2 agreed.

Item 3 and 4 agreed.

ITEM 5

Mr. Katzman: — What are the extra two bodies for? You have moved from 32 to 34 positions?

Mr. Robbins: — It is a central sortation of mail because the federal government ceased to do this and we have to do it now as of April 1.

Mr. Katzman: — We are now sorting . . . in other words, all Government of Saskatchewan mail comes in a big box, and we now sort it?

Mr. Robbins: — We do the sortation, both in Saskatoon and Regina as of April 1. That's a ruling from the federal authority.

Mr. Katzman: — Do we still pay full postage rates?

Mr. Robbins: — You bet we do!

Mr. Katzman: — Do you mean that anybody who pays 14 cents delivery service to send us a letter, that letter does not get the same service from the federal government as what any other person would get because we are a government and we have to sort our own mail?

Mr. Robbins: — It just comes to the Government of Saskatchewan. We have to sort it for all buildings, it's exactly the same for every province in Canada.

Mr. Katzman: — Do we at least get it sorted as to Saskatoon, Regina, Swift Current and so forth, or is it Government of Saskatchewan, then we sort it?

Mr. Robbins: — Yes, they sort it to the cities. But then from there on, we have to distribute it to all the departments of government.

Mr. Katzman: — So that it means an extra body I assume in Saskatoon and an extra body in Regina? Where are they housed?

Mr. Robbins: — We don't have them until April 1, that's when the program starts.

Mr. Katzman: — Where are they going to be housed and is there going to be additional expenses incurred for other personal services for these people?

Mr. Robbins: — The building on 11th Avenue in Regina which is rented premises, but we hope to recover these extra costs, because there are extra costs in terms of sortation, with respect to the way we will deliver mail back and forth between Saskatoon and Regina through STC, instead of using Canada Post Office.

Mr. Katzman: — So what you are saying is, for intergovernmental mail between the cities now, because we have to do our own sorting, we are now going to use STC as a carrier for all our mail between Saskatoon and Regina. How about the rest of the province?

Mr. Robbins: — It is not feasible to do it to the other parts of the province since the economies of scale that apply between the two larger cities.

Mr. Katzman: — Well, let's get into that one just a little further then. We send mail out of here to Saskatoon on STC. I assume we will pre-sort it for the Saskatoon office or will we just lump it all in a bundle?

Mr. Robbins: — There will be some pre-sorting here but we haven't worked out all the logistics. Obviously some of those people will be working on sortation in Saskatoon as well.

Mr. Katzman: — When the mail strike was on awhile back, you had a system like this developed. You were running your mail back and forth — government mail. Did that prove to be a saving, other than going by Royal Mail?

Mr. Robbins: — I don't know whether I can give you a definitive answer on that at the present time, because we had to deploy people from other jobs to handle the mail as best we could. We believe there will be a saving effected in terms of that approach.

Mr. Katzman: — One other questions on this item. Would it not be cheaper, (because STC will only take a bundle of certain sizes of mail,) to go with a common carrier that goes back and forth every night that doesn't have a size restriction? In other words, STC will only take packages so big, there is a minimum charge, and so forth. Have you considered the other possibilities as well?

Mr. Robbins: — We have considered other alternatives and have come to the conclusion that STC is the most economical.

Mr. G.N. Wipf (Prince Albert-Duck Lake): — You say, Mr. Minister, you will recover some of these costs by a carrier system with STC. Do I take it then when you are sending mail from Regina to Saskatoon it will just go as a parcel and you will save on the postage. Is that how you say you will save?

Mr. Robbins: — Correct. Although we don't know how much until we have some experience with it.

Mr. Katzman: — Just one other question. Would you consider splitting your shipment to compare the costs by two different ways or have you done an economic study to prove that your STC is solid for this purpose?

Mr. Robbins: — We have done a good analysis of it over almost a full year because we

are the last province put in the position where we have to carry the sortation of mail.

Mr. Katzman: — Well, the only reason I ask is, all the tractor companies and those type of companies that have parts going back between Regina and Saskatoon all say it is cheaper to go by the carrier rather than STC and I have heard of Loomis and these types of people that run every night. They say they have proven it is cheaper and more efficient because of delivery to the door versus having to go to the bus depot to pick it up and all the other different things involved.

Mr. Robbins: — We have done an analysis of it. We are certainly willing to explore all probabilities because we are looking for the least cost solution.

Mr. Wipf: — Have you negotiated a special rate at all on this courier service with STC or is it the regular commercial rate that you will be paying?

Mr. Robbins: — We have negotiated a rate with them.

Mr. Katzman: — You have negotiated a special rate. Is it any different than what anybody else could do?

Mr. Robbins: — We don't know what other rates apply but it is a commercial rate which we are agreeable to use in terms of their services which we feel will be satisfactory and will keep costs down.

Mr. Katzman: — Commercial rates similar to what anybody else would get if they were looking for that type of thing?

Mr. Robbins: — As far as we know, yes.

Item 5 agreed to.

ITEM 6

Mr. Katzman: — Something is strange here - I think it must be a printing error. Your sheet shows two people on Education and Health Tax and you show 73 here. Should there be a 7 in front of the 2 on this sheet? It may be a typing error.

