

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 20, 1979

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

On the Orders of the Day

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

MR. W.J.G. ALLEN (Regina Rosemont): — Mr. Speaker, I direct your attention and the attention of other members of the House to the west gallery, where we have a very fine group of 70 students from Mabel Brown School in the Regina Rosemont constituency. I might also point out to the House that Mabel Brown School is in the neighborhood in which I live, so many of the children who are with us today are also my neighbors. I want to express a special word of welcome to them today.

I am sure that all members will join with me in hoping that their stay here is both interesting and informative. I look forward to meeting with you all a little later in the afternoon.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. J.A. PEPPER (Weyburn): — Mr. Speaker, again today, I would like to introduce to you and through you a group of, I believe, 60 Grade 8 students from the Weyburn Junior High School. Along with yesterday's 80 students, that makes a total of 140 from the Weyburn Junior High School.

These students today, are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Jim Nedelcov and Mr. Clint Giene, I believe. Their bus driver is Mr. Delbert Foote, and Mrs. Carl Borys.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that all members of the Assembly again join with me as I say welcome to the Grade 8 students from Weyburn, because these students are the students of today and all students are the citizens of tomorrow. We welcome them here very heartily.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. PEPPER: — I look forward to meeting with them a little later and I am sure we wish them a safe journey home.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. R. PICKERING (Bengough-Milestone): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly, five special guests who are seated up in the Speaker's Gallery. These girls won the Saskatchewan provincial High School curling championship last weekend at Eastend.

I would like to ask the team to stand and be recognized as I call their names. The spare on the team, Linda Austin; lead, Karen Dmuchowsky; second, Mary Jo Diekrager; third, Maureen Schmidt, and the skip, Rhonda Williams.

They are accompanied here by the parents of the skip, Mr. and Mrs. Art Williams.

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At the start of the competition, throughout the province, there were approximately 500 teams. You will notice that they are wearing their gold medals and of course, Bob Pickering sweaters.

I am sure all members will join with me in congratulating them and wishing them good luck in the future. Also an enjoyable afternoon and a pleasant journey home.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. E.G. SHILLINGTON (Minister of Education): — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of government benches I would like to join my colleague in extending a warm welcome to these athletes and in extending as well very warm congratulation. I think it is fair to say that all the people of Saskatchewan share the sense of pride which their community must have in them. Thank you.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Saskatchewan Council of Anti-Poverty Organizations Program

MRS. J. DUNCAN (Maple Creek): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Rolfes). Mr. Minister, on July 1, 1978 an agreement was drawn up between your department and the Saskatchewan Council of Anti-Poverty Organizations, better known as SCAPO, concerning job training and job placement of lower income groups. Since you have cut off this funding for this organization as of March 31 of this year, could you please tell this Assembly who will be continuing this program?

MR. H.H. ROLFES (Minister of Social Services): — Mr. Speaker, those decisions have not been made at this particular time and as soon as we have an agreement either with the present group or with some other group the announcements will be made.

MRS. DUNCAN: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Are you aware that a 30-day written notice is required by this agreement? Since you have sent no such notice to SCAPO to this date, how do you expect them to perform their end of the bargain if you don't keep up with yours?

MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, I was not aware that a 30-day notice was given but I assume that my officials are aware and that they will be taking that into consideration and will see to it that something is done in the interim to take care of that 30-day notice which must be given.

MRS. DUNCAN: — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. How can you cut off a program without having something to replace it? It seems to me that would indicate you really are not concerned about job training and job placement of the poor.

MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, I think it is rather a facetious question to ask. I think all we have to do is have a look at other provinces. Programs are being cut every day by Conservative governments in Ontario, by Conservative governments in Manitoba particularly, and they are being cut off by the federal government. I did indicate to the member that I would have a look at the 30-day notice which must be given and I can assure her that something will be done to make sure that the program does not lapse

entirely.

Budget Decreases for Low Income Groups

MRS. DUNCAN: — New question, Mr. Speaker. If you are so concerned with these low income groups, Mr. Minister, perhaps you can advise this House why the budgets have been slashed drastically for such groups as Citizen Advisory Council, Interval House, Community Switchboard, the Native Project Society, just to name but a few?

MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, first of all the member is wrong in saying that the Community Switchboard budget has been cut. No decision has been made on the Community Switchboard. The Citizen Advisory Council budget has not been slashed, as she said, as the Citizen Advisory Council is no longer in existence as of April 1 and I think that it's good for the government to have a look at and examine those agencies which we are funding to see whether there is a need for those agencies at this particular time. We certainly felt when we established them, I believe in 1974, that there was need. Government is re-examining whether or not we can become more efficient, whether there are other groups serving the same purpose as present agencies are doing. I think it is good, in this time of examining how the services are provided, that the government take a very hard look at whether or not there could be some umbrella group throughout the province that could provide those same kinds of services, cut out some of the duplication that has existed and meet the demands of those poverty groups who have said to us, look there are a lot of gaps, there is a lot of overlapping. We would like you to have a look at it. We want to work with you to make sure that we have an efficient organization to provide services to the poor.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ANDREW: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. We've heard a lot in the last two or three weeks with regard to your benevolent government, in particular how you help Mr. Faris along and how you help Mr. McNeil along.

MR. SPEAKER: — Does the member have a question?

MR. ANDREW: — Yes I do have a question, Mr. Speaker. The fact that this program was cut, would it have any bearing on the fact that the head of the organization, Andy Sheppard, was a candidate for the Progressive Conservative Party in the last provincial election campaign?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, I've been waiting with bated breath for this question for some time. I knew it would have to be asked sometime in the House.

Dr. James Albert was appointed, I believe, in 1977 to examine SCAPO and other organizations. The agreement was made between the Department of Social Services and SCAPO. Dr. James Albert made a number of recommendations. We have asked SCAPO to put those recommendations into effect. They have not been put into effect on the whole.

MR. COLLVER: — They did. Every one.

MR. ROLFES: — In June of last year . . . if the Leader of the Opposition has a question to ask, let him get on his feet and ask that question and I'll answer it.

Mr. Speaker, last June, I met with Andy Sheppard and at that time Andy Sheppard was not a declared member of the PC Party. I didn't know what his politics were and I don't care what his politics were at that time and I don't care now. We had a frank discussion at that time about SCAPO and what we would like to do and how it could meet some of the recommendations made by Dr. James Albert. Other poverty groups have made presentations to me over the last two or three years asking me to take some action to make sure that the anti-poverty groups were representative groups and that they were speaking for poverty groups. They were concerned, we were concerned and I think action had to be taken. We took that action.

4-H Council

MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern): — Question to the Minister of Agriculture. A year ago there was an agreement between your department, the University of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan 4-H Council whereby the 4-H Council would incorporate itself so it can independently administer the grants that the government gives it. Then my question is, why last Friday was this decision reversed and the autonomy of the 4-H Council destroyed and the administration moved to the agriculture department?

HON. E.E. KAEDING (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member has a distorted version of what really happened. It's true that last year the university made the decision that they were not going to continue to operate the 4-H program, and some questioning was done as to how it should best be handled. We made the decision that we didn't want the 4-H program to disappear — we wanted it to continue, and so we did have some discussion with the Council as to how that could best be done. The decision which we came to was that we should attempt to give them more autonomy than they presently have and we have done that. We have decided that in the interim until we can come to a better resolution the administration of the funds would be done through the Department of Agriculture. Of course they have requested that they have total autonomy. I think it's fair to say that in our discussion with them we discussed the possibility of what would happen if they got total autonomy. They would have to set up an entire administrative structure for a small program and we could very well provide a lot of that administrative capacity and the background, the office equipment and so on without attracting the extra cost. We proposed to them a program whereby they would basically run the program but we would provide some of the administrative staff and some of the administration to that program. They have met with us only last week and we have come to some fair agreement as to exactly where the program should be going — and we have ongoing discussion with them.

