

April 18, 1978

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

On the Orders of the Day

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce through you and to this Assembly a group of 25 Grade Eight students who are situated in the east gallery. They are from the Rosetown Division 3 school. I believe this is the third group from that school to come through. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Williams, Raylene Formoneck and Miss McConnell.

I know that they have had a long trip down, Mr. Speaker. I'll be meeting with them at approximately 2:50, somewhere in that area. We are going to have our pictures taken and also some refreshments. I welcome this group to the Assembly we are very pleased to have you here and I am looking forward to meeting you after the question period today.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. N. VICKAR (Melfort): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you today and through you to the House, a group of 47 students from the Brunswick School in Melfort, one of the largest towns in Saskatchewan. They are accompanied today by their school teachers, Mrs. Byggdin and Mrs. Koroliuk and also the chaperons, Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Robertson with the bus driver, Lyle Cocks.

I had the opportunity to spend a few moments with them before lunch and I hope to do so again immediately after question period. I hope that they have had a good and informative morning. I look forward to meeting you this afternoon and have a safe journey home.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. S.J. CAMERON (Regina South): — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might introduce through you to members of the House the Grade Eight class from Grant Road school in my constituency, in the company of Mr. Short and Mr. Frytag. I know all members, Mr. Speaker, would want to welcome the class here. I look forward when we are finished question period at 2:30 to meeting with the class. We welcome you here.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. A. THIBAUT (Kinistino): — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the member for Prince Albert, Mr. Feschuk and Mr. Ted Bowerman, who are not here today, I want to welcome to this House members of the Prince Albert Unit No. 56, who are in the galleries. Mr. Herb McCloy, Mr. Murry Denise from Weirdale, Mr. Gene Cloaree from Spruce Home, Mary Skotheim from Spruce Home and Mr. Ken Scrivens from Weirdale. I hope that their stay will be a very informative one and I hope they will get a very good impression of the Legislature. I wish their stay here to be a pleasant one and bring home very pleasant memories. I want to wish them a very safe journey home.

April 18, 1978

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. J.A. PEPPER (Weyburn): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and bring to your attention and the members of the Assembly two special guests who are with us this afternoon, Mr. Walter Bourassa, Chief of Protocol for the government of Ontario and Miss Valerie Fontaine, co-ordinator of Protocol Services for the government of Ontario. I am sure that I am speaking, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all the members when we certainly wish them well on their visit here to our province of Saskatchewan and I would also say that I hope that their stay with us is very pleasant and enjoyable. I would ask Mr. Bourassa and Miss Valerie Fontaine to please stand.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

MR. N.H. MacAULEY (Cumberland): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome a group of students through you, six Community College students from La Ronge. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. M. Harvick. I hope they enjoy the proceedings here this afternoon and hope to see them later on today.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. G.N. WIPF (Prince Albert-Duck Lake): — Mr. Speaker, I would just like to welcome the members from School Unit 56, which happens to be one of the better school units in the province. I met with a couple of these members just before question period and I look forward to meeting with the other members of that group a little later on. Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. R. ROMANOW (Saskatoon Riversdale): — Mr. Speaker, it looks like today is the day for introduction of student visitors and I am pleased to also introduce a group of students that come from my riding of Saskatoon Riversdale. They belong to W.P. Bate School, Grade Seven and Grade Eight. I think there are 80 of them and they are seated in the west gallery over there. Is that W.P. Bate? No! There it is, sorry. I should have looked over here. I can see this tremendously good looking group right to my right, not that the other group isn't good looking, either! (Laughter). It is nice, Mr. Speaker, there is an absolutely stunning crowd we have here today. I also want to extend a welcome to the teachers, Mr. Gary McKenzie and E. Krahn. I am going to meet with the group around 2:45 this afternoon. Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Bill 22

MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Education. I see he is out of his desk. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, he was there, perhaps I can let the question go and come back and pick him up when he comes back in the House.

MR. W.H. STODALKA (Maple Creek): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier in the absence of the Minister of Education. I noted that he was at the meeting yesterday that took place between the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association and the trustees of the province. In quoting Mr. Byron Horner in an article that appeared in the Leader Post this morning, 'It was an indication that some progress has been made in the difficulties that existed between the Trustees Association and the government of Saskatchewan.' Would the Premier please indicate just what progress was made and particularly identify those areas in which there was some progress made?

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity only very, very briefly to skim the report in the Leader Post with respect to Mr. Horner. I would like to use this opportunity to correct one misreport there. The Minister of Education is reported to have said that the STF was hysterical. That is a total misconstruction. I was there and I know that no word or reasonable equivalent thereof was used and I want to correct that at the earliest opportunity.

With respect to the point asked by the hon. member, we discussed four or five areas. The preamble to the duties of teachers and the question of teaching or instructing and faithfully and diligently teaching or instructing was one area. Another discussion was on the issue of a binding board of reference for tenure teachers, if I may use that short cut, and whether or not a portion of, I think it is 221(b), was too widely phrased, and whether or not we could correct some of those concerns or deal with some of those concerns that they had. I do not have in my mind all of the items we covered but those were the chief ones. There was also an issue raised with respect to the powers of the board and whether a general statement, by way of preamble or otherwise, might be included to cover possible gaps in the listing of the powers of the board. I think we had a good exchange and that the government indicated that it would give close consideration to the points raised by the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association. We indicated that some of them looked to us to be ones whereby progress was likely and others whereby progress (from the point of view of the SSTA) was less likely. I think that I would not want to say more than that until we have had an opportunity to put our thoughts into the form of a House amendment wherein they may provide an opportunity for discussion.

MR. STODALKA: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I noticed the one area that is probably of greatest controversy did not really receive any comment by yourself, namely the matter of the principle of the binding award. Is the government still bound to that principle that any award will be binding?

MR. BLAKENEY: — The government is still of the opinion that the decision of the Board of Reference in the cases set out, and that is a series of sections from, I think, 217 to 230 approximately, should be binding on both parties.

MR. STODALKA: — A final supplementary to the Premier again. We have been suggesting that possibly there should be some appeal to any binding decision that may come about by a board of reference. Is the government giving any consideration to establishing some sort of an appeal mechanism, say to the courts?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I would not want to hold out any prospect that there is likely to be a change but we are considering whether or not it would be possible to provide some sort of a mechanism within the time constraints, which I think must operate if this procedure is to work. We are very much of the opinion that the procedure

must serve to deal with any dispute between teachers and trustees expeditiously and if it does not deal with it expeditiously then, however, fairly and justly in abstract terms it may deal with it it will not contribute to harmony between teachers and trustees. In applying those principles we do not know whether or not any appeal from the Board of Reference, any other appeal, is possible and still meet those objectives which we seek.

School of Agriculture

MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Education. This is off Bill 22, which may be of some relief to the minister.

Mr. Minister, on April 13 of this year, you had a delegation come to you from the School of Agriculture, from the University of Saskatchewan. There were four men, in fact. They met with you and their concern was the overlapping, or rather the extension through the Wascana Institute, actually the establishment of another School of Agriculture here in the South.

At the time you met with these four gentlemen they expressed their concern to you. At that particular time, as they have reported to me, you stated to them that you were unaware of the activities at Wascana Institute. That is my first question, Mr. Minister. Can you confirm or deny that particular statement?

HON. D.L. FARIS (Minister of Education): — Yes, I said no such thing. I told them — as a matter of fact they weren't formally representing the School of Agriculture, they were there from four different positions. They said that they hadn't had sufficient consultation and I said that I would take their position, which they very kindly put down on a piece of paper for me, to the department and see whether we could answer some of the questions which they were raising.

But in regard to not being aware, I said no such thing.

MR. BAILEY: — A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I notice and I have with me, Mr. Minister, a number of advertisements which you have placed, or the Department of Continuing Education has placed, and I understand that some of these people have, in fact, been hired. My question to you is this, are you aware of the ads which have appeared; are you aware of the fact that many of the programs, or all of the programs, which I have listed here are overlapping with the School of Agriculture in Saskatoon, and do you have the funds allocated to you under this Budget for the establishment of the second School of Agriculture?

MR. FARIS: — Well, certainly that is a very strange way to ask the question. Of course, we don't have funds for a second School of Agriculture. The gentlemen that I met with did not say that all of those courses were overlapping with things that they were offering. They suggested that, perhaps, some of them might be. They were concerned, for instance, about down the road whether those positions might lead to a duplication of research facilities, this kind of thing. I said that it was not my belief that that was necessarily the case at all.

Bill 22

MR. G.H. PENNER (Saskatoon Eastview): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Education, back to Bill 22. I understand that on Friday last the minister met with representatives of the Superintendents' Association in Saskatchewan; I wonder if the minister would indicate the concerns that were raised by those representatives with respect to Bill 22.

MR. FARIS: — They raised a number of concerns. I believe they sent a copy of their brief, which was not in every regard an official brief, some of the positions they took are not official positions of the association. But we had a very good discussion and interest reports by several of their members. They suggested that they had had a very good hearing.

MR. PENNER: — Mr. Speaker, by supplementary; please respond to the question. Would the minister indicate the areas of concern that were raised with him with regard to Bill 22?

MR. FARIS: — Mr. Speaker, if you want to have the information I am quite willing to table the letter which raises some of their concerns. There were full press reports on what they presented to me. I don't see that this is an urgent topic for question period.

Answer to question re Concrete Contract

HON. E.L. COWLEY (Provincial Secretary): — Mr. Speaker, last night the member for Moosomin (Mr. Birkbeck) asked a question with respect to a rumored \$300,000 cement contract let by the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

First of all, the contract was for 1,350 yards of cement at \$1.08 a yard or roughly \$147,000. The contract was awarded to a firm called Crushrite. Crushrite has facilities in Foxwarren, Manitoba and at Esterhazy in Saskatchewan. They plan to set up their manufacturing plant on the site in Rocanville and as far as I can determine the materials will all be purchased in Saskatchewan. The contract was awarded without tender, although the market was sampled and tested. The reason it was not formally tendered was because of the desire of the Corporation to get the work under way before the highway ban was imposed. Subject to the approval of the Potash Board there will be an additional 4,000 yards required for some additional outside storage facilities. This amount, if it is approved, will be formally tendered.

MR. R.L. COLLVER (Leader of Conservative Opposition): — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister advise the Assembly then why he would invite a Manitoba corporation or a Manitoba organization to tender for work that had formerly been provided by organizations that were Saskatchewan organizations that were already established in the area?

MR. COWLEY: — First of all, Mr. Speaker, the company in question operates both in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Secondly, I am advised that, for example, when the IMC mine was undergoing some expansions this firm was used by them on at least one occasion. Third, I am not advised as to any local firms that indicated any interest in this particular contract.

MR. COLLVER: — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister advise the Assembly then, why he would pick an organization that supposedly has a plant or a yard, I understand, in Esterhazy for a mine in Rocanville? Would the minister not agree that if the facility was available in Rocanville that there must of necessity be some economic benefit by the organization in Rocanville to provide the cement to the Rocanville mine or the former Sylvite mine rather than to go down the road to get the facilities of the so-called facilities of the Manitoba corporation in Esterhazy?

MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, first of all I am advised that there is no one in Rocanville.

Secondly, it is not a question of a facility, it's a question of concrete. The facility will be set up on site by whichever contractor it is on the mine property in Rocanville. The cement obviously will be purchased from somewhere. I doubt if it will be produced in either Esterhazy, Rocanville, Moosomin or anywhere locally there. I presume it will be acquired from somewhere, the gravel or the crushed rock will be used, etc., the additives will be purchased from various places and the water will probably be locally obtained.

Use of Saskatchewan Products

MR. W.C. THATCHER (Thunder Creek): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister in charge of Sask Housing Corporation. Yesterday, Mr. Minister, I believe you gave some misinformation to the House which I am sure you will wish to correct and that is that it was the Local Housing Authority that made basic decisions as far as subbing on construction jobs.

Mr. Minister, my question to you today is a matter that was brought to your attention yesterday and you took notice of, a contract for 102 senior citizens' units at Saskatoon and the kitchen contract which has subsequently been awarded. Can the minister tell me since it was not, as I am sure you now know, that it was not the Local Housing Authority that made the decision can the minister tell this Assembly today exactly who made this goof that prevented Saskatchewan based products from being accepted when they were low, was is the architect, was it NBS or was it the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation?

HON. W.E. SMISHEK (Minister of Finance): — Mr. Speaker, I still have not received a copy of yesterday's Hansard and therefore I do not have the answer for the hon. member until I am able to check out the details of the question. I am not able to answer his question today.

Cable TV

MR. E.F.A. MERCHANT (Regina Wascana): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister in charge of Sask Telecommunications regarding the schmozzle over SaskTel and cable. Would the minister indicate whether you have investigated the fact that the Chamber judge, the Queen's Bench judge has described Sask Tel's attitude as repugnant, said that he believes that Sask Tel was acting above the law? I ask the minister whether he does not believe that where Sask Tel is being described as acting in a repugnant manner that it is not an area where you, as the minister, should investigate the actions taken by Sask Tel and do something about it to extricate a hitherto well respected Crown corporation from this mess in which it is involving itself?

HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer that question and I would like to answer by first of all observing that I find it repugnant to say the least when you talk about the word repugnant - that a matter which is before the courts only as late as this morning and to the best of my information it is still before the Chambers court judge should be the subject of a debate and a question in this Legislature. I ask the member of the House who asked the question and all members of the House, to let the judge do the job, let the parties argue the case and let us await the decision of the courts before any decisions are taken in this regard. The members should know better.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I think the members should be quite clear about the rules which apply to a matter which is sub judice and . . . (Inaudible interjection). If the member for Indian Head-Wolseley wants to get up and made a point of order, he can make it later rather than upsetting the decorum of this House! (Inaudible interjection)..and I would caution the member for Wascana, the member for Wascana about getting into this area, or infringing in this area at all. Order!

MR. E.F.A. MERCHANT: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I ask either the minister in charge of Sask Telecommunications or the Hon. Mr. Romanow, whether there is any intention of Sask Tel rather than allowing what are now two court proceedings, one by CPN against Sask Tel and one by the various cable companies against Sask Tel, rather than allowing those to wend their way through the courts and probably result in damages being awarded against Sask Tel from both sides — whether there is any intention of Sask Tel to seek to negotiate to extricate itself from these proceedings which may very well result in serious damages being awarded against the people of this province from both sides?

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, I say again, the difficulty here is the one that the hon. member puts by way of his question. Notice this question, Mr. Speaker, 'probably damages will be awarded'. How is Sask Tel going to work itself out of this, if and when judgement comes. Mr. Speaker, I say with all due respect in giving the answer to the hon. member, no person can give an answer to those kinds of questions based on that kind of hypothesis and I say it shows a gross disrespect for the judicial process for the hon. member of the Liberal party to raise this matter today, when it is before the courts at this very moment!

SGIO Licence Plate Insurance Review

MR. G.N. WIPF (Prince Albert-Duck Lake): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister in charge of SGIO. Yesterday, I questioned you, Mr. Minister, on retroactive premiums back to 1974 for truckers in Saskatchewan, which you doubted. With the Speaker's indulgence, I will just read two lines here of a letter which says: 'Registered Notice' was forwarded to you on August 2, 1977, indicating that an additional assessment was required for the calendar years 1974, 1975 and 1976. You said you doubted that that had happened. Mr. Minister, the question is, would you have your department check the records in SGIO and see how many truckers in Saskatchewan have been assessed retroactive premiums on their licence and have the money refunded seeing as yesterday you said this was not a policy of your government.

HON. E.C. WHELAN (Minister of Consumer Affairs): — I have discussed this with the officials at SGIO and I think this is the kind of question that should be asked in Crown Corporations where you can make specific mention of who it is, give us the material so we can have a look at it. If the person registering the vehicle, and this could be the individual owner or it could be the people who are doing the registration and the issuing, could have made a mistake and the mistake will not show up until it goes into the computer and they may not have had it registered with the proper wheel base or the proper information going back two or three years. But as a general rule this is not the policy that they follow. They have assured me of that. You have got one individual case and if you give us the names we will dig it out or if you want to bring it to the Crown Corporations Committee we will be glad to give you all the details.

MR. WIPF: — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister I will be glad to supply

you with this letter; I will give you a copy of it. I ask that you check the records for all the people who were charged additional premiums under this. With this specific letter the guy fought back and they dropped it, they dropped the thing. But how many other truckers in Saskatchewan have been penalized by this retroactive legislation? I would like you to look that up and have the premiums returned to them.

MR. WHELAN:— I think everyone knows that this is a new procedure and we know that there are some errors made by individual people who fill out the forms, by the issuers; because it is an entirely new approach. At one time there were a large number of them. We anticipated this, but they have dropped off considerably. I would suggest that the hon. member could bring it directly to me, take it to the officials at the Motor Licence Division or take it to Crown Corporations Committee. This is not a proper question to be raised in the House. This is an individual case. You are asking me how many? You only have one as an example. You are asking me to supply how many there were. I don't think there are very many. Surely you are not measuring a tub full with a teaspoon full.

Legal Fees - CPN

MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Indian Head-Wolseley): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Attorney General in charge of the telecommunications in Saskatchewan. Would the minister indicate to me, seeing that CPN has not collected a five cent piece, except for the service charge for installation, who is paying the legal bills for CPN in their court case? Is it the taxpayers of Saskatchewan and their \$2.6 million loan?

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, CPN legal fees are being paid for by CPN out of the funds that CPN has negotiated through a loan by Northland Banks. That is presumably where the expense is going to be paid for legal fees.

May I say that Cable Regina is also one of the participants to this legal proceeding which is getting a great deal of political airing in this Chamber today, also a participant to this particular application. It too, has a loan guarantee with substantial funds of money and a guarantee which comes out of the government of Saskatchewan as well. It as well, has not been charged anything with respect to the Sask Tel operation. I am saying to the hon. member that CPN legal fees will be paid for by CPN out of the normal cost, the ordinary costs of doing business just like Cable Regina or any of the other participants involved in the matter.

MR. S.J. CAMERON (Regina South): — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary. I want to ask the minister a question which is not before the court. The question is, the undertaking by Sask Tel to clear Channel 3 was made by way of letter, signed by Gil McCormick; now, can you tell me whether the decision not to abide that undertaking given in February in writings, which is filed, was a decision made by Sask Tel or was that a decision made by the government? That question is not before the courts.

MR. ROMANOW: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I would submit to you and members of the House that indeed that is one of the issues, as I understand it, which is certainly peripherally before the courts, if not centrally. On the assumption that it is not a central issue to the court case — I think this question has been asked of me in the past and I have indicated, as the acting general manager of Sask Tel has indicated, whatever actions were taken by Sask Tel were taken by Sask Tel management.

MR. COLLVER: — Does the Attorney General believe that it is the job of the people of

Saskatchewan, through the government of Saskatchewan, to back one side against another in terms of a particular judicial dispute, by covering legal costs on behalf of that one side or the other?

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, I tell the hon. Leader of the PC Party that the government of Saskatchewan is not backing one side or the other by covering the legal expenses in this matter. I want to tell the Leader of the PC Party that there are, for example, two opposite groups in this operation. One, as an example, is Cable Regina. The same financial arrangements that the government of Saskatchewan has made to Cable Regina apply to the same financial arrangements that the government of Saskatchewan has made to CPN. Their parties are the operation. Saskatoon is a private operation. Those are two opposite people at two opposite ends. That is the nature of the loan guaranteed operation.

I know that the PCs and the Liberals would like to see CPN and any chance of rural television killed but they should not try to do it right here.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, I will take a new question. I will take the member for Moosomin.

Price Increase in Milk

MR. L.W. BIRKBECK (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question through you to the Minister of Agriculture responsible for the Milk Control Board. Mr. Minister, the chairman of the Milk Control Board, in a news release yesterday indicated a four per cent increase in the price of milk. The question I have to ask is, is there a decrease at the store per weight and volume of milk and an increase per weight and volume at home deliveries, and is this increase solely as a direct result of metric conversion?

HON. E. KAEDING (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, there is no increase in the actual price of milk in the actual milk itself. The increase is in the cost of the packaging which comes about as a result of the conversion to metrics. There are costs to the processors for the conversion and part of that is reflected in the cost of milk to date.

STATEMENT - Handicraft Display

HON. N. VICKAR (Minister of Industry and Commerce): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to have a moment of your time. Through you and to the House I would like to remind everybody that the Department of Industry and Commerce this afternoon has a display of handicraft in the lower rotunda of the Legislative building. I would like everybody to go down there and have a look at it, have a look at it with an open mind and an open wallet. Please visit the display.

MR. R.A. LARTER (Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the minister for having this display here. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you could do this throughout other areas of Saskatchewan and show Saskatchewan people what we have. I commend you for starting it and I wish you would place Estevan second on the list.

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. We can't allow answers on ministerial statements.

POINTS OF ORDER ON THE QUESTION PERIOD

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, before the orders of the day, I would like to ask your Honor to consider the propriety of some of the questions that were raised in question period. I will make my point very briefly. I refer, Mr. Speaker, to the interim report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures, dated March 12, 1976, page 10, point (i) dealing with the rules respecting question period:

Questions must not be asked which might prejudice a pending file in a court of law.

That is the direct quotation. Today, Mr. Speaker, this morning and this afternoon before Mr. Justice Ken MacLeod of the Court of Queen's Bench, there is a very lengthy and important court proceeding involving CPN, the various telecable companies and Sask Tel which was the subject of several questions during question period from the members of the opposition.

I would submit to you, sir, that these questions are out of order and highly inappropriate and I would ask that your Honor so rule once you have considered the matter.

MR. E.C. MALONE (Leader of the Liberal Opposition): — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am aware of the rule and the rule talks about matters prejudicial to a matter pending before the courts and I accept that rule, Mr. Speaker. We all do, but at the same time, Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is the duty of the opposition to pursue government policy and if government policy is to break contracts from Sask Tel and Cable Regina and other cable operators, it is our duty as opposition members to talk about that in this Legislature, which indeed is the highest court in the land.

Mr. Speaker, the questions that we asked today were not prejudicial in any way whatsoever to the matter before the courts. They were prejudicial to that government, Mr. Speaker, and that is why they are complaining so much about it.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order.

MR. COLLVER: — I am not prepared to comment on the questions from the members to my right but I cannot believe that the Attorney General is serious when he suggests that it is inappropriate for an opposition to ask who is paying the legal fees of an organization that is presently before the courts.

Ruling by Mr. Speaker.

He said: The member is debating a question that was asked earlier today rather than dealing with a point of order. Order, order! I think I have had sufficient guidance on this particular matter. Order! I have received a comment from each of the parties in the House and I think I want to deal with this particular matter right now. Order!

I want to say to the members of the House that this is a very serious matter and it is a matter that if the members of the House are going to err they should err on the side of not talking about something that is sub judice. It is difficult to tell at this time, not having acquainted myself with this particular case but I do want to take this opportunity to repeat a ruling which was given in this House at a previous time and it is as follows:

It appears that a clarification of a sub judice rule and its application is necessary. It is an established practice of parliamentary procedure that

matters awaiting or under adjudication in a court of law should not be referred to in any motion, or debate on a motion, or in any parliamentary question but the rule does not apply to bills. This prohibition is in effect in criminal cases from the time a charge is laid and in civil cases from the time a case has been set down for trial or otherwise brought before the court. Until the verdict and sentence have been announced in criminal cases or a judgment given in civil cases and again when notice of appeal is given until the appeal has been decided.

This citation is from Erskine May, Parliamentary Practice. 18th edition, pages 328, 362, 416 and 417 and Beauchesnes Parliamentary Rules and Forms, pages 127 to 129:

And further statements which reflect upon the decision of a court of law or casting imputations on any judicial proceedings are also out of order. The sub judice rule is based on two principles. The first, that the Legislative Assembly should take no action which might prejudice the right of citizens before the courts. The second principle is that the Assembly should not set itself up as a second or alternative forum for debate of matters already before another judicial body.

In view of this explanation of the particular rule, I think members should consider seriously questions that in any way come close to a subject which might be in any type of judicial proceeding.

MR. MERCHANT: — On a point of order, I wonder if I might obtain further information from you regarding your ruling. Firstly, I would ask why if this matter is of such pressing importance that on the three occasions when we sought to have a priority of debate, the priority of debate was refused and I ask that of you, Mr. Speaker. Secondly, I ask, Mr. Speaker, how it comes to be that Mr. Speaker had prepared in advance a written decision about these matters?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MERCHANT: — Thirdly, I ask, Mr. Speaker, if he would not better read page 417 which, as you indicated said, 'When the matter is set down for trial,' and perhaps continue your consultations with the Attorney General and discover that setting down for trial has not happened in either action.

MR. SPEAKER: — Now that the member for Wascana has finished with his imputations on the Chair, I will reply to the member. It was clear and the record will show that the member for Wascana cast imputations on the Chair, very clearly, at least three times. The member asked why a priority of debate was not granted? The member for Wascana should have asked about that when the matter arose and I think it was dealt with at that time. The matter of priority of debate was dealt with when the matter was raised. The member for Wascana asked why I happen to have a statement in my hand. It is because I have a very efficient staff who keep the rulings right there before me and happen to bring forward this ruling which was given at another time. I reject categorically the suggestion by the member for Wascana that I discussed this matter with the Attorney General or with any member of the Executive Council or any member sitting to my right.

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I categorically deny that and I ask the member at this time to withdraw that.

MR. MERCHANT: — I withdraw.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Speaker, in light of your ruling, I would like to pose a question or two to you regarding the manner in which you have allowed a similar situation to proceed at various times in the Assembly. The Attorney General has made reference or has believed that we should not be discussing matters which are before the court and I accept your ruling, Mr. Speaker. But I would like to question you; why when there was another matter before the courts involving the member for Nipawin which is no longer there, Mr. Speaker, freely allowed members from the government side and this side to freely make references to this . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! The member is strictly out of order. If there was something of that nature raised in this House then the member should have — if he was concerned about it — he should have raised it at that time. If it was raised at that time it would have been dealt with at that time. It is unfortunate that the member is now bringing forward something that should have been dealt with some time ago in my view and in the view, I think, of the rule books of this Assembly.