Mr. Robbins: — I don't know. Are you sure you are checking on the right line. The correct number of positions is 73.

Mr. Katzman: — It says two people – Education and Health Tax. Sorry, I apologize. There are two places (Education and Health Tax). There is 72 in one column and 2 in the other, so you have a decrease. Is that correct?

Mr. Robbins: — There were two transferred from Motive Fuel and Tobacco Tax to E&H Tax but the complement in E&H Tax was down by . . . a net reduction of one in actual numbers.

Item 6 agreed.

Item 7 agreed.

ITEM 8

March 28, 1978

Mr. Katzman: — Item 8, it shows you transferred, you've got four here and it shows there were six before. Could you tell me what happened to the other two?

Mr. Robbins: — Some positions were deleted, these were the people who worked in succession duty in gift tax and there's still some backlog to be handled there because some of those payments will be coming in over a number of years on a deferral basis but these people that are shown in revenue monitoring and miscellaneous revenue collection are the people who were working with succession duty and gift tax.

Mr. Katzman: — So basically you're telling me they're still over in the Department of Finance, I assume, and will remain there until their job sort of disappears.

Mr. Robbins: — There were 12 people working in Finance, we now have nine in Revenue. There's been a deletion of positions of three.

Mr. Katzman: — So basically, you're telling me you've done a saving by removing three people you've laid off, fired, got rid of, disposed or somehow got rid of three employees.

Mr. Robbins: — Vacant positions, nobody's been laid off.

Mr. Katzman: — Vacant positions? Positions budgeted for that you never filled in other works prior?

Mr. Robbins: — People secured other employment, they knew that the succession duty and gift tax thing was being run down or slowed down in terms of the work that was going into that particular field and they took other positions.

Mr. Katzman: — What you are saying then is because of that particular department is slowly going to disappear the normal death because you're not collecting them anymore so the people were bidding out and you were just putting the extra work on those remaining there, basically that's what you've done?

Mr. Robbins: — Work load was declining because we were seeking to collect succession duties and gift taxes but there's some carry over of that because people have a right to defer payments over a six year period.

Item 8 agreed.

Items 9 and 10 agreed.

ITEM 11

Mr. Katzman: — Could you tell me, it seems to me your figure is down for 1978-79 compared to what it was in 1977-78.

Mr. Robbins: — Adjustments for prior years. The estimates are made and they are never completely accurate as you will realize and so the adjustments for prior years have brought that figure down slightly.

Mr. Katzman: — So you are indicating that last year you had overestimated this item and therefore that's the reason for the reduction this year.

Mr. Robbins: — Yes, there would be some overestimation because there has been a tapering off in the consumption of fuel all across Canada in the last couple of years, to some degree, some decline. Our estimate was a bit too high, that's correct.

Mr. Katzman: — So you are saying on the three cents per gallon collected for SGIO to assist SGIO in their revenue the figure will be \$11,539,000 this year and that is the subsidy that you will be collecting on the gas for SGIO?

Mr. Robbins: — That's for the year starting April 1 right into March 31 next year. It's an estimate of course.

Item 11 agreed.

Item 12 agreed.

Revenue, Supply and Services Vote 18 agreed.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Katzman: — How will I take and move these figures, when they come under Revenue, Supply and Services now into last year's Estimates?

Mr. Robbins: — Because when the new department was set up — and you are covering two months in the current year to the end of March 31, 1978 — you cannot transfer money from one department to the other. You froze those funds in Finance and Government Services and you issued special warrants in terms of carrying those costs for the new department, for the two months in the current fiscal year.

Mr. Katzman: — So with that in mind, I am assuming that there should be a surplus of these amounts in the departments that you took over two months ago. They shouldn't even have used 12 months of their money, they should have only used 10.

Mr. Robbins: — . . . expended funds.

Mr. Katzman: — Once again, is there any way that you would recommend that we could flag these in such a way that the ministers could indicate it when we get into the various departments that they came out of?

Mr. Robbins: — I think you simply have to go back to each of those subvotes in the previous departments and check them out against it. I can't tell you exactly how you should do it. It is obvious that those expenditures did not occur in Finance and they did not occur in Government Services; they occurred for those two months in Revenue, Supply and Services.

Mr. Katzman: — Well, two years down the road, when I sit on the government side benches, in this House, there is going to be a book produced like this . . .

Mr. Cowley: — We are not sure . . .

Mr. Katzman: — If the member for Biggar (Mr. Cowley) wants to make comments like that, I am sure they are trying to get rid of you and nobody wants you. That is the reason you are still there.

March 28, 1978

Will there be some way of flagging when you put a 10 month period? Will it be indicated in Public Accounts in such a way that it can be spotted very quickly that it is a 10 month budget, not a 12?

Mr. Robbins: — Well, in Public Accounts the expenditures for 10 months will occur under Finance and under Government Services and for two months will appear under Revenue, Supply and Services. Obviously, you will simply have to look at the figures in conjunction one with the other.

Supplementaries agreed.

The Assembly adjourned until 7:00 o'clock p.m.