They opposed the idea that we should move the office to Regina. We have agreed with them, okay, we can leave the office in Saskatoon. We've agreed with that, and we are still having ongoing discussions with them. One should not assume that we are not talking to these people and not trying to get the best possible 4-H program we can get.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. KATZMAN: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister of Agriculture, are you not really just trying to take over the 4-H, run it the way you people want, the same as you did with the cattle checkoff? As you know, 4-H is mostly run by volunteers which includes the Council which are volunteers. By your people running the program as you indicated they are going to do now, I do not believe you that it will be temporary because you people say things are temporary and they are forever when you take them over. Will you not reconsider your decision as the presentation made to you on Friday

asked for straight independence from the government and let them run their own affairs?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. KAEDING: — Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite that I've got a fair bit of experience with 4-H movements. I was a 4-H leader for many years and my children were in the 4-H Club for a long time. I was involved in the regional councils. Just last week after I had discussion with the Council, had some discussions with our own 4-H leaders in our own community, and I asked them what their concept was and whether they didn't think that this was a fairly good way of running it. They were quite in agreement that although they would like to have a 4-H Council have total autonomy, they have some real concerns about that. We are not taking away any of the autonomy of the 4-H movement, the Council. They can still design their own programs. All we're saying is that we are providing some of the staffing and that is simply because, if we don't provide the staffing, they're going to have to hire a lot people and they will have that much less money to run their program. We're trying to give them more money to run the program.

MR. KATZMAN: — Supplementary. Mr. Minister, did you not just point-blank blackmail them into doing . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order. I'll take a new question.

Experience with 4-H

MR. E.A. BERNTSON (Souris-Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, question to the Minister of Agriculture. I recognize that you've had lots of experience with the 4-H. You would think in the time you've had that experience you'd get to know that these volunteers respect their autonomy. They resent your . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. I'll take the member for Swift Current (Mr. Ham). Order. I'll take a new question, Swift Current.

Contaminated Fish Being Given to Needy Families

MR. D.M. HAM (Swift Current): — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Tourism (Mr. Matsalla). In light of the announcement of Dr. Rick Mathias, Provincial Epidemiologist, that the lakes in the Qu'Appelle chain are now also designed as fish for fun category, have you now taken steps to stop the practice of allowing contaminated fish to be given to needy families?

HON. A. MATSALLA (Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources): — Mr. Speaker, I think I indicated at that time that we are providing supervision with respect to any game fish which may be caught in the nets of the commercial fishermen. Any of the game fish that is there, the commercial fishermen are required to surrender this fish to our department or to our officers, and we proceed to dispose of the fish.

MR. HAM: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. When you say the commercial fishermen will surrender these fish to your officials, can you guarantee that they are? Are you taking steps to make certain that they are, because obviously they haven't been?

MR. MATSALLA: — Mr. Speaker, we're trying to do the best we can in enforcing the

regulations. I don't think that we should have an enforcement officer standing along side a commercial fisherman 24 hours a day.

MR. HAM: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I think the minister should know, at least until this day, the regulations haven't been followed and I think you'd better take steps to make sure they are.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Financial Support for Project Health

MR. G. TAYLOR (Indian Head-Wolseley): — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Rolfes). Mr. Minister, you've refused to indicate financial support to the program Project Health, which is home enrichment and learning for pre-schoolers. You are undoubtedly aware that this program will have to be discontinued as of March 31, 1979, without your support. Is this, Mr. Minister, an example of your government's attitude toward the services for retarded youngsters in this International Year of the Child?

MR. H.H. ROLFES (Minister of Social Services): — Mr. Chairman, I will have to take that question under advisement. There are literally hundreds of grants that are made by the Department of Social Services. I am not aware that we are not funding that particular program. It may well be that we are not. I would take that question under advisement and bring the answer to the House for the member. I can't just recall whether or not we are funding that one.

MR. TAYLOR: — Supplementary. You are indicating to me that you are not familiar with Project Health, Mr. Minister, but you will be looking into this and you will be bringing an answer to this Assembly? Would I have that answer tomorrow, Mr. Minister?

MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, I've already indicated to the member that I will bring an answer to the House for him. I can't guarantee it will be tomorrow but if I have the answer tomorrow it will be brought to this House tomorrow.

MR. LANE: — Supplementary question.

MR. SPEAKER: — Next question.

Cutback in Social Services Programs

MR. LANE: — A new question to the Minister of Social Services. There seems to be a series of cutbacks in various volunteer programs or training programs. Did you make representations to your cabinet colleagues about the contradiction in government policy between cutting back on social service programs while enhancing and expanding the 'higher the defeated NDP candidate programs' which seem to be the new . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS — Hear, hear!

MR. ROLFES: — In answer to the member, let me first of all indicate that the Department of Social Services' budget has increased 2.5 per cent, the day care program increased 39 per cent. Not only that but grants to poor people's groups have increased 11 per cent and they will total \$4.3 million this year. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I made

representation to my colleagues and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) has been very generous.

4-H Program

MR. R.L. COLLVER (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding). The Minister of Agriculture has made statements in this House today about the meetings that they had with the 4-H. Is the minister aware that the 4-H executives and the people with whom the Department of Agriculture met are not in the same consensus as the Minister of Agriculture? They do not believe, for example, that the office will remain in Saskatoon; they do not believe, for example, that the administration is not going to be taken out of the hands of their volunteers; and they do not believe, for example, that their total programs are not going to come under the control of the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture. Is the minister aware of this divergence of opinion?

MR. KAEDING: — Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I am aware that the 4-H Council was not totally happy with the way the program was brought down. But I want to advise the Leader of the Opposition that with the program they have now, the existing program they are going to have this year, they'll have more local autonomy, more autonomy for the 4-H council than they had under the university . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, they have. They were run last year from the university. This year the administration is being done by the Department of Agriculture. The administration is being done by the Department of Agriculture, not the program.

MR. E.A. BERNTSON (Souris-Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Agriculture. I wonder if you would undertake to communicate this increased autonomy to the 4-H people because they don't believe it. My question is, would you not agree that the whole 4-H program could well be jeopardized by your imposition of this program from the Department of Agriculture because of resentment at your imposition and a threatened resignation of all the volunteer people in the 4-H movement? Further, would you not agree that your department was acting in gross negligence when it threatened to withdraw funding if they didn't agree with your department?

MR. KAEDING: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know where you guys are getting all that gobbledygook from. Frankly, we have had discussions with the board. We had a meeting with them; my staff had a meeting with them last week. They met with me after they met with the staff. We discussed some of their problems. We said that we would get back to them with some possible changes. We are in the process of doing that.

I want to tell you that we didn't ask to have the 4-H program brought to the Department of Agriculture. What happened was the university said it was no longer going to continue the program so there had to be a decision made of who was going to run the program or how it was going to be funded. Either we were going to let it drop completely, which is obviously what you guys are saying, or we had to take it over to the Department of Agriculture and fund it. This is exactly what we are doing.

We may have some difficulty until we get it entirely smoothed out in terms of administration but certainly the program, as we are setting it up, gives them more autonomy than they had last year.

MR. LANE: — A question to the Minister of Agriculture. Will the Minister not admit that

the reason the universities (to use your phrase) didn't want to do it anymore, is because you cut back . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I will take the Minister of Finance.

Answer to Question re Average Wages

HON. W.E. SMISHEK (Minister of Finance): — During the question period last Tuesday the hon. member for Regina South (Mr. Rousseau) asked a question about the average provincial or government wage as compared to the average wage as reported by Statistics Canada.