MR. CAMERON: — Mr. Speaker, I have a question now on three occasions in the House; it is an important question. The question is, whether it was a decision of Sask Tel not to clear channel 3 as was provided for in the letter filed in the House or whether that was a decision of the government? The government of Saskatchewan is not a party to the action before the courts. My question, therefore, is not a question that the members opposite can answer sub judice in respect of, yet that has happened on two occasions. I want to ask Mr. Speaker to rule whether the Minister in charge of Telephones and the Minister in charge of Communications who have twice denied me the answer to that question are right in doing so relying upon the suggestion that that is a matter before the court, when I say the government's decision is quite a different matter from the decision of Sask Tel and the government is not a party to that action only Sask Tel is.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I think it is unnecessary to have too much applause on points of order. I would suggest to the member for Regina South that I appreciate his position, having been in the opposition myself at one time and not having questions answered to me when I put them to the government. However, that is the way the question period operates. A member puts a question and the government may answer the question, not answer the question, refer it or give some answer which the member considers to be a non-answer. Regardless of how the member answers the question it is not my problem. It is a problem that exists in the system that we have adopted, namely that the ministers can answer the questions or they can ignore them or they can take them as notice or they can refer them. There are all kinds of ways in which it can be dealt with and the members of the Executive Council choose whichever way they think is appropriate.

MR. COLLVER: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to on a point of order ask you to invite your very efficient staff to go back over the last two years on the rulings made by Mr. Speaker when raised on a matter of point of order, when raised on a matter of point of privilege by myself with reference to a matter that was before the courts by myself on behalf of statements made by the hon. members opposite and I invite you to examine the rulings of the Chair at that time and compare them to the ruling today.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I don't think that is my responsibility to go back over the

rulings that have happened in the House. If the member for Nipawin is concerned about them, I am sure he has a very efficient staff too, and they would be pleased to go back over the record and examine it. That is not my responsibility.

MR. MacDONALD: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I would like to bring two facts before your attention. Mr. Speaker, on the question for the member for Wascana, I would have been glad to accept your ruling, but not the ruling of the Attorney General. The member for Wascana asked the question, Mr. Speaker, you remained in your seat; you made no ruling that it was prejudicial. It was the Attorney General who stood on his feet and said it was prejudicial. That is the first point, Mr. Speaker.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Hear, hear!

The second thing, Mr. Speaker, is that we have now had a question of the potash in Saskatchewan and the oil in Saskatchewan before the courts for the last three or four years. Are you or the Attorney General to suggest that on something as important as that to the province of Saskatchewan, the members of the opposition can ask no questions?

MR. SPEAKER: — Well, the member for Wascana was asking a question which someone thought was not proper to ask at this time and — Order, order! I cannot make my decisions until I hear all of the question asked and until I hear some point of order raised. I do not judge points of order before they are raised. The point was raised, apparently by the Attorney General, that he thought there was a point of order there and that he was not prepared to answer the question because he felt it was an improper question at this time because of proceedings before a judicial proceeding. Now the member for Indian Head-Wolseley had a second question. It just slipped my mind what it was . . . Oh yes, during the potash and oil issues that were before the courts, the members had all kinds of opportunities as stated in the ruling. This rule does not apply to bills and the members had all kinds of opportunities to discuss the bills that were before the House on those two particular issues and, in fact, I believe asked many questions on potash and oil when those particular matters were before the courts; but it was the judgement at the time that they were not sub judice, consequently the questions went ahead.

MR. COLLVER: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask you a question. Since the Attorney General and the Premier have announced that CPN was going to be used as an educational channel, and since the —

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! What is the point of order? I want you to get to the point of order directly.

MR. COLLVER: — My point of order —

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! I want the member to get to the point of order without making a political argument before the point of order.

MR. COLLVER: — Mr. Speaker, my point of order is quite simply this. You have stated that when it is a bill before the Legislature, questions are satisfactory, pertaining to that issue, even though the matter is before the courts. You just said it. I am saying that, since CPN is an educational channel, The Education Act is before the people of Saskatchewan and we are entitled to ask questions about that act.

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MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! Order! I asked the members to bring themselves into order. There are no questions put by members — What is the point of order?

MR. MERCHANT: — I asked you, Mr. Speaker, if you would examine the record and I believe that after I asked the question and the hon. Attorney General chose to answer the question for the Minister of Sask Tel, the record will clearly show that the hon. Attorney General was raising a point of order in question period, to which you then responded, and I ask Mr. Speaker this question. How can we be given the right to raise points of order in question period if obviously Cabinet Ministers are able to raise points or order under the guise of answering a question? That is what he did and then you responded to that point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: — Well, it is unfortunate that members do all kinds of things under the guise of asking questions and answering them. That is unfortunate and I might say, in response to the member for Wascana, that I did not respond to the matter and the record will show it. The Attorney General said I do not intend to answer the question because it is out of order and because it is sub judice, or words to that effect.

AN HON. MEMBER: — He did not say that.

MR. SPEAKER: — Well, the record will show it and the member for Wascana can read as well as I can.

MOTIONS FOR RETURN

Return No. 21

MR. E.F.A. MERCHANT (Regina Wascana) moved that an Order of the Assembly do issue for a Return No. 21 showing:

- (a) The administrative cost for each fiscal year of the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan since its establishment.
- (b) Cost control studies done within the Government regarding the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan.
- (c) Studies of the system by which drugs are selected for the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan.
- (d) Studies regarding mega-vitamin treatment resulting in the refusal by the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan to allow high dosage tablets of mega-vitamins to be covered by the Plan.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is a Motion for Return debatable seeking certain information. The questions will not take long. They are a matter of significance and importance but unfortunately of importance to a small percentage of the population. As the questions will demonstrate, I seek information regarding the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan, questions about the process by which drugs are included

with the plan, and the cost of administering the plan. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, and through these questions, that the process by which drugs are included under the Prescription Drug Plan is not sufficiently tolerant of differences of opinion among doctors. It is not sufficiently tolerant of the views of the minority. The process of including a drug under the formulary imposes the views of the majority of the doctors upon the minority and their patients. The best example and I refer to it specifically in the question is the mega-vitamin question. Mega-vitamins are prescribed by doctors in large numbers, for two forms of treatment, yet nonetheless to date the majority of doctors do not agree with the use of megavitamins in those ways. Approximately 2,000 North American physicians now prescribe mega-vitamin treatment, particularly niacin and niacinimide as a cure for schizophrenia. The dosages prescribed are not covered under the drug plan. The work was pioneered in Saskatchewan by Dr. Hoffer in Saskatoon. Mega-vitamins have been prescribed as a cure for certain forms of schizophrenia since the early 50's, yet are not covered under the drug plan.

Secondly, mega-vitamin treatment in large dosages is prescribed by a large number of American and Canadian doctors (including a large number of doctors in Saskatchewan) as a means of arresting, and it is alleged, reversing the symptoms of multiple sclerosis. The prescription of mega-vitamin treatment has been going on for many years, notwithstanding this wide use, mega-vitamins are not available under the Saskatchewan Drug Plan because, at this time at least, a majority of doctors still remain to be convinced that it is a valid treatment for schizophrenia or MS. The drug plan, as I said before, improperly imposes the majority view on the minority, even though many of the minority are respected doctors practising their profession in this province.

Where should the government fit into the dispute, is really the question. The public purse is acting as the insurer against the cost of drugs. The Prescription Drug Plan is not qualified nor I say, should it claim to be qualified, to be judge whether a treatment is valid. Yet government purports to make value judgments when it should not. There is a very real need for a review of the system by which drugs receive coverage under the drug plan and that review is the first purpose of this motion and these questions.

The second purpose is to discover and seek further information about the cost and operation of the Prescription Drug Plan as a whole. As has been said in the past, Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba drug plan brought in by the sister NDP government, provides broader coverage and provides broader coverage at less expense. It is superior in the sense that it costs major users of drugs less than our plan and therefore tends to cost the elderly, who are in need most of assistance, less than our plan. It is also superior because it is much cheaper to operate in an administrative sense, than our plan. The Manitoba plan pays 80 per cent of all prescription drug charges over \$50 per year for a person or a family unit. That works better for the elderly than our plan. Yet in 1976, the most recent year of figures, the Manitoba plan cost in administration, a mere \$4.4 million with a comparable population of that of Saskatchewan. Our figures for the administration of our plan clearly demonstrate that it is a far more costly plan to operate. Now, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the drug plan in this province should be re-examined — that is the area to which these questions address themselves. The Executive Director of the Manitoba Pharmacare program has himself, even though he was then an assistant to an NDP Premier, been very critical of the Saskatchewan plan, speaking at a conference in Portugal held in April of 1977, Mr. Chartier very clearly indicated that the Saskatchewan plan was deficient, and one wonders, Mr. Speaker, why Saskatchewan would not have followed with the more effective, yet less expensive Manitoba program than to proceed with the program that we are using.

Now, Mr. Speaker, with those few comments and stressing particularly the megavitamin question and the question of the means by which drugs get onto our program, I seek the answers to the questions showing in Return No. 21, seconded by the hon. member for Shaunavon.

HON. E. TCHORZEWSKI (Minister of Health): — Mr. Speaker, first of all let me say that I certainly would be most pleased to provide for the member opposite and the House information on the administrative costs of the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan and other matters which the member refers to in his motion.

I am going to amend the resolution in order that I may more adequately provide him with that information. I am sure that he will accept the amendment because I know that he is interested in, for example, the administrative costs for each fiscal year of the Saskatchewan Drug Plan, as he asks, also the kind of cost control measures used by the government regarding the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan.

The thrust of my amendment will be to deal with that kind of a question in order that I can provide the appropriate answer. I want to say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that although the members opposite often have been heard to complain about the cost of the Saskatchewan plan and compare it to the Manitoba plan, they do so without really honestly making a correct comparison. I just want to use an example and indicate to the member for Wascana that the Saskatchewan drug plan for administration purposes, costs about 44 cents per prescription. If he wants to take a look at another example on the other side of this province in Alberta where I think the Blue Cross or the Green Cross provides the program for the Alberta government to the extent that they have it, the administrative cost of that private enterprise operation is 70 cents per prescription. So if the member wants to get into a debate on what is more efficient, the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan which is universal or a plan like they have in Alberta, I am prepared to debate him on that issue at any time and in any place.

Now, the members opposite, including the member for Wascana, have been heard to often argue about the Manitoba drug plan and the Saskatchewan drug plan and compare costs. Well I want to show, Mr. Speaker, why I have said that they are playing politics by not providing all of the information about the Manitoba plan and only providing some selective information to suit their purposes. The claim that the Manitoba drug plan consistently costs one-third of the Saskatchewan plan as the member opposite makes is just not valid. I have indicated, however, that the two programs are not directly comparable as I have in my estimates on other occasions, because the Saskatchewan drug plan includes costs which are not included in the Manitoba pharmacare budget. A more accurate estimate of the cost of drug benefits in Manitoba for 1976 would include the \$5.4 million for pharmacare plus the \$2.2 million paid for drugs used by welfare recipients and \$2.1 million for nursing home residents. This would bring the total Manitoba expenditure for drugs to \$9.7 million for 1976 and not the figure that the member uses and this sum does not include administrative costs or the costs of special benefits provided to people with diseases such as diabetes and cystic fibrosis. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it should be very clear that the cost of the Saskatchewan plan compares very closely and very favorably with the Manitoba plan and at the same time provides services to a larger number of Saskatchewan families, 337,000 as compared to 65,000 or 67,000 in Manitoba. Now, if the member wants to ask the question which he does about the administration costs of the Prescription Drug Plan in Saskatchewan I am most happy to provide it to him because maybe it will enlighten him enough so that he will understand what the right figures and right statistics are. I don't want to belabor this debate, Mr. Speaker. I have

spoken on this on many occasions before. I just want to mention one other point because I think it is of particular significance and importance.

The members talk about the way the drugs are put on the Saskatchewan formulary. I want to say that we have a formulary committee and that that formulary committee determines whether the drugs are therapeutically effective and of high quality. I think that that's a very good objective. The thing that the member doesn't mention is that this formulary committee has representation from all of the expertise that may be involved with the prescribing of drugs and the dispensing of drugs. On this formulary committee - and I wish he was here to listen so that he would learn but maybe the member for Wilkie will inform him, I'm sure - but on this formulary committee there is representation, for example, from the Saskatchewan Medical Association. The member chose not to make any reference to that at all. On the formulary committee, Mr. Speaker, there is membership from the Saskatchewan Pharmaceutical Association and other such areas of expertise. That is the committee which determines whether drugs that are going to be put on the formulary are of the kind of therapeutic value so that they should be included in the plan and so there is a constant review that takes place. The member makes the point, he says that somehow the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan imposes certain judgments and decisions on the minority, that somehow the majority of the medical profession in the province through the Saskatchewan Drug Plan dictate to the minority who may have some different views on some specific drugs. Well, I want to say, Mr. Speaker, and make it very clear that that is just not true and the member knows it. If all he is trying to do in his remarks is to try to make a political point in the hope that somehow it will give him a little line in the newspaper somewhere and I notice he is outside in the hallway having an interview in front of the TV right now. That's perfectly O.K., or radio, I'm sorry.

AN HON. MEMBER: — He looks better on radio.

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, the drug plan in no way imposes on any physician that he must prescribe a certain particular drug. That is the right of the physician who ought to know what he wants to prescribe. The drug plan provides certain drugs for which coverage is provided but it does not indicate to the physician what drugs he should prescribe. There is even a further provision in the plan that if the prescribing physician feels that in the case of his specific patient there is a need for a particular drug that is not in the formulary, he can write in and apply for an exemption and it is provided if he can show that there is good reason for it. So there should be no question about what the member raises of interference with the judgment of a physician in prescribing because that's just not true and the member knows it.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to take too much time. The member asked the question and when I provide the answer I am sure that it will answer the questions he had. Unfortunately, by the time we do it because it will take some time, he likely won't be here but I am sure one of his colleagues will get it to him so that he is able to read it when he has gone back to his law practice at full time. So, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member for Nutana (Mr. Robbins) I move:

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

(a) the administrative costs for each fiscal year of the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan since its establishment;

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(b) the cost control measures used by the government regarding the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan;

(c) the system by which drugs are selected for the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan;

(d) studies regarding megavitamin treatment resulting in their refusal by the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan to allow high dosage tablets of megavitamins to be covered by the plan.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

MISS L.B. CLIFFORD (Wilkie): — Mr. Speaker, will the member answer a question before he sits down. Would you table the number of exemptions that have been applied for and the number that have been granted?

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — If you like, I can provide them for you, if you want you can put them on the order paper but I think we can probably arrange that, yes.

The debate continues on the motion and the amendment.

MR. MERCHANT: — Mr. Speaker, the changes are so minimal I am having trouble seeing them. Mr. Speaker, I rise only to say one further thing in an area that the minister suggests that there is freedom for doctors to prescribe treatments that they think appropriate; and that just isn't the case. There are certain areas where the majority of the medical view is imposed on the minority of medical view and you can't describe it in any other way.

Abram Hoffer for instance, he feels himself and the psychiatrists who are of his view in the treatment of schizophrenia, Abram Hoffer feels himself virtually driven out of the province of Saskatchewan because of the refusal of this government to provide funding for certain kinds of treatment which he considers to be appropriate. Yet, Mr. Speaker, in other forms of highly questionable care, shock treatment for instance, where the majority of psychiatrists think shock treatment is a good thing the minority don't, even though that is the new treatment and that is an exceptional treatment in the sense that it imposes high voltage treatment to people. In that area where the majority falls on one side, the government doesn't say, 'well we will go to the root of caution', no the government says, 'if the majority thinks that is all right, we will pay for it.' So over the question of megavitamin treatment and that is the example to which I address myself, megavitamin treatment for the treatment of schizophrenia, megavitamin treatment for the treatment of MS, the government says, No.

Mr. Speaker, other than that the amendment appears to me to give the information that is required.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Return No. 22

MR. E.F.A. MERCHANT (Regina Wascana) moved that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 22 showing:

(1) The requirement imposed on hospitals, penal institutions, nursing

homes, and special care homes, within the Province of Saskatchewan, regarding the use of fire resistant bedding materials. (2) The funding being considered to assist in the transition in hospitals, penal institutions, nursing homes, and special care homes, to facilitate the replacement of current bedding materials with appropriate fire resistant bedding materials in those establishments.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is another area of narrow but important significance. The question deals with a matter which I suggest requires the immediate attention of the government. It is a matter which puts a number of lives in jeopardy and it is something where I think the government should act. We have seen in the last few years in various provinces across Canada, the occurrence of suffocations in institutions, people dying from fire and I say that we should act on that because we are, in fact, putting in jeopardy quite a number of people in our old folks homes, in our penitentiaries, in our correctional institutes, in our hospitals and so on. The problem that I see, Mr. Speaker, is that we are not moving as the question requires to ensure that our various institutions where people cannot move quickly, either because of ill health or bars, that they are unable in those areas where they can't get out quickly that they are protected from suffocation.

The interesting thing about our fire precautions is that most of the people who are killed in those kinds of fires are killed not as a result of fire directly burning them but, in fact, suffocation. That is the reason that I, by implication, suggest in these questions that we should include in our legislation regarding nursing homes and hospitals and the like, a requirement naming the type of material used for mattresses and pillows or at a minimum the standard that will be required. The product that should be used is a product called Staphcheck(?). It is a material made from polyvinyl chloride. Unfortunately Staphcheck(?) is a product made only in the United States. There are no fireproof tickings made in Canada but our government should, I believe, nonetheless, compel the use of Staphcheck(?) or a comparable product, when it is developed.

I envisage, Mr. Speaker, that if the minister examines this question and, as a result of the response to the questions that are posed here, if he then agrees with my view he might be prepared to bring forward general legislation which would, through allowing some flexibility through the use of regulations, urge that the institutions I have named move quickly to require the use of Staphcheck(?) or a like material.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the second part of the resolution addresses itself to the question of the cost that will be involved. Since hospitals and penal institutions are government run, I suppose this part of the resolution for them is of little significance; but for nursing homes and old people's homes and those kinds of institutions, there is a cost question that has to be overcome. The cost of those establishments of putting in new mattresses and ticking and pillows, and so on, could be high. Old people's homes are principally run by eleemosynary organizations of one sort or another and I believe they should not be expected to pick up that additional expense.

Grants, I suggest, to those kinds of establishments, should be made to cover the cost of the transition. The government should, in general, be encouraging a more general use of fire resistant bedding materials and should do that through financial assistance. I say, in that regard, that even if the government is not prepared to move, the best way to advertise the use of fire resistant materials throughout would be for the government to provide some leadership in the institutions that the government now runs. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I ask for the information contained in Return No. 22, seconded by my

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seatmate, the member for Morse.

HON. H.H. ROLFES (Minister of Social Services): — Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me say that I did not have an opportunity to examine the motion before us, having only seen it just previous to coming into the House, so I am not sure whether or not I can provide the answers but I think we can.

The member, I believe, makes several good points in the motion before us, however I do want to caution the member that it is rather difficult to pass legislation, and consequently, regulations, and then say well let us be flexible. If you are going to be flexible, as he well knows, then you don't have any regulations. You cannot say yes to one home and no to another home. I do want to say to the member for Wascana that lately I have had three petitions, three petitions from special care homes that are simply saying that our fire regulations are too stringent. I am not saying that I agree with those people from those special care homes. I think the member makes a good point when he says that we must protect those people who might find themselves in the position of not being able to move rapidly in case there are fires.

I cannot recollect, Mr. Speaker, I may be wrong on this, but I cannot recollect that any person in Saskatchewan in a special care home or in a nursing home has suffered because of —

MR. MERCHANT: — Wrong about Canada.

MR. ROLFES: — No, I did not say Canada. Here in Saskatchewan! Certainly in Canada I recall, in Newfoundland, a very serious case. I am saying in Saskatchewan. I may be wrong, but I cannot recall any particular case but that does not mean that we should not examine what the member is saying.

I do want to say again, Mr. Speaker, that often in this House the members opposite will accuse the government of extravagant spending, saying yes you increased your budget again. I know that you have got a good cause but so does everybody else on that side of the House, and when you add them all together there are hundreds of thousands of dollars involved. And I think at the same time I am not opposing what you are suggesting but I think there is also some responsibility on your side then and on your part, to say to the public, Yes, sometimes a government has to spend these moneys because I ask them to expend those moneys and not go around on the one hand and say, well you know, I demanded this of them, but its that government over there that is increasing the budget. You can't do that and be a responsible citizen. I just wanted to point that out to the member that to be fair to us I think he would then go out and say to the people also, Yes I asked them to spend some extra dollars and this is how much. All the things that I requested them to do, and they accommodated me in doing so, cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars. I just say to the member that I wanted to have an opportunity to look at the motion in more detail and see if I can then provide him with the answers, therefore Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 14 - Federal Crown Corporations

MR. R.N. NELSON (Yorkton) moved

That this Assembly urge the Government of Canada to establish a crown corporations committee similar to the Saskatchewan committee so that the business of all federal crown corporations may be effectively examined and controlled.

MR. E.F.A. MERCHANT: — How on earth can Resolution No. 14 be in order to examine the business of the federal Crown corporations? Can I introduce tomorrow a resolution to examine the business of the British Columbia Crown corporations? Or perhaps, the Tanzanian Crown corporations? I am fascinated by the Crown corporations in Tanzania.

MR. SPEAKER: — Are there any further comments on the orderliness of Resolution No. 14?

MR. MALONE: — Mr. Speaker, I know a wide latitude is given to resolutions of members in private members day and I must say, I am sympathetic to what the member is getting at with the resolution but what conceivable use is this resolution in this House? What can this House do to make this resolution effective? I suggest to you that the resolution should be launched by one of his colleagues in the House of Commons in Ottawa, where it would have a more meaningful role to be placed, in that this House can really do nothing about the situation in Ottawa. I believe also, Mr. Speaker, is there not a general rule that Legislatures do not comment on the rules of other Legislatures — that it is deemed improper to do so?

MR. SPEAKER: — The question was raised in regard to whether Resolution No. 14 is in order. Resolution No. 14 does not have to do with the rules so, therefore, we are not commenting on the rules of another jurisdiction. Resolution No. 14, has, as I understand it here, embodied in it the expression of opinion of the member for Yorkton that we urge the government of Canada to do something, and I recall in the past that many, many resolutions have crossed this Assembly's deliberations, urging the government of Canada to do certain things and urging this government to do certain things. I think the member asked how that could affect the government in Ottawa. I think that if the Assembly were to reject it outright, then it would cause the government of Canada to probably not notice what happened and if, in fact, they were to adopt it unanimously, as they have done in the past with other resolutions, then I think the government of Canada it may have some effect on them. Probably the member for Yorkton is speculating that he thinks this might have some effect on the government of Canada.

MR. NELSON (Yorkton): — Thank you very much for your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I certainly appreciate that. Let me say in respect to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, that the federal Crown corporations belong to all of the people across Canada; they belong to the people of Saskatchewan. I think it behoves us in this Assembly to do all that we can to urge a businesslike examination of the business that is being done by the federal Crown corporations which are owned by the people of Saskatchewan, as well as by the people all across Canada.

Now I have been, Mr. Speaker, a member of the provincial Crown Corporations Committee since I have been a member in this House and I have seen some very valuable contributions that that committee has made, both to the Crown corporations themselves and to the people of Saskatchewan. I would like to see that that same contribution carried out by a federal Crown corporations committee. I think it is only fair and fitting that the federal Crown corporations should be put on a good business

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basis, and by activating a committee to examine all federal Crown corporations and their affiliates and subsidiaries, certainly a great service would be done to the people of Canada and I would like to prove that in the statement that I have to make in regard to this.

Members here, Mr. Speaker, should realize that the Saskatchewan Crown Corporations Committee was set up in the year 1946 by the T.C. Douglas government of the day. Now the purpose of this committee then and now, is to have a careful examination of the business activities of the Crown corporations. In this committee, we, the representatives of the shareholders of those Crown corporations have the right and duty to examine the reports of the Crown corporations owned in common by the people of this province. The people of Canada deserve to have the same careful consideration given to the Crown corporations at the federal level.

Every one of the three years that I have been on that committee, I have heard members opposite make great noises about expanding the scope of the Crown Corporations Committee. I would like to deal a bit now with the make-up of that committee to show why it is working so well for the people of Saskatchewan and why it should be adopted and carried forward at the federal level.

Now, we in Saskatchewan as I have said, have pioneered the Crown Corporations Committee in this province. First of all, Mr. Speaker, annual reports of the Crown corporations are tabled in the Legislature and if there is a subsidiary to any of those Crown corporations, that subsidiary is also scrutinized to the extent that the opposition critics wish. As long as the opposition wishes to probe, it may carry on the investigation. Naturally there are certain limits to the questioning. One cannot reasonably expect to receive answers to questions that would be detrimental to business operations of the Crown corporations being examined. One could not expect for example, to ask for lists of customers and the prices received by the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. Such lists would only aid the competitors of the corporation and be detrimental to the people of Saskatchewan. The same should hold true for a federal Crown corporations committee. No one in his right mind would reasonably expect to ask and get answers to such questions, although members opposite certainly do ask such questions.

Naturally too, Mr. Speaker, the examination of those annual reports should have a businesslike approach. Everyone knows that all private corporations from General Motors to the smallest corporation issue an annual report. Everyone who knows anything about business that is, knows that it is the annual report that is discussed at the shareholders' meeting. Naturally if a Crown Corporations Committee is to be businesslike in its operations, that committee should deal with the annual report. You could well imagine the snort of disdain from an executive in the private corporate sector, if a shareholder should ask for the revelation of plans for future or present sales policy. You may be sure that any such shareholder who dared to ask such a question about sales policy would be told in no uncertain terms that there were

people who were hired to run the corporation this year, and there is no way that valuable information would be laid on the table for competing companies to view. It is irresponsible to even ask that such information should be given. It is because I want to see this business like approach applied to the federal Crown corporations that I am proposing this motion.