Mr. Speaker, on checking the two figures that he had quoted, we find that the Statistics Canada publication does not include wages earned by the people in educational institutions, such as the universities, all our teachers and technical institutes, etc. It does not include health and welfare institutions and does not include all the public administration, that is, provincial government, civic governments or the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, the survey only considers about 25 per cent of the labor force. I don't think anybody can say that a survey is very valid when it excludes 75 per cent of the labor force.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member gave a figure of \$18,740. I do not know where he gets the figure because our study reveals that for the Saskatchewan Public Service, the average wage is \$15,500 as compared to the figure that was reported.

4-H Movement

MR. COLLVER: — A question to the Minister of Agriculture, with reference to the 4-H movement in the province of Saskatchewan. Is the minister aware and has he made any effort to calculate the value of the contribution made by the volunteer workers of the 4-H movement in Saskatchewan, in the light of his attempt to jeopardize those volunteers with his actions of last Friday?

MR. KAEDING: — Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Leader of the Opposition that there is no one in this House more dedicated to the 4-H movement than I am.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. KAEDING: — I can tell the Leader of the Opposition that there is nothing in the proposition which we have which takes any autonomy away from the local 4-H councils. I ask him to go out and ask the 4-H people in the province whether they think we are jeopardizing their program. I know that all that has been done here is the administration has been taken from the university and taken over by the Department of Agriculture, not at our request, but because the university was no longer going to do it. That's really the only difference there is in the program.

MR. COLLVER: — Final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In the light of the minister's response, would the minister not agree that when a government in Saskatchewan cuts the funding to one organization by \$93,000 (that is the University of Saskatchewan) for purposes of 4-H, then tries to tell 4-H that they have to take over

the administration because the university has backed out, that this might have a tendency (given the fact that the minister says he wants to support 4-H) to cause the 4-H directors to believe . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order. I will take a new question.

MR. COLLVER: — Well, you would prefer this kind of question. When, Mr. Minister, will you find out about the valuable contribution made by the volunteers and when will you learn that your actions of last Friday . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. I will take a new question.

Control of 4-H in the Province of Saskatchewan

MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. I give you the following background, Mr. Minister. Last week your department indicated to the university that there was going to be a cutback of approximately \$90,000 to the university for 4-H. 4-H then came back and said that we will try to work on the restrictive budget and one of your senior officials, Mr. Miller, told them point blank that you might as well give up — the Department of Agriculture has taken it over. Do you deny that and do you deny again that in fact what we are seeing is a concerted effort on the part of the government to take control of 4-H in this province?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. KAEDING: — Mr. Speaker, I can't tell you what some member of my department said or didn't say but I do know that we didn't take any funding away from the university. The university makes their own decision on how they run their programs. We don't tell them how many dollars to put into 4-H or anything else. They simply said to us, we think that 4-H is not a program we should be running out of the university. They said, we think it should be run either independently or out of the department. That's a fact. I can assure you that the \$93,000 which you are quoting (and I don't know whether that's an accurate figure) is probably the difference between what the council wanted and what they got in the budget. I can tell you that what they are getting in the budget now and the kind of program they can run with what they have, is just as good, in fact better, with more autonomy than they had before.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. I will take a new question.

Volunteer Organizations

MR. LANE: — Will the Minister of Agriculture not admit that in fact whenever a volunteer organization has paid administrative staff from the government or somewhere else, that that full time paid staff running the day to day operation has a tremendous influence on that volunteer organization and an influence in many cases which allows them . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I'll take a new question.

4-H Movement

MR. COLLVER: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister of Agriculture not agree that the 4-H movement is in jeopardy because of his . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I'll take a new question.

High Energy Equipment — Pasqua Hospital

MR. E.A. BERNTSON (Souris-Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Health (Mr. Tchorzewski). My question arises out of a news release which the Minister of Health sent out just the other day. He announced several things for which I compliment him. The one that bothers me is the one that says he is putting high energy equipment in the Pasqua Hospital at a cost of \$800,000, \$450,000 over and above that for the cost of the housing of that equipment. On May 17, 1978, that same minister when questioned as to whether this new facility at Pasqua would house this equipment, (it was also told to him that it would cost \$500,000 to put it in later and \$00,000 now.) He said Dr. Mallik is wrong.

. . . In that expansion, all considerations and provisions are being made for the installation of the new equipment which may be necessary at a future point in time. I want to assure the member, that is not a problem, all that has been looked after . . .

The letter of Dr. Mallik is wrong.

Will the minister indicate to this House whether in fact he was deliberately misleading the House at that time, whether he was misinformed and while he is doing that, will he also indicate whether he is going to simply apologize or tender his resignation?

HON. E.L. TCHORZEWSKI (Minister of Health): — Mr. Speaker, I can recall the debate last May on the Allan Blair Memorial Clinic. I can recall the reply I made to the member's questions. I stand by what I said. Whether that relates directly to the issue at hand in the establishment of the linear accelerator is something I will have to pursue and get clarified. Then I shall inform the member with the information that he wants to know. I do not have any intention of resigning at all. I want him to know that as well.

Point of Order on Question Period

MR. R.L. COLLVER (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, before the orders of the day, I want to rise on a point of order with reference to a question by the member for Qu'Appelle today. The member for Qu'Appelle issued a question to the Minister responsible for Social Services and in the course of his questioning when he was about three-quarters of the way through, you rose as though to rule the member out of order. Being a good member, the member immediately sat down. You then recognized a minister who was allowed to give an answer to a question which you were in the middle of ruling out of order and I'd like to know, Mr. Speaker, under what authority do you hold that kind of action is appropriate during question period in this legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: — The member for Qu'Appelle rose and was putting a question before the House. I judged the question to be debate. The rules governing the question period say:

Questions must be stated without pre-amble or speech or be in the nature of debate.

Therefore the member for Qu'Appelle was out of order. I moved on to the next person who was available. It was the Minister of Finance who was responding to a question which was put at an earlier time.

MR. LANE: — On that particular point of order that's not quite the way the events happened, Mr. Speaker, and I'd just like to refresh your memory. You rose in your place to rule me out of order. I sat down. The minister to whom I was directing my question at that point then gave up and gave an interminable answer prior to you recognizing the Minister of Finance and I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, why the minister was able to reply as I say, at great length, when you ruled the question out of order?

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order. I didn't rule the question that the member for or . . . the Minister of Finance was not responding to the member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane). His answer was to a previous question on another day. The member for Qu'Appelle was out of order because his question was in the nature of a debate. Therefore, he was out of order, according to the rules, not allowed to proceed with his question which I judge to be debate. I think if the members would have a look at the record, the verbatim transcript of the House for that particular question, they will find that the member for Qu'Appelle was, in fact, debating the issue.

MR. COLLVER: — . . . point of order, I arise on a new point of order then, Mr. . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — I can't have interminable debate about rulings I've given. I think the members have . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order. The members have to accept the ruling. The members have to be aware of the fact that I have to make a judgment quickly and if a member is debating the issue, I think an examination of the record will show, one way or another, whether the member was in fact debating the issue.

MR. COLLVER: — Mr. Speaker, I agree with what you say. What I'm asking you to do is to review the record yourself on the question asked by the member for Qu'Appelle to which the Minister of Social Services replied, on which you ruled him out of order because it was debate, but then you allowed the Minister of Social Services to reply. I'm asking you to review the record and, Mr. Speaker, if you find the record according to what we are suggesting then perhaps tomorrow, or when the record is available perhaps you could make an appropriate ruling at that time.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. I assumed that the member for Nipawin (Mr. Collver) was raising the point of order with regard to the question raised by the member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane) immediately before the Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek) rose . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, it's difficult to know which question the member was referring to from my records here. I have the member for Qu'Appelle on his feet several times and he was on his feet four times during the question period. I have marginal notes here and in each case the member for Qu'Appelle was out of order because of debate in every instance. So my ruling is consistent with the member for Qu'Appelle, and he is consistent and I am consistent and I think the record will clearly show that every question the member for Qu'Appelle asked was debatable.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order. That covers all the questions the member for Qu'Appelle asked so I think that takes care of the issue.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 2 — Migratory Waterfowl Depredation Claims

MR. J.R. KOWALCHUK (Melville) moved, seconded by Mr. D.G. Banda (Redberry).