Now before 1944, Mr. Speaker, there were only two public enterprises in Saskatchewan. They were the provincial telephone utilities set up in 1908, and there was a small power utility organized in 1929. They became the Saskatchewan Government Telephones in 1947 and the Sask Power Corporation in 1949. In the year 1945 the then CCF government established nine Crown corporations, many of which are still providing Saskatchewan citizens with excellent services. The Douglas government, knowing that those Crown corporations were public businesses felt that the representatives of the people of Saskatchewan should have a right to a thorough examination of those companies on behalf of the people whom those MLA's represented.

Our Select Standing Committee on Crown Corporations was established in 1946 by the Douglas government and there were only nine public corporations. The CCF came to power in 1944 and in 1946, two years later, they established the Crown Corporations Committee.

Now, Mr. Chairman, there have been Liberal and Conservative governments in Ottawa since before confederation and there is still a most inadequate cumbersome method of examining the business transactions of the federal Crown corporations. But getting back to our Saskatchewan Crown Corporations Committee, in the beginning the MLAs were allowed to ask questions beyond the year of review, however, it was the decision of the Legislature of the day to restrict the examination to the annual report of the year under review. There were several reasons for that decision. First of all, to ask questions from the year before would be an indication of the lack of faith in the work done by the previous committees. Next, the minister and his officials could not be expected to have complete information for any year that the questioner chose to ask questions upon — they could not be expected to have all of that information in the committee but there were constant delays and inefficiencies that the committee itself wished to avoid and so the terms of reference were changed. Moreover, much of the information for the current year is classified as being helpful or useful to competitors and so it is in the interest of the people of Saskatchewan who own the Crown corporations not to release the information. And so we would urge the federal Crown corporations to follow much the same procedure.

But, Mr. Speaker, don't let a Liberal or Conservative try to tell you that Crown corporations are something new. From a research paper prepared by the library of parliament in Ottawa, I find that the first Crown corporations in what is now Canada were formed back in 1841 when the Board of Works was formed. Following that the Nova Scotia Railway Company was established in 1859 and since then there have been dozens and dozens and dozens that have been established including the Canadian National Railways, the Bank of Canada, the CBC, to name just a few.

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Now, most Liberal and Conservative members opposite profess a great knowledge of business and business procedures. Yet both political parties have been in charge of the federal government in Ottawa off and on for 111 years and yet they have not even bothered to put those companies on a sound business basis.

MR. MERCHANT: — Give us a chance . . .

MR. NELSON (Yktn): — Just 111 almost now, just coming up, Tony.

MR. MERCHANT: — . . . we will . . .

MR. NELSON (Ykton): — Yes, I realize that, that's what you all have said for 111 years, you would clean up the mess. In over 111 years the representatives of those great private and business entrepreneurs, the Liberals and Conservatives have failed to set up a properly operating method of examining the business of the people that they represent.

Now, I know that there was a Crown Corporations Committee set up in Ottawa in 1964 but there is just one slight problem, Mr. Speaker, the committee has never examined one Crown corporation. It's a paper tiger. At a time when there are close to 400 federal Crown corporations, subsidiaries and affiliates, the Ottawa Crown Corporations Committee remains unused, as idle and as useless as an Ottawa senator. In all other provinces, both Liberal and Conservatives, they haven't even made a pretence such as the one in Ottawa in recognizing the need to examine our public business. No Crown Corporations Committee has even been established anywhere else in Canada. Indeed, the Conservative government in Alberta not only refused to allow its Crown corporations to be examined there but they also refuse to answer questions that are put on the order paper. I would like to give you just a few examples of orders for return that the Alberta Conservative Saskatchewan has refused. The following motions were defeated in the Alberta Legislature by the Conservative government there:

Moved by Mr. Wilson that an order of the Assembly do issue for return showing:

(1) The cost of the Alberta Energy Company advertisements for its senior executive group which appeared in the several newspapers during November-December, 1974.

It was refused.

(2) A breakdown of the above advertising costs by newspapers.

Refused. And it wasn't for a long time, Mr. Speaker, it was just for a short period of time.

(3) The terms of reference and fees for services of Pete Marwick and partners with regard to the advertisements and the executive functions on behalf of the Alberta Energy Company.

It was refused, Mr. Speaker. Simple, ordinary questions of that nature.

A second example.

Moved by Mr. Notley that an order of the Assembly do issue a return showing:

A copy of all assessments, interim or otherwise done by an official of the Department of Energy and Natural Resources and/or the Energy Resources Conservation Board since January 1, 1971 and of the impact of the Alberta Petroleum Exploration in natural gas exploration in the province of Alberta.

And this was back in 1976 and yet this, too, was refused, Mr. Speaker. I find it amazing how members opposite can talk out of both sides of their mouths on issues of the freedom of information. Here in Saskatchewan while they are in opposition or anywhere when they are in opposition there is never enough information. The members of both parties demand information they know full well cannot be given. They may wring their hands and talk about the lack of information. The members of both parties demand information while in opposition and yet when their parties come to power they run a government that is in the most secretive style possible.

Let's look at the Ottawa situation to see why there is such a desperate need to have an active Crown corporations committee to protect the interests of the Canadian people who are the shareholders of those corporations.

In Ottawa there is no real operational organ for the systematic review of the Crown corporations. The corporations are supposed to be accountable to parliament through a minister, but it is an most ineffective channel because there is only a daily question period of 40 minutes in the federal house, so what can be done in 40 minutes to examine hundreds of Crown corporations? Moreover the ministers have a neat dodge to avoid questions. I would like to quote this on the Crown corporations, from the study done on Crown corporations in the library of parliament in Ottawa. I quote 'But the ministers are not responsible before parliament for all the activities of the Crown corporations.' In 1963 the speaker reaffirmed the right of the minister to refuse to reply to a question concerning Crown corporations. The question was directed to the Secretary of State about the CBC. The speaker stated and I quote 'With the greatest respect I do not think there is anything in the conduct of the business of the house which insists that a minister must at this time give a reply to some hon. member.' The hon. member may think what he likes about the minister's reply or the lack of it, but he has no right to comment on it. Isn't that interesting, Mr. Speaker, the ministers are not responsible for parliament for all activities of the Crown corporations, but for both members opposite, man! Are our ministers here ever responsible.

Isn't it interesting, the member may think what he likes about the minister's reply or lack of it, but he has no right to comment on it. Further, many of the boards of the major federal Crown corporations don't even send the minutes of their board meetings to the minister who represents them in the parliament. No wonder those ministers refuse to answer questions in the house. However, the business of the Crown corporations may also be discussed in the debate in the speech from the Throne, but seeing how the debate on the speech from the Throne goes here, we can see that that is the most inadequate way to examine a Crown corporation.

Then there is a smattering of committees that do examine the odd corporation here and there. A few were done in the Public Accounts Committee, but you can well imagine that the examination in this method is completely inadequate when you consider the amount of work that must be done federally by that committee.

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I know, too, Mr. Speaker, that the Senate also has a committee with power to examine the Crown corporations, but the chairs in that upper chamber are just too comfortable and that committee too, rarely or never examines anything effectively, say nothing about scrutinizing a Crown corporation in a businesslike manner. Like the Senate, the Senate Crown Corporations committee sits as idle as possible.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the best that can be said about the study of the business of our federal Crown corporations is that it is haphazard and that is being most careful. A better description is that the federal government, both Liberal and Conservative have taken an extremely irresponsible attitude toward the operation of the publicly owned corporations of this country.

Let us just look at some of the results of this irresponsible attitude. I would like to quote at length from Canadian News Facts that covered the period from Tuesday, November 16th to November 30th, 1976. I quote:

The most disturbing revelation was that the atomic energy of Canada paid \$18 million to agents in South Korea and Argentina to help promote sales of nuclear reactors. Over \$10 million of which, Mr. MacDonnell said was not supported by documentation.

Now I can quote all kinds of other similar news reports, one can dig up all kinds of dirt of the similar manner but that's not my purpose here.

Mr. Speaker, if there were an active Crown corporations committee, a government would hesitate to allow such practices, they would be too soon detected. But without a thorough examination who knows what is going on, how much more happens that we know nothing about? I would like to quote at length from the Regina Leader Post Friday, December 16th, 1977, and the headline was 'The Government Finds Firm It Never Knew It Owned'. And I quote:

The government discovered on Wednesday it owns or controls seven companies it previously knew nothing about, a senior Treasury Board official said Wednesday. We were up to 380 as of yesterday, an embarrassed Stewart Mensford, Deputy Secretary of Financial Administration of the Treasury Board told the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee. On Tuesday he told the committee that he had identified 373 which are wholly or partially controlled by the government. He added that he was still counting.

I believe that he is still counting, Mr. Speaker, and probably will for a bit yet. 'I sometimes wonder, I sometimes wish you had never asked us to make up a list,' Mensford told Auditor General J.J. Macdonnell. I guess he would wish such a thing. The Auditor General has severely criticized weak and ineffective controls over the spending practices of the federal Crown corporations. He has done the same thing over the spending practices of the federal Liberal government. As Mensford said Tuesday the Treasury Board is discovering that the government owned corporations that have subsidiaries, sub-subsidiaries and affiliates wanting more subsidiaries; talk about control, Mr. Speaker. Macdonnell and his staff are arguing before the committee that all federally owned Crown corporations, when they are identified, Mr. Speaker, notice, when they are identified, shouldn't be subject to the same strict accounting rules which private corporations must follow. It is strange, Mr. Speaker, that you should even suggest, have to suggest that they should be subjected to these such rules. Mr.

Mensford said Thursday, the Treasury Board agrees in the case of Crown corporations which compete in commercial markets but some government corporations are set up for different reasons and there must be flexibility to allow them to adapt accounting rules to their function. Wouldn't ..it be nice to be able to adapt your own accounting rules to your own functions. Man, what you could do with that sort of a rule. Macdonnell said he strongly disagreed and warned that federal authorities may lose an important opportunity to set a standard for behavior by corporations. 'If the Treasury Board's position is adopted it will result in a pretty shifty kind of bench mark for acceptable behaviour,' he added. It is pretty shifty, Mr. Speaker, already. It is pretty shifty. 'The federal government' to continue to quote, Mr. Speaker, 'the federal government has promised to introduce legislation in the current parliamentary session lightening the controls over the corporations' activities.' To even lighten them further, Mr. Speaker, this is followed by disclosures by Macdonnell that two federally controlled companies, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited and Polysar Limited had used bribes and other questionable practices to get business. 'These opportunities come rarely for parliament,' Macdonnell noted referring to the promised legislation for Crown corporations. 'Promised legislation for Crown corporations' financial activities is a chance for parliament to make sure government companies fully disclose their financial dealings.' I think, Mr. Speaker, I have dealt enough to thoroughly indicate why we in Saskatchewan and all of Canada are really in desperate need of an active Crown corporations Committee. Because, Mr. Speaker, an active Crown corporations will ensure a healthy businesslike approach to the operations of those federal Crown corporations. It is in the interest of all Canadians that our federal counterparts take action. And I urge all members to support this resolution. So, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Quill Lakes, Resolution No. 14.

MR. M.J. KOSKIE (Quill Lakes): — ..opportunity to second the motion by the member for Yorkton. I am a little regretful that the member for Regina South, who is aspiring to go to Ottawa, is not here with his colleague for Wascana. I don't think either one will make it but I'd like to pass on some information while they are still anticipating their greatness. You know, Mr. Speaker, I asked myself why we are debating this resolution when we in Saskatchewan here have almost with the birth of Crown corporations, set up an effective method of reviewing them. Mr. Speaker, I ask myself this question, why hasn't Ottawa followed our lead? And the obvious reason is that Ottawa has been dominated by Liberals and Tories, ever since Confederation. And, Mr. Speaker, if we examine the philosophy of the Liberals and the Tories or the PCs, call them what you want, Crown corporations don't form an integral part of their economic strategy. Yes, it seems to me in Ottawa they have given birth to Crown corporations, some 384, if that is the accurate count. But they are not considered a real economic tool but rather an appendage to the further structure of the corporate world, which they live so comfortably in.

I was looking through a research paper which was done by the Research Branch of the library of Parliament. On page 2 it says:

The only political party in Canada that has consistently favored the use of Crown corporations as an instrument of economic policy is the New Democratic Party and its predecessors.

It seems to me that this is fairly evident because it goes on to indicate an exchange in Parliament, an exchange in Parliament between the opposition benches and Mr. C.D. Howe. I would like you to listen to this exchange - C.D. Howe, the industry and commerce giant for the Liberal Party in the past.

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Mr. Smith had this to say:

The minister has given us no reason why this Dominion Coal Board should be a corporation.

Well, good old C.D. Howe answered. Mr. Howe said:

My hon. friend asked why this commission should take the form of a corporation. I shall have to get a more satisfactory answer to that question, than I can give offhand. All that I can say is that for a commission to operate and do business, it seems to be necessary that they be formed into a corporation. All the commissions I know of that operate around Ottawa are formed in a corporation. I do not know why, other than a corporation, is a convenient form.

That is Mr. Howe's attitude. I want to add just a point in respect to the nature of the problem that arises in so far as the use and the creation of Crown corporations in Ottawa.

Essentially the Crown corporations were initially created by an act of Parliament. They were set up through an act of Parliament. The act came before Parliament itself. Parliament had the opportunity to deal with the creation of that corporation. But the parties of the corporate world, since they had no real affinity to Crown corporations and since they set them up on a very similar basis to the private corporations, set up a second method. The second method was to incorporate, by letters patent under the authority of part 1 of the Dominion Company Act.

It is interesting to know that any company incorporated under letters patent did not have to be reviewed by Parliament in the same way as one created by statute. What is further, is that the corporations that were created by letters patent were also able to establish other Crown corporations of their own power.

Now, I want to go into some considerable detail of exposing the situation in Ottawa as it is today and to relate it to how we operate here in Saskatchewan because as chairman of the Crown Corporations, I am fairly familiar with the Saskatchewan scene. I think it would be worthwhile to review that, to compare it to the jungle that we have down in Ottawa. So at this time, Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Resolution No. 15 - Building and Mounting of School Bus Bodies.

MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose) moved, seconded by Mr. R.A. Larter (Estevan).

That this Assembly urges the Government of Saskatchewan, through the Department of Industry and Commerce, to conduct a feasibility study into establishing an industry in Saskatchewan for the purpose of building and mounting of school bus bodies.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to speak on this particular resolution. I have had some conversation with the Minister in charge of Industry and Commerce and this has been a topic that has been very close to my heart for some time.

I want to point out to the Assembly that for over 20 years now I have seen and have been part of the school transportation system in the province of Saskatchewan and I have seen a lot of things happen to it. I want to make it very clear to the members of this Assembly that what I am talking about here in the way of an industry for Saskatchewan is not to try to outdo some of the larger companies in eastern Canada but rather to take a look at a particular need that we have here in western Canada. There are in Saskatchewan for instance, 60 school units and within these 60 school units the number of bus routes within each school unit will range at a minimum of 40, so there are somewhere between 2,400 and 2,800 school routes in Saskatchewan.

What I want to talk about to this Assembly is the smaller type bus which could be a great industry here for the city of Regina. I have done some research in this particular field and I want to share it with the members of this Assembly because I am sure that everyone here would be extremely interested in having an industry of this type here in Saskatchewan. What happens to the school transportation industry? What happens when you purchase a school bus? Well first of all you have to admit that you buy the chassis which is designed not to haul a ton of students, but rather to haul three or four tons. Let me give you an example. You buy a 36 passenger bus and all that the companies have done (and there are four major companies, Bluebird, Thomas, Wells Wayne and Superior) at the end of the year is to go down to the lots of the three big corporations and buy a chassis. Designed to haul students? Not by any chance. Take a look at a 36 passenger bus, which by the way, does not haul 36 students comfortably. A 36 passenger bus, in our opinion (the board that I work for) is really a 24 passenger bus. All right, we put 24 youngsters on that bus. What is it mounted with? Well, the Minister of Agriculture will know what a three ton chassis looks like — mounted with six 750 x 20 ten-ply tires with springs and overloads that have the ability to carry something like seven tons. What do you do with those 24 students on that bus? You wind up and you take off burning fuel that is not necessary; you gouge all the rural roads when it is wet in the winter time. The motor home industry across Canada has proven beyond a doubt that the school bus industry, particularly for smaller vehicles, is outdated and as archaic as anything could be.

The springs, the overload springs during the entire life of the bus never make contact. You bounce the kids along; you pound the front end out of these buses and what you are doing is just simply taking an under carriage designed for something other than hauling people around. You mount a bus body on it; you jam three kids in a seat about that wide and you call it a 36 passenger bus.

If any of you people have had anything to do with the bus transportation in Europe you will have seen how completely outdated we are in the field of school transportation.

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Now, I don't propose to this Assembly that we take over from these major bus body-making companies in St. Thomas, Ontario and Quebec and so on, but I do propose that we have proven one thing here in Saskatchewan — you don't have to go too far from the city of Regina to see what has happened. Right here in the city (and I see the mayor is here) they have designed what is known as a telebus. What do you find? Well, you find that somebody has made a purchase of the extended one ton frame . . . mounted on 750 x 17 tires, power steering, power brakes, automatics, and designed to move people. It's designed for people. What do we do in the rural areas when we have to buy a 16 passenger bus? Well, you have two choices. You can go to the bus that you buy which is a 24 bus and that's about the most pitiful excuse there is on the market. You bang the roads up, you pound the kids around night and morning on this thing. You run - we have five of them for which the daily cost of the thing is outrageous for getting that number of students to school. Or you can go to what is known as the maxi-van. What's the maxi-van designed for? It's not designed for carrying students. It's designed for a plumber putting pipes in the back of it or a carpenter to throw his tools in but it's not basically designed for carrying students. Now what have we here in Saskatchewan?

Well, first of all, we have a steel industry right here in Regina. That industry is capable, along with other craftsmen we have right here in the city, without mentioning names and I've talked to some of them, who could well build that body to meet the specifications on the extended one ton frames. What would you have? Well, you would have a modification of the telebus. You could build a 16 to 20 passenger bus which has a demand in western Canada but really not in eastern Canada.

Let me give an example. If you went across western Canada, that is the three prairie provinces depending upon the year, Mr. Speaker, they'll buy from 200 to 250 new buses every year. And of those 200 to 250 new buses, a third of those will be of the small category. That is the 12 to 18 passenger buses which is needed. There's not a bus on the market. Nobody has put a bus on the market to meet this demand. You know why, because the major bus bodies are made in Ontario, they are not made here in the west. Our market is here in the west and I can assure you that if the Minister of Industry and Commerce would take a look at the potential market in the three prairie provinces, I suggest to you that as our bus routes grow smaller with sparcity factor, we would have a market for at least 200 of these vehicles for the next 10 years. Now what has to be done? Well, the Fleury bus company went into the motor home or the mobile home. Very few modifications have to be done with the Telebus and here you would have — let's take Degelman Industries as one example who is perfectly capable of building these bodies. We can build bodies here in Regina just as well as they can in St. Thomas or south of Montreal. Our craftsmen are just as good. We can mount them on the frames here and here we can develop an industry, right here in Saskatchewan. We don't have to haul up the buses up from eastern Canada at all. Just have the chassises come in and establish an industry where there is no other industry existing on the North American continent at the present time. I'm very concerned about this. I'm concerned because we have not kept pace with the school transportation industry. Our buses and our busing of students do not compare with those of the European communities at all. We have an opportunity and I'm sure that no one in this Assembly would deny that because of the proximity of the steel plant here in Regina, and because of the industries and the technicians that we have.

Let's just then in summary, take a look at some of the advantages. First of all, they are easier to operate; these buses can be easily equipped with power steering, power brakes and automatics. You don't have to go to the big automatics. The standard heavy duty automatic with a cooler on front will handle these very very easily. It also provides

that women can drive the buses and they would be more available for bus driving than they are for trying to herd those big awkward lumbering 36 passenger buses around with 20 kids on them and certainly it has been proven. It has been proven by statistics that I read from the United States that women are by far the best bus operators when it comes to expenses at the end of a given year because they take more care. That's one advantage.

The second advantage of course is that with single wheels you don't have to go and tear up the rural roads making a bus rut. They have a low centre of gravity, a single wheel axle wheel at the back is much easier in snow and mud than the dual axle.

And I suppose the third advantage is that you are not tearing up the rural roads just to make a run with some students on it. And so there are the advantages. Markets — I suggest to you that it is here, I'm asking the Minister of Industry and Commerce to and I know he will, treat this resolution very seriously because after 20 years I think and much thought, Mr. Minister, and I don't want to take any more time with all of the statistics available, but I would appreciate your department taking a real good look at this and I'm sure the member for Regina Victoria would welcome a new industry right here in Regina. I have every confidence in the world that it will go. I have every confidence in the world that there is a market for it, so it gives me great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to move this resolution. And with the clarification, I am talking about one particular type of bus and I would be very pleased that this is a Saskatchewan bus and we could put our names right on it.

MR. VICKAR: — Mr. Speaker, I take note of what the hon. member has said in his remarks and I also take note in the resolution that he is trying to put forth. I discussed this situation with the hon. member and I have also discussed the problem with my Department of Industry and Commerce and I might say that the Department of Industry and Commerce have for quite some time now been investigating the possibility of building that type of product in Saskatchewan.

I have many more facts and suggestions that I would like to make to the hon. member but I haven't them with me at this particular time. I would ask you adjourn debate at this time so I can come back with some further information.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 01 - An Act respecting The Royal Trust Company and Royal Trust Corporation of Canada.

Sections 1 to 7 agreed.

Section 8 deleted.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTIONS FOR RETURN

Return No. 9

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The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Lane (Qu'Appelle) that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 9 showing:

The number of non-government employees who used government owned vehicles in each of the years 1976, and January 1, 1977 to November 1, 1977 and the reason for such usage.

HON. W.A. ROBBINS (Minister of Revenue): — Mr. Speaker, this particular motion for return requires, I believe an amendment to give the information properly and I would, therefore, move, Mr. Speaker:

That all the words the after 'the number of' that is non-government employees who used government owned vehicles in each of the years 1976, and January 1, 1977 to November 1, 1977 and the reason for such usage be deleted and be replaced by substituting the following:

People other than government employees or members of their immediately family (1) who use government owned, departmentally assigned vehicles in each of the years 1976, and January 1, 1977 to November 1, 1977, and (2) the reasons for such usage.

I move this, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member for Redberry, Mr. Banda.

Amendment agreed to

Motion as amended agreed to.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 9 - Orderly Marketing of Feed Grains

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed resolution by Mr. McNeill (Meadow Lake):

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.

MR. KAEDING: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on this resolution. My colleagues, the member for Meadow Lake and the member for Turtleford, have already outlined to you some of the background of our difficulties with the Federal Feed Grains Policy, under which producers of western Canada have been laboring since 1974. As already indicated by my colleagues, Mr. Lang, the Minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, in an attempt to ameliorate some of the criticisms of eastern livestock producers, has succeeded only in bringing about a system of utter chaos for western Canadian grain and livestock producers.

Mr. Speaker, the original stated objectives of the national feed grain policies were:

- (1) to provide a fair and equitable base price for feed grains across Canada.
- (2) to provide relief for the grain producers against oppressed feed grain prices such as occurred in the prairies in 1968 and 1969; and
- (3) to encourage the growth of livestock and feed grains across Canada according to natural factors and the natural potential of the various regions of Canada.

There was full agreement, Mr. Speaker, by all interested parties, that these were worthy objectives in order to achieve a healthy industry on a national basis. The open-market vehicle, however, chosen by Mr. Lang to fulfil these objectives, was opposed by this government, as well as many major farm organizations from the start and we continue to be opposed to it.

All of the concerns we expressed in opposition to having an open market for feed grains have occurred. After four years of trying, the National Feed Grains Policy has not achieved any of the stated objectives but, rather, has created more serious inequities than ever witnessed before in the feed grains area. After a board of interim proposal the present hodgepodge policy has been in effect since 1976.

The revised policy calls for Montreal corn competitive pricing, open market purchasing of feed grain outside of quota and removal of the feed freight assistance program. Livestock producers in western Canada were led to believe that removal of the feed freight assistance program would make the livestock feeding industry more competitive with eastern feeders. And, of course, this did not happen. First of all because Mr. Lang and Mr. Whelan made it quite clear that the \$12 million to \$15 million which would be saved under the feed freight assistance would be used for the benefit of eastern feeders to provide better storage facilities so they could purchase feed grains when prices were most attractive. In recent months one program after the other has been announced in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes where the federal government is providing federal dollars to pay up to 50 per cent of the cost of on-farm and off-farm storage facilities for this purpose. Not one nickel of the savings of the feed freight assistance policy has been passed on to western feeders.

We hear announcements of a big new government terminal and oil seed crushing plant in Windsor also designed to provide greater storage in crushing capacity. When questioned about the need for oil seed crushing capacity when an over capacity already exists in western Canada, Mr. Whelan said, 'The Ontario plant will be crushing primarily soy beans most of which will come from the USA. Hardly a benefit, Mr. Speaker, to the feed grain producers in western Canada. In addition to that, Mr. Lang provided for the purchase of feed grains on the prairie through the open market without a quota. Mr. Speaker, in a survey done by the Natural Potash Marketing Council in 1974, 93 per cent of prairie farmers indicated that they wish to market their grain under the Canadian Wheat Board. Yet Mr. Lang, in his haste to placate the issue in farm vote saw fit to ignore this very clear desire of western farmers. The result has been most unfortunate to our feeding industry.