That this Assembly deplores the federal government's disregard of its obligation and responsibility to the farmers of Western Canada shown by its refusal to share fully the cost of 1978 migratory waterfowl depredation claims.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I stand up to introduce this resolution, but it is with a very strong sense of disappointment and frustration that I do this. Because, Mr. Speaker, it is the third time in three years that I have sponsored the same type of resolution, always with the hope that the federal government will accept the suggested solution arising out of the debate and settle, once and for all, on a formula for waterfowl depredation that satisfies the farmers who have suffered substantial losses to their income through no fault of their own making, and accept, once and for all, the fact that the waterfowl depredation is a federal responsibility.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, I had a resolution made out making out the case of the farmer as well and let me repeat that resolution which I introduced:

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

Mr. Speaker, the theme of this resolution is the same as this year's, asking the federal government to carry out its responsibility in the area of waterfowl depredation of Saskatchewan crops, causing damages — untold damages — to the Saskatchewan farmers' crops. And that is all it does and nothing more, Mr. Speaker.

Year after year, the federal government continues to attempt to wriggle out of its responsibilities even after making commitments. This last year, 1978, was no different.

This resolution is timely. The question of full federal participation in migratory bird depredation is of great importance to western Canadian farmers, who yearly find their crop losses substantially increasing. This year, 1978, the loss claims in Saskatchewan alone were nearly \$2 million. And it is the same farmers, year after year, in the traditional flyways of these migratory birds, who are affected.

The losses for the 1978 crop season in Saskatchewan amounted to, as I said a moment ago, nearly \$2 million. The federal government's contribution was \$625,000, matched by Saskatchewan as per agreement coming to \$1,350,000. The Saskatchewan government agreed to share the cost on a 50-50 basis to the full extent of all approved claims. After many discussions with the federal government the net result was a steadfast refusal by that government to increase the amount of the funding to cover these net losses.

Mr. Speaker, another \$275,000 from the feds matched by the Saskatchewan Government, which we agreed to do, would have compensated all claims 100 per cent, but the federal government has refused. Not another nickel, they said. So the

compensation paid instead of dollar for dollar loss, resulted in a 68 per cent dollar paid out to the loss claimants.

Mr. Speaker, it has been acknowledged many times in the past that migratory birds are the responsibility of the federal government. Let me repeat to you, Sir, what I said last year in debating the same question:

That the Migratory Birds Convention Act and the International Treaty with the United States places the responsibility of migratory birds squarely on the shoulders of the federal government.

We know that the migratory birds are protected, and so they should be. We also know that this Saskatchewan government has made a valiant attempt through crop insurance, through lure crop programs and so on, to do all within its power to alleviate the great loss to the farmer.

But, Mr. Speaker, let us not forget that this province also has the added responsibility of losses as a result of all the other creatures of the Crown — elk, deer, bears and so on. The depredations of these animals and birds are a costly item which is totally borne by the province. The Minister of Tourism (Mr. Matsalla), has just recently announced the rate of payments that this province will be paying for such losses.

Mr. Speaker, migratory bird losses are first and foremost, as I have said, a federal responsibility. They issue the licenses for hunting these birds. In fact they increased the cost from \$3 to \$3.50 in 1974, saying, only after federal-provincial discussion, that the increase was to pay extra compensation for crop losses — a real turnabout, Mr. Speaker, once again assessing the Saskatchewan people, while all the while before in the negotiations, not once claiming that this extra charge was as originally stated, and I quote: ‘to ensure that it became an effective sampling to the universe for the purpose of getting information from the hunter’. That purpose is still valid now as it was then, Mr. Speaker.

The federal government has increased its income, yes, increased its income from the hunting permits, but has made a complete turnabout. It is still charging the fee but is ignoring the farmers’ total losses and is saying that the agreement between them and the province is at an end as of 1979, and in fact might be totally stopped in the name of government spending cutbacks, Mr. Speaker.

I am certain, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan hunter does not mind paying for his share of the crop losses, providing the farmer gets it. There is more to it than meets the eye. The hunters’ limited benefit of a few days hunting is in no way comparable to that of the benefits of the hunters of the United States and Mexico who probably benefit tenfold from these game birds. The Saskatchewan farmer who suffers these tremendous losses benefits none at all, Mr. Speaker.

From any angle that you look at the problem of migratory birds, it is a federal responsibility — a federal problem which can be dealt with only by the federal government and not by their opting out, as has been intimated time and time again.

Let me quote from my statement of last year in debate on this very same question, Mr. Speaker. I said last year:

For too long the farmers of Saskatchewan and the province have borne the

brunt of the depredation carried on by the waterfowl of the North American continent. More than 60 per cent of all wild ducks, geese and other waterfowl use the western flyway, and prey upon the farmers' crops in the southern half of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta, causing millions of dollars of uncollectible crop damage.

As far back as one can remember, this picture has always been the same, Mr. Speaker.

In 1953, the provincial Government of Saskatchewan, under the Department of Natural Resources, initiated a program and made funds available through the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office (SGIO) to administer a program designed to assist in the wildlife damage but in no way could a province stand the cost of the total coverage program.

The Migratory Birds Convention Act places squarely the responsibility of waterfowl depredation on the federal government and so it should be, Mr. Speaker. Waterfowl are creatures that have no domicile residence. Their habitat and residence change with the seasons. They're continental without any border restrictions. Their hunting license is under the federal government. In every way, it is the federal authorities, Mr. Speaker, that should be totally responsible for losses under the crop depredation, since it's all of North America that benefits. The damages, however, caused by the waterfowl, is borne to the greatest degree by farmers with almost no compensation, except that provided by the province under crop insurance and subsidized to a very limited degree by Ottawa. Only in 1974, Mr. Speaker, after a prolonged and protracted negotiation did the federal government finally recognize its obligations and responsibilities. We considered it then a breakthrough for the province. An agreement was signed in 1974, retroactive to 1973, a four-year agreement which last year was extended for another year in the form of a letter. The agreement called for \$1 million yearly divided between the cost of projects such as lure crops, which is a preventative measure, and in compensation only contributed to premium cost of all crop insurance and also half of administration costs, Mr. Speaker. Where the loss is the greatest and not recoverable to the greatest extent under the All Risk Co-op Insurance, the federal government has contributed nothing nor does it seem that it intends to. In other words, there is no protection for the individual farmers' coverage for specific fields which were damaged or totally destroyed by migratory birds. That is where all the losses are, Mr. Speaker. That is the weakness in the federal government's participation.

As I've already stated, Mr. Speaker, there was a \$10 million crop loss last year and possibly a bit of recovery through the crop insurance but to the greatest degree the farmers are the losers. This was said by me last year, Mr. Speaker.

I go further on, Mr. Speaker, to say the federal government continues to display that kind of irresponsible attitude. I say it is irresponsible. I said it last year and I'll say it again this year and I continue to read.