The eastern purchaser is always protected by the requirement that the Canadian Wheat Board must sell to the domestic market according to competitive prices when open market cash prices are above that level. When they are below the cost of the going competitive price they can purchase at the lower open market price. In Western Canada, however, feed grain producers will not normally sell off board grain at less

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than Canadian Wheat Board initial price plus expected final prices unless under extremely distressed circumstances, nor are they anxious to sell to the open market option if quotas are available. This has resulted on numerous occasions where feed grain consumers have had to resort to the purchase of American corn in order to remain competitive. That certainly is a tragic situation in the middle of a surplus producing province.

This past fall and winter many farmers on the prairies have again been forced to sell feed grains on the open market because quotas were not available. Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind you that farmers in overwhelming numbers have expressed their support of orderly marketing through the Canadian Wheat Board. However, the policy instituted by Mr. Lang permits delivery of feed grains to the open market without quota restrictions. As the result of the lack of quotas increasing numbers of producers have been forced to deliver on the open market at tremendous losses to themselves.

The fact that the open market option exists does not in any way increase the amount of grain moving through the system. Every bushel of grain delivered to the open market picks up just as much space in the system as a bushel of wheat in the Canadian Wheat Board system. In other words every bushel delivered on the open market reduces the ability of the Canadian Wheat Board to open additional quotas under the orderly marketing system. Those farmers who for whatever reason deliver large volumes of grain to the open market without quota are, in fact, stealing the opportunity which should be equally shared by all producers under an orderly system.

Mr. Speaker, during the crop year 1976-77 producers who sold feed grain on the depressed open market received over \$10 million less than they would have had they delivered their grain through the Canadian Wheat Board. During this present crop year up to March 3, 1978, open market prices for 3 CW wheat have averaged 48 cents a bushel under the Canadian Wheat Board initial price. No 3 utility wheat has average 19 cents under initial prices. No 4 feed oats 8 cents under and No 1 feed barley 14 cents under the initial price. These to me are depressed prices and indicates the failure of the feed grain policy to achieve its stated objectives. With our agricultural economy

on a downward trend we can ill afford to continue with this arrangement . . . (interjection) . . . right, they are right in there with them. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Lang has under estimated the anger of western farmers at being forced into this unhappy situation against their wishes and the results of the upcoming federal election will make that abundantly clear.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have indicated the serious loss of income experienced by western farmers are due to the existing feed grains policy and the unfairness of the open market delivery system.

I would like to discuss at some length a proposal I put forward by my two counterparts in Manitoba and Alberta as well as to western farm organizations. This proposal represents some concepts which have been put together as a result of a series of discussions held in the past year by many farm producers, university staff and research staff for the Department of Agriculture and reflects some of the findings of the meat grain interface meetings held last winter. These are not necessarily new proposals but a revival of some concepts which have been put forward by farm groups in the past with some innovations. The difficult year in which beef and feedlot producers have experienced have brought renewed demands for beef producers for a restructuring of the crowrates to bring rates for grain and livestock more closely in balance. Although to some beef producers this may seem to offer a solution to the cost input side of their operation, the benefiting dollars to livestock industry would be far exceeded by the economic loss to feed grain producers in western Canada if, indeed, any benefit would actually accrue to feedlot operators. Again, I want to point out that the expected benefits of the removal of feed paid assistance which actually provided no benefits at all to beef producers in western Canada. The proposal being offered here attempts to resolve some of the input cost disparities. The users of feed grain want, at the same time, to have the advantage of providing for Canadian Wheat Board marketing for the majority of locally consumed feed grain.

Firstly, expand the role of the Canadian Wheat Board to include direct producer to use transfer in Saskatchewan, or in fact, western Canada. This would avoid the redundant handling and the unnecessary costs which are incurred under the current method of selling into the local market. The producer offering his grain for sale within his quota restriction, would be able to sell to a neighbor, receive the Canadian Wheat Board initial payment and be eligible for a final payment, as well as being eligible for the western grain stabilization payments. Country elevators would be used for weight, grade, dockage and documentation on a fee-for-service basis. This is a more efficient way of marketing grain as it avoids redundant handling, additional storage and extra finance charges. The user would pay the Canadian Wheat Board its asking price of the day, which would be a revised corn competitive price for western Canada.

The revised corn competitive price for western Canada is the second part of the proposal and incorporates two charges:

- (1) The daily corn competitive price bases at Thunder Bay would be the lower of the current corn competitive price formula at Thunder Bay or the Canadian Wheat Boards' export opportunity value in feed grains, and,
- (2) The price to local users would be the Thunder Bay price arrived at above less the cost that would be incurred in moving grain from Saskatchewan to Thunder Bay.

Under the present corn formula pricing arrangement, the prairie user is only credited

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for the freight costs. An equitable price for the prairies requires that a number of other charges be deducted from the Thunder Bay price for sales to local users. An example I will use illustrates the charges to be deducted for feed barley, under this formula:

- (1) You would deduct freight costs, 10 cents a bushel, which is now being deducted under the present system.
- (2) You would deduct handling costs, approximately 11 cents a bushel because grain would not be handled in the system.
- (3) You would remove the current deduction for cleaning grain because the grain is not cleaned in the system, 2.5 cents a bushel, and you would deduct the Canadian Wheat Board marketing costs which are not incurred and that would be approximately 10 cents a bushel.

The total Canadian Wheat Board marketing costs presently are about 12 cents per bushel. Approximately 10 cents of the Wheat Board marketing costs are for storage and interest. These costs would be avoided if the direct transfer recommendation and the extended role of the Canadian Wheat Board is adopted. The remaining two cents are Canadian Wheat Board administration and general operating costs and these would still be incurred in direct sales. And finally, the load-out charge currently levied is not justified because the loading a truck for a local user is substitute for loading a boxcar and that would be about a saving of about 3 cents to 5 cents a bushel.

I would like to present an example which demonstrates the inadequacies of the present corn formula for Saskatchewan users. The example will show the advantage of a direct transfer proposal. Under the present corn formula, when the price at Thunder Bay was \$2 per bushel, the prairie price would be the price at Thunder Bay \$2 less rate of 10 cents, plus the load-out charge of 3 cents a bushel, which makes the ultimate price to the prairie user of \$1.93 per bushel.

The proposal for extending the role of the Canadian Wheat Board to include direct prairie transfer would lead to the following prairie prices; the price at Thunder Bay, again, \$2 a bushel, less freight of 10 cents a bushel, less removal cost for dockage, 2.5 cents, less Canadian Wheat Board marketing costs of 10 cents a bushel, less elevator handling charges of 11 cents a bushel. You add to that an elevation service fee for weight, grade and documentation of about 3 cents a bushel. The price to the prairie user on this formula would be about \$1.69 and one-half cents a bushel. That is for grain moving directly through the system without being dropped into the elevator.

An equitable price under the current corn formula for grain already stored in a country elevator would be as follows: again price at Thunder Bay \$2, less freight of 10 cents, less removal of dockage 2.5 cents, less one-half (approximately) of the Canadian Wheat Boards' storage and finance charges (because there would be some charges incurred) at 5 cents a bushel and no load-out charge would be allowed because we are allowing, under this proposal, the elevation charges of 11 cents. That makes the price to the prairie user for grain already stored and taken out of a grain elevator of \$1.82.

As you can see, under the direct sales mechanism, a prairie user could obtain peak barley for 23.5 cents a bushel less than under the current system. You will have observed that although the price to the prairie user is lower under the direct transfer proposal, the final realized return to the prairie grain producer is unchanged. The 23.5 cents saved is, in fact, the cost that would have been incurred in moving that grain to

Thunder Bay and beyond. A logical extension of this proposal would be to include feed mills on the prairies as agents of The Canadian Wheat Board. Given the opportunity to deliver to The Canadian Wheat Board through feed mills, producers would supply the local market on a fairly regular basis. This would avoid the useless extra costs that mills now incur when they are supplied indirectly through the country elevators. The advantages of the direct transfer proposal to both the grain and the livestock producer include the following. First, a sharing of the discount on tough and damp grain would increase return to the grain producer and provide a saving to the livestock producer. It would also reduce the burden of out-of-condition grain on the handling system and I think you can recognize that as being a fairly important item. Secondly, the sharing of the dockage between the producer and the user would encourage local transfers and offer real gains to both livestock and grain producers within the province.

Let me use an example. A 60 sow farrow to finish operation would, in addition to a half section of land, result in full employment to a farmer. However, approximately 10,000 to 15,000 bushels of barley would have to be grown or purchased annually to meet the requirements of a 60 sow farrow to finished the operation.

At times, in the cycle of cattle markets, the farmers would be required to purchase grain from The Canadian Wheat Board or a feed manufacturer would have had to do so. Given the present feed grain policy the farmer would be priced out of a competitive position in the Canadian market under those circumstances. This is the case because he is not given full credit for the costs not incurred in moving grain from the surplus prairie region to deficit regions. Unnecessary costs are incurred between the feed grain producer and the hog barn. Implementation of the direct transfer proposal and the revision of the formula price for prairie feed grain users will overcome this problem. If this proposal were adopted, The Canadian Wheat Board would complement western development objectives as it would be active in the transfer of grains within the prairies. In this way producer preference for The Canadian Wheat Board could be harnessed as a positive force to develop a diversified and intensive agriculture in Saskatchewan.

This proposal is an attempt to put our livestock producers on an equal footing with their competitors elsewhere in terms of access to grain without sacrificing the grain producer in any way. This change would avoid the situation where Saskatchewan livestock producers are priced out of the competitive position in Canadian markets because of the feed grain policy designed to serve Eastern Canada which has no regard for our needs.

Mr. Speaker, I have submitted this proposal for discussion to other prairie governments and to some grain companies and farm organizations. No doubt, there may be some opposition to proposals to eliminate total handling charges and the storage and financing charges of The Canadian Wheat Board. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the acceptance of the basic principle of this proposal can go a long way to eliminate some of the disparities which now exist in the marketing of feed grains and to the advantage of both producers and consumers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say more on this subject but I think I should stop here and I would now beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

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MOTIONS FOR RETURN

Return No. 20

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Merchant (Regina Wascana) that an Order of the Assembly do issue for Return No. 20 showing:

The cost of maintaining the winter road to Uranium City in the fiscal years ending in 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977 and 1978, (2) The estimated number of vehicles which used the winter road to Uranium City in the fiscal years ending 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977 and 1978.

HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment to propose. I would move, seconded by my colleague, the hon. Minister of Northern Saskatchewan (Mr. Bowerman):

That we amend Motion for Return No. 20 by adding after the numerals 1978 in the last line, the following:

(3) The approximate number of pounds of freight moved over the winter road to Uranium City in each of the years ending in 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977 and 1978.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 13 - Equality for Saskatchewan Women

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

That this Assembly go on record as supporting the principle of equality for women in Saskatchewan and further commits itself to continue taking positive action, in the future, in furtherance of this principle.

MR. J.R. KOWALCHUK (Melville): — Mr. Speaker, just a few comments on the resolution No. 13 proposed by Mr. Allen that this Assembly support the principle of equality for women in Saskatchewan and I firmly believe in the principle of equality, that equality of life's opportunities be available to all people, male and female, Mr. Speaker.

I also get up to speak because of a number of reasons, one being the action and the last number of remarks made by the member for Rosetown-Elrose. When he spoke on the subject he left me no recourse but to say something on this debate. I, of course, disagree on a number of issues that the member elaborated on and I would say let the people of Saskatchewan decide as to whether they agree with the member for Rosetown-Elrose or not. I agreed on some of the things he said as well. But the point at which the member for Rosetown-Elrose waxed so eloquently, his voice rising higher and higher and his arms waving in the air, was near the end of this address, Mr. Speaker,

when he almost shouted about the need for a return to the family unit on the basis of which builds a good community and good humanity.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as if the member for Rosetown-Elrose and his leader and his cohorts were the only people who believed in the strong, healthy family unit. I don't think there is a member in this House who doesn't agree with that statement, the need for a strong cohesive family unit, New Democrats, Liberals and Conservatives, with the possible exception of a few Conservatives. The member for Rosetown-Elrose made it appear that the New Democrats were against the family unit. That indeed, the New Democrats were for the family breakdown by all and any means. As indicated by the member for Rosetown we were just interested in promoting hundreds of day care centres, Mr. Speaker. Now this is nothing but pure balderdash, Mr. Speaker. When we speak of the need for day care centres, it is in the vein of importance that we attach to day care centres and that is the word 'need'. When we are speaking of providing day care centres, we are talking about taking care of children of parents who are forced to go to work. And as so well documented by the hon. member for Cutknife, our affluent society, or so-called standard of living, brought to bear upon all the people by the high pressure Park Avenue advertising newspapers, magazines, TV, radio and media and so forth, make all the people reach out for the things that they seem to need, Mr. Speaker. But in the lower income bracket of the male bread winner, it becomes a necessity and a need to have a wife working. Most women, but I agree not all, would want to be homemakers and not have to be away from their families and homes. But the highly mortgaged house, the extra car, often needed to get to work, the whole world of freely excessible credit, Mr. Speaker, mandatorily necessitates that the mother go to work daily, for most of her life.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, a society, that directly or indirectly, the so-called free society or free enterprise society, dictates that everybody must work to keep our so-called standard of living, must also, Mr. Speaker, bear some of the responsibility for making sure that there is some form of care for the children who must be cared for.