This isn't the program that was first inaugurated by the province and so interpreted as indirectly being forced on the federal government

We didn't force this on the federal government. It isn't the program that can be branded as some sort of a welfare scheme. It isn't the program that could be interpreted as a socialist brain wave. It is a problem, Mr. Speaker, that became a problem when the first settlers came to this province to farm. It's a problem that has had continuous,

disastrous consequences for the farmers for many years. It's distinctly and definitely a national problem and in no way should be sloughed off on the Canadian government on to Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, if this is the attitude of the federal government, then I believe that our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding) and our Minister of Highways (Mr. Kramer) indicated to the SARM delegates at Saskatoon that we drop out of the federal-provincial agreements is a good one, that either the federal government face up to the situation as it is and increase the payments for crop damage or we drop the whole problem into their lap to deal with as their problem, which it is.

Mr. Speaker, the fight for compensation to each farmer began earnest in 1971, as I have already stated, when the Hon. Eiling Kramer was Minister of Natural Resources. From then on there has been a sharing of costs of crop damages with changes coming on as the years went by, with the federal government under Jack Davis, Minister of Environment and Juaane Sauve accepting the responsibility of crop depredation by migratory birds as a federal responsibility for the first time. In 1974 when I had the honor of being the minister in charge after a long and protracted negotiation, as I have already said before, an agreement was signed retroactive to 1973 — a four-year agreement as stated just a few moments ago in last year's debate. And here we are today, Mr. Speaker, almost where we were five years ago back at square one — not that it is the fault of this government at all. Both the ministers, we pressured them, both the Minister of Agriculture of Saskatchewan and the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources (Mr. Matsalla) have fought a valiant fight to build up and approve the depredation agreement but to no avail . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You'll have your chance — the member for Moosomin (Mr. Birkbeck) if he contributes as much to this debate as he did last year he could have stayed home.

May I say that both these ministers, Mr. Speaker, have fought and so have the provinces of Alberta and Manitoba fought along side with them. I sincerely hope, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition members will give their full support to the resolution and not condemn this government for not implementing and signing a further agreement. We would have implemented and signed it a long time ago if we could have reached a conclusion with the federal government. This government has made every attempt to deal with the federal government on this issue in particular and deserves a great deal of credit, not condemnation. Mr. Speaker, because it's a smaller issue than crowrates or prairie rail line abandonment does not make it less needful of a united approach for western farmers, be they in Alberta, Saskatchewan or Manitoba. We need a united front to place this question of crop depredation once again squarely to the federal government as a matter of being under their jurisdiction and their responsibility. I am hoping that all members of this House will support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I now move this resolution.

MR. D.G. BANDA (Redberry): — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to support the very important resolution that has just been moved by my colleague and I want to commend the member for Melville on his persistence in regard to this resolution.

The resolution deplores the federal government's disregard of its responsibility to the farmers of western Canada by its refusal to share fully the cost of the 1978 waterfowl depredation claims. I wouldn't go so far as to say this is Ottawa's year to get the West, Mr. Speaker, as every year is the year to get the West, but it does appear that they are trying harder. Just a spot list will show cutbacks and attacks by the Prairie Rail Action

Committee on our rail lines, attacks on the crowrate, weather forecast stations, RCMP training, the cancellation of rail line relocation for Regina, just to list a few, Mr. Speaker. Now the latest in the continuing saga of withdrawals is the waterfowl depredation payments.

Mr. Speaker, in 1978 nearly 1,900 Saskatchewan farmers submitted claims that came to about \$1.8 million. In addition, the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation spent about \$100,000 to administer the program. This brought the total cost for the program to \$1.9 million. The federal and the matching provincial grants came to \$1.35 million, as my colleague has stated. This made the fund about \$550,000 short of the verified claims. Mr. Speaker, because the federal government refused to live up to their responsibilities, Saskatchewan farmers will receive only 68 cents on each dollar. Now, Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand why Saskatchewan farmers must pay to feed the Crown's birds.

Mr. Speaker, let no one doubt that these birds and the damage they cause belong to the federal government. This was first established in 1916 by the Migratory Bird Convention Act and has been fortified several times since. We do not need a history lesson on migratory bird legislation. We have been through this, unfortunately, before — year in and year out. To further establish its domain over migratory birds, Canada collects \$3.50 a year from each waterfowl hunter and maintains the right to arbitrarily set bag limits for all game species. And yet, Mr. Speaker, they have the audacity to withdraw after collecting the money that was originally promised to grain producers for losses suffered due to the waterfowl. They pay less than what adequately compensates the unfortunate farmers, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunate, indeed, is the farmer whose crop is ravaged by feeding waterfowl. Although Ottawa may say crop damage by waterfowl is only slight compared to the whole harvest, it can be ruinous for the individual farmer that lives on the migratory flight path. Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to state that Saskatchewan has more than lived up to its responsibility for wildlife. We have recognized that society deems wildlife as important. We have spent millions of dollars on consultation with concerned citizens and agencies. We also believe these are society's birds, not the farmer's birds; therefore society should pay for them. Now, in 1979, after some 63 years, Ottawa says we will not honor our obligations. We will not pay the outstanding debt of \$550,000 which we owe Saskatchewan farmers for feeding our birds in 1978, and furthermore, they say we will not pay anything at all for feeding birds in 1979. We want to cut back on the West so we can make the bankers in Toronto happy, because we need Toronto; we don't need the West.

Members opposite say we should sign a binding agreement — look at Resolution No. 19. Well, Mr. Speaker, a program with one year's life expectancy shows no long term federal commitment, as was the case in the 1973 agreement. The one year agreement creates a crisis situation each spring for administration of the program and does not give the landowner an opportunity to plan ahead. Thus public confidence is lost. Secondly, the one year program provides no indication of a continuing federal involvement, and we found that out. The proposal also does not contain any mention of a mutual promise to develop a long term spot loss compensation scheme. This was contained in the just expired agreement of 1978. The federal government has done nothing in this agreement to live up to this obligation.

Mr. Speaker, we strongly support a long term approach, and we recognize the responsibility to have such a program in place this last year, as well as in the future, and

a minimum five year agreement is required. The fact that separate programs were proposed for compensation and prevention is also totally unacceptable to us as it will reduce the efficiency of the program and creates the potential danger of one portion of the program being played against the other, and this is exactly what is happening. By separating the two programs, heavy public pressure is placed on the compensation portion of the program and escalating cost tremendously. I suggest that either the two programs remain together, or that Canada completely take over the compensation portion of the program, and Saskatchewan run the prevention program, with 50 per cent federal funds.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has been picking up the bill for conservation. We have been picking up half the bill for crop depredation when it is not our responsibility . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . when we have not been able to make decisions on waterfowl management.

Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite would read their speech from last year, they wouldn't be harping over there. Whatever they contributed, all they said was that farmers in Saskatchewan should pay the whole shot. That's what the member for Moosomin (Mr. Birkbeck) said.

We have given all this support for our farmers. Now we, and our farmers, are left stranded, Mr. Speaker. It makes one wonder if we should continue with agreements with the federal government to protect and encourage the breeding of game birds, if the federal government is not going to pay for the feeding of the birds. The Migratory Game Bird Act is a federal law and a federal responsibility. With the present attitude of the federal government, one would be tempted to say that we in Saskatchewan should never have accepted any responsibility for wild game damage to crops. It's not fair that Saskatchewan farmers should suffer economic setbacks from a resource which benefits all of society. The negligence of the federal government is jeopardizing any chance of implementing habitat conservation programs for waterfowl on the prairies . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . squeak it over there. Mr. Speaker, this places the entire waterfowl resource in danger. Mr. Speaker, it seems highly hypocritical of Ottawa to draw money from waterfowl hunters, to insist that migratory birds have been their responsibility for over half a century, and then to refuse to give compensation to the very people who are suffering the most because of the waterfowl, Saskatchewan farmers. Mr. Speaker, this is a discriminatory and shabby policy brought to bear against the farmers of Western Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that we have not received much encouragement from opposition members on this issue. I would like to address myself to a suggestion made by some of the members of last year's opposition, that is, that some form of crop insurance be set up to compensate landowners for losses caused by migratory waterfowl. Others said that Saskatchewan should pay the whole shot. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the members opposite if they can justify telling the landowners in their constituencies that in order to get compensation for losses due to depredation they should have to pay the premiums on insurance themselves. I would like to ask them if they can explain to their constituents that they will have to support at their own expenses a resource which is enjoyed by every person in Canada and, indeed, out of Canada, in North America — a resource which through revenue from hunting licenses puts money into federal coffers. Mr. Speaker, I suggest that crop insurance is not the answer to the problem of depredation by waterfowl. As my colleague, the hon. member for Melville (Mr. Kowalchuk) stated in his remarks, the farmers of Saskatchewan have carried the brunt of depredation caused by waterfowl for too long. Mr. Speaker, it is time the

federal government paid up and quit welching on responsibilities they have committed themselves to in writing and in deed. It is time they properly funded a compensation for crop loss program for farmers who have suffered crop depredation due to migratory waterfowl.

Mr. Speaker, this government has demonstrated that it more than meets its responsibilities for wildlife protection and farm protection. It is now time for the federal government to stop the foot dragging and pay their bills. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I second Resolution No. 2, and that I strongly recommend everyone in this legislature support this resolution.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. J. GARNER (Wilkie): — Mr. Speaker, I would also like to address the legislature on this motion this afternoon. It's very amusing to sit here and listen to members opposite condemn the federal government and only the federal government, stating that it is just the federal government's fault because there was not enough money to pay all the claims in '78 for crop loss due to migratory game birds. I believe very strongly that it is not only the federal government that is to blame but the provincial government as well.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to address my remarks to the federal government that is so arrogant when it comes communicating not only to the people of Saskatchewan, but started out not even co-operating with the Government of Saskatchewan. After reading a headline in the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix dated Saturday, March 18, 1978, Saskatchewan Still is Waiting for Word on a Press Announcement Made a Week Ago by two Federal Cabinet Ministers, Agriculture Minister, Eugene Whelan and Environment Minister, Len Marchand sent out a joint press release, date lined Brandon, Manitoba, in which they announced a new program of help in covering farm losses due to duck depredation. But the entire scheme was announced without consultation with the Saskatchewan government, the one most affected by duck damage to grain crops. This just helps to prove what I was saying about a very arrogant federal government that does not even try to communicate with the provincial governments. Saskatchewan first offered compensation for losses due to ducks back in 1956. But it was not until 1972 that the federal government woke up and finally decided that they should maybe get involved and accept their legal responsibility for waterfowl damage.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it is very evident that the people of Saskatchewan are fed up with the present federal Liberal government and the two dictators we have running the federal Liberal government, those two dictators being Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Lang. Every time these two individuals turn around, something happens to our wonderful Canada and it's not good.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Think Joe Clark would be better?

MR. GARNER: — Just hang tough, guys. Whenever Mr. Trudeau calls a federal election, I'm very confident that the people will pull the rug out from underneath him and the rest of the Liberal Party. With Joe Clark as our Prime Minister . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. GARNER: — . . . we will get back to a government that will listen to the people and not dictate to them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Right on, right on, Jim.

MR. GARNER: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn to the provincial government that seems to be wearing a white cloak over a black one. Mr. Speaker, another heading from a press clipping reads: Damage Fund Ceiling Irks Province on August 17, 1978. Saskatchewan will drop out of a federal wildlife preservation program if the federal government does not recognize its responsibility for waterfowl damage to crops. Are these not your words, Mr. Minister of Agriculture? This to me sounds like a real socialist approach to a problem. Instead of indicating a solution, just dump the ducks on the Saskatchewan farmer and run away in those white cloaks.

Mr. Speaker, if you were a farmer, having just read a statement like that from the Minister of Agriculture in your province of Saskatchewan, knowing that you might have a wet fall with lots of migratory game birds around, it wouldn't be long before you would start dreaming about ducks, knowing that your provincial government could care less what happens to your grain crops.

Mr. Speaker, a news release put out by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding) on January 16, 1979 reads as follows:

Waterfowl Crop Depredation Insurance in Jeopardy, Nineteen hundred Saskatchewan farmers submitted claims totalling about \$1.8 million. In addition the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Board spent about \$100,000 to administer the program bringing the total cost to about \$1.9 million (. . . inaudible interjection . . . Oh, you read your own newspaper, Cody). Since the federal grant and matching provincial grant came to about \$1.35 million, the fund is about \$500,000 short of verified claims. If the federal government's contribution is not increased there will be enough money to provide only 68 cents on each dollar of verified claim, Mr. Kaeding said. Mr. Kaeding said, he intends to wait until January 31 before making a final decision on payment of 1978 claims. If we haven't heard from Mr. Whalen by then we will have no alternative but to go ahead and pay the claims on a pro-rated basis, he said.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to point out to this Assembly what a lacklustre and weak government we have in Saskatchewan. The Minister of Agriculture has just stated that he wasn't going to mail out any money to the farmers on their crop losses until 1978 at the end of January. By delaying and waiting this long to pay money owed to the Saskatchewan farmers it has already put a large burden on them as they have bills to pay like anyone else, Mr. Speaker. The farmers of Saskatchewan entered into this agreement with the government in good faith but the government was once again playing games with the farmer of Saskatchewan. In the first part of February I was in touch with the minister's office asking when the money was to be sent out to the farmers. I was given no direct answer or no date so, on February 6, after receiving many calls from farmers all over Saskatchewan, I issued a news release calling on the government to mail out money that was already in the fund. If more money was to come from the feds later, send that out later. So, the very next day the minister stated that payment would start going into the mail. Mr. Speaker, I would now like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Agriculture for taking my advice and mailing those cheques out to the farmers of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. GARNER: — In the cheques, Mr. Speaker, that were mailed out to the farmers of Saskatchewan, one little paragraph I would like to read to you, dated February 5, 1979:

I sincerely regret that the enclosed cheque under the Canada-Saskatchewan Waterfowl Crop Damage Compensation program represents only 68.3 per cent of your approved claim. It has been reduced because the federal government has limited expenditures on this program in Saskatchewan to \$675,000. Saskatchewan has matched this amount by agreement for a total of \$1,350,000 which will only pay 68.3 per cent of the total approved claims.

Mr. Speaker, I have a copy here of the agreement between the federal and provincial government, signed by the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well I suppose you should be told because after all you signed it. I don't imagine you know what you signed, but I can tell you if you want to know.

I'll quote two parts in here, Mr. Speaker.

5(a) Canada and Saskatchewan shall share equally compensation payments to Saskatchewan grain producers made in accordance with this agreement and the following costs and expenses of administering the said program, namely, salary, wages, travelling and other out-of-pocket expenses of personnel engaged in the actual adjusting and processing of claims under this program and stationery and printing supplies, public information costs and other miscellaneous expenditures directly attributable to the administration of this government.

Mr. Speaker, now I ask my members opposite to listen, and listen closely:

. . . provided, however, that payment by Canada under this agreement shall not exceed \$675,000.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I ask you, what Minister of Agriculture, what Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources for any province in Canada would sit down and even start negotiating an agreement like this with a set price in there? How do they know, unless they have some little magic wand or a crystal ball, what claims are going to be coming in, in the year 1978? One other little point, Mr. Speaker, under number 16:

Nothing contained in this agreement shall commit either party to any obligation, either financial or jurisdictional, beyond the term of this agreement. Nor shall this agreement form the basis for the negotiation of any subsequent agreements.