Everybody cannot afford a high priced nanny as we well know and in the upper circle this often happens. When the member for Rosetown was so strongly expanding on the basic principles of preserving the family unit, Mr. Speaker, and once again, no one on this side of the House disagrees with him on that point, it was at this point that I interjected, 'so what are you shouting about,' and further on in regard to his comments, the need for holding up these principles, I again interjected saying, 'how much good will your speech help in this House?' And then of course that's when the member for Rosetown-Elrose became abusive saying 'You know if you would speak up in the House every time you do, you would display your sheer ignorance'.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder who displayed ignorance. I just wonder who displayed ignorance. I'm not going to ask for a retraction or an apology, in fact the member has already apologized personally.

He no doubt has had some bad times on that side of the Conservative caucus lately and I think that probably is the reason, but Mr. Speaker, I do not apologize to the member for my interjections as well. I apologize to you sir, Mr. Speaker, because it's not in the best interests of orderly and properly debating, the howl of crisscross verbal firing across the Assembly floor and so on.

The Conservative member, the member for Rosetown-Elrose even their sanctimonious

leader who struts and verbalizes in decorum at orderly procedure yet, they are always interjecting as well as other members of this House, Mr. Speaker. Let me say this, Mr. Speaker, that if all members of this Assembly interjected and cat called as often as I do, this would be a fairly orderly House, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I was upset, because when the Conservative Party members stand up and debate our party efforts and directly and indirectly say that only we are ignorant of the worthiness and the stability of the family unit, then I object very strenuously, Mr. Speaker. The member for Rosemont in my opinion is to be congratulated in his effort in the resolution. It's a deep and a moving question with deep divisions and deep feelings and in my opinion should be dealt with as already stated in a non-partisan and a non-political manner.

Towards the end of his debate, the member for Rosetown-Elrose became very political. The member for Rosetown-Elrose left a most distinct impression that he and the Conservatives have all the answers and the rest of us in this House are the insipid instigators of all that is destructive to the family unit. And I reject that, Mr. Speaker, very strongly. I totally reject it. We, the New Democrats are very concerned about the role of women in our society as it concerns society and as it concerns everybody and particularly as it concerns the children in our society who because of adult decisions are often left to do as they will, unguarded, unprotected and often without any care at all. I therefore support this motion very strongly, this resolution.

MR. W.C. THATCHER (Thunder Creek): — Mr. Speaker, I had difficulty in reconciling some of the comments from the backbencher for Melville (Mr. Kowalchuk), I believe it is, as to the resolution, but I had no difficulty in ascertaining what I thought was a highly personal attack on one of the most respected and capable members in this Assembly and I think most people have that opinion, regardless of where they sat. Now we hear some derision from people on my right and I hear some derision on the opposite side.

Mr. Speaker, I frankly don't believe that we in the Conservative Party have to be lectured by someone like the previous members as to our stand and our position on the equality of women in this province. I think it is an issue that probably all political parties have jumped upon and I don't think any of us can really claim any particular credit for advancing any of these issues. Mr. Speaker, I don't think any political party has the monopoly on the position of equality of women. Certainly we in the Conservative Party don't pretend to have any monopoly. But, Mr. Speaker, I think we have the right in the Conservative Party to take some exception when a speech from a backbencher is totally aimed at abuse of a member in this side of the Assembly. This MLA is quite able to defend himself but regrettably he has already spoken in debate.

Mr. Speaker, I think this last speech that we just had to suffer through, I think it is an example of the personal vilification that has become rather common from members on that side of the House towards other members in this particular corner. We have seen unsubstantiated charges made in this Assembly before; I think that the source that they came from has been rather obvious and so be it. I think the source where these last remarks came from is equally obvious. I sincerely hope that the people of Saskatchewan will take note of, let us say the past two to three weeks, where personal vilification from the government members towards the opposition members, particularly those in this particular corner, just simply smacks of a government that is scared to death and is pulling at whatever straws may be available.

Mr. Speaker, I had the adrenalin flowing a few moments ago; regrettably the member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. MacDonald) made an aside and sort of took some of it away so therefore Mr. Speaker, I can only say to the ruffians on that side of the House,

please lower the intensity of your personal attacks.

Debate adjourned

SECOND READINGS

MR. S.J. CAMERON (Regina South) moved second reading on Bill No. 33 — **An Act respecting the Right of the Public to Government Information.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, with all the hard work I put into the bill I am hardly to drop it. The Attorney General will be pleased to see that the bill has come before the House in amended form in consequence of some suggestions he made last year when we debated this very proposal.

Mr. Speaker, essentially the idea of the Freedom of Information Acts is becoming an idea whose time has arrived in all jurisdictions. What has been happening is governments have grown larger, they have been accumulating, their capacity to accumulate, and their want to accumulate information grows proportionate to the mushrooming in size of governments. This has become a matter of concern in jurisdictions in the United States, jurisdictions in Canada and I think in every jurisdiction provincially now, the question is beginning to arise. Some jurisdictions are acting in respect to it, others are not. It is arising as well on the national level and some work is being done there. What is bringing these Freedom of Information Acts of one kind or another forward is a concern by a great many people, that governments are in fact accumulating so very much information these days and so much of it is remaining a secret and behind closed doors, and it is so potentially damaging to the individual and so potentially destructive really, of the fundamental of democracy, that that is what is prompting these notions to come forward.

Now we know that information, Mr. Speaker, is power. The concealment of information can lead to the abuse of power. As I say, as governments have mushroomed, so too have their capacity to accumulate information and so too has their power because information is power. So too is the potential for abuse growing with the capacity to accumulate information. Now essentially governments accumulate information of two kinds; information with respect to the private affairs of citizens and information of a public kind with respect to the public business in its exercise of its jurisdiction.

Let me turn first to deal briefly with the information on private individuals which governments these days accumulate. In respect of which I think we have to do something to provide the public better access to the sort of information governments have accumulated. Over time we have come to accept a position which not very many years ago we would never have done, because we prized our freedom so dearly, but we have now come to a position where we quite accept that government ought to know about each one of us individually, what we have in the way of assets, what we earn in the way of income, what we give to charity, what we now give to political parties, is accumulated by government and stored. Information with respect to births and deaths and marriages, information on the vehicles we own and their value, extensive records on our health, the health of every citizen, is stored. Records on our transgressions, be they major or minor, are retained by government. Information being guarded by government in another area which should be of particular concern to us because governments are becoming more active in some of these areas, I refer members to particularly information gathered with respect to insurance. To use an example that came before us a year ago or so in SGIO; this is an example of an individual that applied

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for an insurance policy from Saskatchewan Government Insurance and was denied the application for insurance. It was denied on the basis of information that Saskatchewan Government Insurance had accumulated from the neighbors and the business associates and acquaintances of the person who had applied for the insurance. The person who made the application for the insurance was not able to find out what was in the file and why his request for insurance was turned down. No doubt, government insurance, as all insurance companies do, will go out and talk to neighbors and friends and people involved with the insurance company, ask about their drinking habits, the state of their marriage, the state of the community and their personal habits and lot of that information is gathered. Insurance companies do it all the time. Governments are now beginning to do it.

The dilemma, when an individual can't get at the file to see what is there and decisions are being made in respect of it, is that you can't challenge the validity of that you don't know about. So in the case of the fellow that applied for his insurance and was turned down, he had no access to that government insurance file to see what it was there that was housed that prompted SGIO to deny his request for insurance. He couldn't challenge the validity of that information. That's one example but you can see the seriousness from this person's point of view. This was a person establishing himself in a hotel business. He couldn't get insurance, without insurance he could get nowhere despite the fact he had bought his building to start his business. In other words his whole livelihood was at stake resting on this insurance policy and he couldn't get access to the SGIO file to see what was there in order to challenge him in case it was invalid. That's the kind of thing that should frighten all of us because that's the kind of thing which is growing more extensively and that's the very kind of thing which is causing people in all jurisdictions to think about some measure to require governments to release information, much of it that they hold. There is great deal of potential here for abuse.

Let me cover two or three other areas, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Labour empowers its inspectors without warrant, without complaint even, to enter a business premises and to search there and to look at the employer's books and to find out how the employer is treating his employees. Usually those investigations are made, as I say always without warrant, but usually on a complaint by somebody. If the employer says to the Department of Labour inspector, I want to know what the nature of that complaint was because I want to know what I have to meet here, the inspector says no, you're not entitled to that. And that's a fact, that's what is now going on in Saskatchewan. It has gone on for some time; it's not a political thing; it's that government simply lapses into these practices.

I know of an example where the Department of Labour inspector arrives in a doctor's office and says I want to see your books and I want to talk about how you treat your employees. The doctor says, yes, I am prepared to do that, could you tell me have you had a complaint about me. The inspector says, well, I'm not entitled to tell you whether there has been a complaint. The doctor says, well that's fundamental, surely, you have to tell me whether there has been a complaint and what is the nature of the complaint. I ought to know about that. But he isn't entitled to know.

Now, all members can see that that creates a very real problem. If that happened to you, you would be very concerned about the nature of information which can be gathered on an individual by government with that kind of power and he never has access to the information to challenge it in any way. Many times, yours is only one example and I'm only using this one because there are so many. What I say to you in the end is that we

ought to have some concern here.

The Department of Health is another department whose inspectors are authorized without warrant to conduct searches of premises to see whether the law is being sort of carried out by the employer, often again on complaints. Again the employer has no right to know whether or not there was a complaint and has no right to know the nature of the complaint. So the employer doesn't know in effect what he has to meet in the first instance. Secondly, as a result of each one of those inspections, and they have them all the time, there is information stored on the file of that particular employer. That information is accessible and is getting accessible between government departments as they go along. Again, that's a habit all governments are getting into. That again poses some very real opportunity for abuse and again it is something we should be directing our minds to, not necessarily in terms of passing this particular bill, but at least becoming alert more alert to the problems that apply in this jurisdiction in the same way they apply in all kinds of other jurisdictions.

The other side to the question, Mr. Speaker, is as I said earlier, is the accumulation of public information. Now governments, all governments are conducting regularly studies and market analysis and drawing information from all sorts of quarters. They really over the time accumulate tons and tons of information. Now, most of which is never accessible either to members of the Legislature or to members of the public. Let me use one example, and I think it's a very solid one. When the government embarked upon its course to take over the potash mines, it conducted and had conducted a whole series of studies with respect to that move. Considerations of the market potential for potash into the future, considerations as to what was the real value of the mines, what they will likely have to pay for the mines. There were many many studies done in respect to that decision when it was taken.

We to this day, don't have access to those studies. We were never able to weigh the government's decision in that respect against what was in those studies, so therefore we were never able and the people were never able to make the kind of thorough assessments that they have to make in a democracy and whether they decide to continue to go on supporting the people who take those decisions or not.

Now, I think we have to address ourselves to that too. Here was a decision which was the largest financial commitment that this province has ever undertaken and in relative terms, I would venture to guess probably one of the largest financial decisions taken by a provincial government anywhere in this country; based upon thorough studies that preceded the decision and that followed the decision. Information and studies that to this day we don't have access to. We don't know what's there. Only a handful of men in this province do, and that affects very adversely our opportunity and the opportunity of the public to weigh the validity in propriety of that decision. This applies in all other areas as well. And as I say again, it's a notion that has kind of seeped into governments that public isn't entitled to information that hasn't any right, it's the government that has the right to the information that they feed out only that portion to the public that they, the government think the public ought to have when the rule really ought to be the reverse. And we ought to be entitled to the bulk of the information with only a limited number of exceptions.

This particular bill which I brought forward last year, Mr. Speaker, in a different form is different in this respect, that last year I had suggested that with the exception of a limited number of exceptions that a citizen ought to have access to information of a private kind and information of a public kind that a government has on mere application

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to the government. In other words, you merely, file an application to the government saying, I would like a particular bit of information, and the government if it doesn't fall within the guidelines is obliged to give it to you. The proposal I advanced last year was that if the government refused to do it, then the applicant had a right to go to court to have the question determined as to whether the information the government was withholding was within the exceptions. The Premier took exception to that, in a traditional way, by saying the problem with giving people access to the courts in these circumstances, he said it affected adversely ministerial responsibility. And that's the position a number of governments, including the national government have taken.

I am not sure that that isn't a little antiquated already because we've come so far these days from ministerial responsibility as we used to know it. But conceding for the time being to the Premier, that that was a failure of the bill I introduced last year, I've revised it this year by giving the Ombudsman power to order that certain information should be released, if in his opinion it doesn't fall within the exceptions outlined in the bill. Now that's a concept that we have already accepted. That the Ombudsman does have certain powers within the government and insofar as that's an intrusion on ministerial responsibility, it's an intrusion which has already been accepted by us. I did that to avoid the argument of the Premier that we were again intruding where we shouldn't be on ministerial responsibility in respect to the bill I introduced last year. So I think it's a better bill in that respect. What it would do — I see now it's two minutes past 5 o'clock so I will call it 5 o'clock.

The Assembly recessed until 7 o'clock p.m.