Mr. Speaker, there is another point that disturbs me and I hope the Saskatchewan farmers can see what kind of a government they have running their province. Negotiations started on this agreement last year. I am sure I have read in different press clippings and so on, that the provincial government, last year, was telling the people of Saskatchewan it had already signed this agreement.

Mr. Speaker, this agreement was signed March 1, 1979. Now, how do you explain that?

Last year the farmers of Saskatchewan were going on a crop depredation program and the agreement wasn't signed until March 1 of this year.

Mr. Speaker, this just helps to prove my point that we not only have an arrogant government in Ottawa. This just helps to prove my point that we not only have an arrogant government in Ottawa but just as arrogant a government here in Saskatchewan and it is very weak.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, I would now like to move an amendment to the motion and it shall read:

That Resolution No. 2 be amended and the following words added:

That this Assembly condemns the provincial government for not pressuring the federal government to signing a binding substantial agreement with the federal Liberal government in 1978.

AN HON. MEMBER: — . . . Farmers in Manitoba?

MR. GARNER: — I am not concerned about the farmers of Manitoba. I'm concerned about the farmers of Saskatchewan and so should this government be!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, I would just like to add one more remark. I can see why no action has been taken . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I can't say anymore? Okay. Mr. Speaker, my motion is seconded by Mr. Birkbeck (Moosomin).

Debate continues concurrently on the motion and the amendment.

MR. L.W. BIRKBECK (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise to second the amendment by my hon. colleague the member for Wilkie (Mr. Garner). It also makes it very difficult to speak at any length or in any detail on this main motion or the amendment in light of the superb and admirable job that has been done by the member for Wilkie on this very motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BIRKBECK: — As usual, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of members there who seem to be rather lost in their ideals and their goals. Let us just very quickly recap what we have. We have a motion by the member for Melville (incidentally which he had on the order paper last year as well) and it just simply says that this Assembly deplores the federal government's disregard of its obligation and responsibility to the farmers of western Canada shown by its refusal to share fully the cost of 1978 migratory waterfowl depredation claims.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's not a bad motion, that is really not a bad motion. But, Mr. Speaker, what the members opposite seem to do, as they are doing throughout the province and they set that example right here in the Legislative Chambers, is that rather than getting up and presenting the motion honestly, sincerely and attempting to get the support of the opposite side of this House (the opposition members), they make

statements and make charges which will divide this Assembly, which is the institution and which surely should set an example for the rest of the province. Then they continue that on outside of this Legislative Chambers throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, that's where I take objection with the member (Mr. Kowalchuk). He comes in (again today) and says that my comments on his original motion last year were not valid. Well very simply, what were they?

He is suggesting that the cost sharing program between the federal government and the provincial government, should be handled by the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office. Now surely, I don't feel that's the appropriate way to handle the funds. My statements were very simple. The SGIO should not handle the distribution of those funds. I think that's a reasonable assessment. I suggested, partly, crop insurance could cover some of these losses. I think that's a reasonable suggestion. I agreed that the feds should share part of the losses here in Saskatchewan, but, Mr. Speaker, I also made the statements when I replied to the member for Melville (Mr. Kowalchuk) that it was not just Saskatchewan's problem and it was not just a federal problem, but it included both the federal government and the provincial government and as well the United States of America. I made those statements as well in my comments. The Migratory Bird Convention Act is an international act. You don't speak of that particular aspect in this motion whatsoever.

Now your failure, as the member for Wilkie (Mr. Garner) has adequately pointed out, to negotiate reasonable terms with Ottawa to get sufficient funds, is just, Mr. Speaker, another example of this government's failure to negotiate at any time on any subject with Ottawa. You failed with the weather office and you have failed now with this migratory bird situation and it just goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the member for Wilkie has pointed these things out. If they don't agree then I condemn them for putting the motion in the way that they do. The amendment that we have added to the original motion will provide that you accept your responsibilities as well. You can't always slough everything off on Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, that's all I have to say on this motion and the amendment and I beg leave to adjourn debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

Resolution No. 6 — Cable Television

MR. P. ROUSSEAU (Regina South) moved, seconded by Mr. J.G. Lane (Qu'Appelle):

That this Assembly condemns the Government of Saskatchewan for its cable television policies which have cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan millions of dollars and which have deprived the people of rural Saskatchewan cable television.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak on this motion. It has been less than two years since this government introduced and passed the act respecting community cablecasters in this House, one of the most controversial bills that was ever introduced. They drafted this legislation under the guise of the communities and the

people, by way of co-ops, having complete control over it. What they in fact wanted is control by the politicians and the bureaucrats. The minister who was then responsible for cable said, and I quote:

Cable television should be harnessed to serve the needs of the community, the province, and the people who live here. The service ought to be available to as many people in Saskatchewan as possible.

Today we have, according to recent reports, only 17,000 subscribers in the three major cities of the province, and this figure is probably grossly exaggerated. Once again, in their greed for power and control, they least of all consider the people of the province.

Saskatchewan was the last province in Canada to be considered by the CRTTC (Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission) for cable television and yet, in spite of this affront by the CRTTC, this government proceeded to delay delivery of cable to its residents even more. Licences were issued in July of 1976 to four groups in Saskatchewan and more than one year later, this government had still refused to negotiate with these groups for hardware leasing or allow any of them to install their own. You'll probably never know how much these delays have cost these four licensees, but it is no doubt in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Why did this government feel that they could accomplish what no other city in Canada could — having both cable TV and closed-circuit TV at the same time in a very limited market?

They were told by this opposition that it was economically unattainable. This government has the habit of not listening to the people or of hearing only what they want to hear. Again, I quote from Hansard, where the minister said:

Shortly after the election of this government in 1971, it was clear that some communities in this province might enjoy cable television. The government then began to formulate its policy as to what cable TV should be.

He then quoted Pierre Juneau as saying that cable TV is really, in a sense, an evil. It brings into Canada three of the American networks, the worst of a foreign culture. Then he said, and again I quote, 'We in essence agreed with that statement that in any by itself it wasn't serving much of a purpose'. Now, this is an example of partial hearing. They listened to the people who said they wanted cable television. They listened to Pierre Juneau, who said they didn't want American television. However, if they had been listening intently to the people, what they would have heard was they wanted American TV on cable to be able to tune in to more sports such as football, golf and baseball.

Is the present closed-circuit TV giving the people Canadian content? Of course not. The four channels provide almost total American content, with the exception of maybe one hour per day for local programming. What they have managed to do is bring to the people of Saskatchewan American content, not free but at a very high cost. Why were they so anxious to support a non-viable or economically unattainable venture? Was it to eventually have the political propaganda machine not otherwise available to them? Why did they set co-op against co-op?

Mr. Speaker, at the February, 1976, CRTTC (Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission) hearings in Regina, there were five or six groups

that applied for cable in Regina alone. Cable Regina was the successful applicant. All of the other applications, no doubt, were very disappointed in not being successful. However, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that a year later, when it became apparent that this government would stop at nothing to gain control of cable television, they were all quite happy that they had not invested any more than their initial cost of applying for the licence. When the minister failed in his initial attempt to force their ideologies on the federal government, they demoted him and brought in their heavyweight, the Attorney General.

I find it ironic that the federal socialists and provincial socialists were not able to negotiate satisfactory terms. This government has also spent a considerable amount of money in applying for the same licence for cable television. However, because of their unlimited resources, our taxpayers' money, they acted like school boys — pouting school boys, and decided that they would teach CRTTC or the federal government, that they would not be allowed to interfere within this province. They then proceeded to go after the closed circuit market. Surely, with the resources available to this government and the surveys they conducted, they knew it was impossible. I am sure their attitude had to be that they could do the impossible when it was the taxpayers' money anyway, so it didn't matter.

Mr. Speaker, the minister at the time suggested that only with their bill, would the community have control over community programming. Who did he think would control it, for example, on Cable Regina? In their submission to the CRTTC, not only did all of the other groups of committees established for this purpose offer community input (?) but provided at least 10 per cent of their revenue to local programming and provided anywhere from 40 hours to 60 hours per week for community programming. Through their stubbornness, this government tried in every way to break the licensees of Cable TV. They have spent at least \$5 million and now have forced CPN (Co-operative Programming Network) into receivership.

Let us take a look at some of those costs. First of all, there is the \$2.6 million guaranteed by the government. Then there are the 10,000 converters that Sask Tel ordered at a cost of probably somewhere around \$100 per converter. It totals to about \$1 million. The member asks if it has all been spent. If it hasn't all be spent, then why haven't you paid the Sask Tel telephone bill of \$600,000? I would venture to guess that it has been all spent and probably more. Then we have the Department of Finance officials who spent several months assisting this white elephant, and of course the hidden cost of Sask Tel employees who spent much of their time on it. No doubt, as is the tradition of this government, they will blame the mismanagement of CPN (Co-operative Programming Network) for its failure. The member, the hon. minister, I suggest that I am calling the Co-op a white elephant — your interfering with that department, or that company, that co-op, a white elephant.

Again they will have a scapegoat. Again they will prove to the people of Saskatchewan their ministerial irresponsibilities. It was the Premier's own appointee who was instrumental in the original management of CPN, Jerry Parfeniuk, who was from the Premier's office. And of course there was George Dyck, the prominent NDP from Saskatoon who was actively involved. So if they want to blame the management, as they no doubt will, then I suggest they blame themselves. It was their management team.

During the third session of the 18th legislature the subject of cable television was discussed 15 times in this House. Both opposition parties tried to convince the

government of their foolhardiness but they wouldn't be budged. It will be interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, what they intend to do now. After the persistent condemnation of the private sector in operating closed circuit TV, will they now sell it to business people? I understand several businessmen have already approached the government with offers to purchase it. The salvage value, I am told, is less than \$250,000. Will they attempt to recover as much of the loss as possible or give some of their friends a new windfall? Will they eventually admit that it is economically not feasible to have two cable companies in the same area?

The Premier recently in this House criticized this opposition for submitting 17 motions condemning this government. What would you have me do — congratulate you for costing the taxpayers \$5 million or more, for mucking up cable television in Saskatchewan, for antagonizing our co-operatives and private firms, for delaying delivery of cable television to the citizens of this province? No, Mr. Speaker, because I do condemn this government I move this resolution.

MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is certainly not with pleasure that I enter this particular debate because this debate should not have been brought before the floor of the Assembly if the government opposite had not embarked upon a financial bungle, which is costing the Premier himself some loss of prestige and is certainly an embarrassment to the government members opposite.

Let me indicate the CPN mess that we have in Saskatchewan is an indication of what happens when a government policy becomes a partisan political force rather than an attempt to attain the policy as set out by the government. If we go back to the cable television in Saskatchewan, a presentation of the Government of Saskatchewan to the CRTTC (Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission) dated February 9, 1976, the government sets out most clearly its policy on cable television.

The government policy at that time was basically to foster the construction of an integrated provincial telecommunications system, which delivers all forms of signals and services including telephone, television, business information and educational services to as many people as possible at a reasonable cost to all users.

Such a system is best regarded not as an end in itself, but as a means by which the social and cultural fabric of the community is preserved and strengthened.

In pursuing this fundamental objective (and those are the words of the government) the statement of policy indicates that CPN has nothing to do with the original government policy. Very precisely, that original policy was designed to allow Sask Tel to become the transportation vehicle of the cable system in Saskatchewan. If we all go back to the original dispute that existed between the government opposite, and I say at that particular juncture, all the people of Saskatchewan and the federal government, it was a question as to who was going to deliver cable television to the people of Saskatchewan. I happen to agree and I think the government was quite right that in this province it should be Sask Tel. That is what the government's white paper says; that was going to be its major goal.

What has CPN got to do with that? Absolutely nothing! The government said at that outset that CPN was to be the vehicle, the weapon in our fight with Ottawa. If that is the case then the question should be asked — why was CPN not dropped when, in fact, the CRTTC ruled that Sask Tel would be the common carrier of cable television in the

province of Saskatchewan. Why at that point after victory was attained was CPN not dropped? The reason is that at that point, if not sooner, CPN then developed into a political vehicle for the government opposite, a political vehicle instead of an adjunct to attaining government stated policies. In fact, the political vehicle instituted by the Premier of Saskatchewan's office when they parachuted and directed a Mr. Gerry Parfeniuk out of the Premier's office in to run CPN. At that point, at that very point, CPN became a political tool, a partisan political tool of the government opposite at great cost to the people of this province. It became irrelevant and unnecessary when CRTTC ruled in favour of the government and became a political adjunct to the government once CRTC had ruled.

There became all sorts then of justification, Mr. Speaker, of CPN. We had the fact that CPN was going to be the vehicle to get cable television to all the small towns — which was frankly hogwash. The Premier knew it wasn't true. Members opposite knew it wasn't true. In fact, we have tabled in this House — and that's two years ago and I know there's a significant increase since — the fact that 18 small communities in the province of Manitoba had conventional cable, not government controlled CPN or closed circuit television, under the existing system. There were seven or eight in the province of Alberta two years ago, small towns that had conventional cable under the existing system without the need of a government controlled closed circuit network. We had as well, a political cost which has run — the estimates are well over \$5 million. Some of them have been detailed by the mover of the motion, the member for Regina South (Mr. Rousseau). First of all, we had the total loss to the people of Saskatchewan of \$2.6 million. Then we had the roughly — and we can't get an accurate figure on how many subscribers there are. (CPN says 17,000 but Sask Tel only takes 8,000 many converters or 10,000 converters). We can't get an accurate figure because the government opposite is embarrassed and won't give the information at \$60 to \$80 each. We say \$100 or \$130 but the government says \$60 to \$80.

AN HON. MEMBER: — What do you say, Doc?

MR. LANE: — You're afraid to tell us. I challenge the member responsible for telephones who is afraid to give us the information on CPN to stand up in this House and come clean and tell the public what the financial cost of this economic debacle was to the people of this province. I'll bet you, Mr. Speaker, he doesn't have the political fortitude to come clean on CPN. He doesn't have the political fortitude to tell the people the true cost of CPN because I'm going to detail some other costs.

First of all, CPN may be the only outfit in this whole province that doesn't have to pay its Sask Tel bill and some months ago it was \$600,000. I bet you now it is up in the \$700,000 or \$800,000 range. Let me tell you what would happen to any individual in this province if they didn't pay their telephone bill for a couple of months — they would be cut off and we say that CPN should be cut off.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LANE: — We say, as well, that the individuals who are responsible for CPN should be run out of the government and that those government ministers who are, in fact, responsible for this error in judgment should be made accountable to the public of Saskatchewan. We know what the public would do if they found out the true cost of CPN. They would run them right out of the province. The fact is the government can't give the true information because the political embarrassment and the political ramifications would be too great.

We've got some additional costs as well that had to be incurred because of CPN. That was the matter that Sask Tel had to embark on a policy of inserting filters for each hookup so that, in fact, the CPN would be screened out of the conventional cable. The government estimates opposite were approximately \$100 and, in fact, we all know that they are relatively ineffective. All of these costs are paid by the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. We had some other costs. We had the situation where Sask Tel employees were made to promote CPN in the Sask Tel exhibits at exhibitions and events across this province. It happened in Regina and in Saskatoon, as a couple of examples, where Sask Tel employees against their wishes were made to put on the CPN display in the Sask Tel exhibit for the people of this province. We had the hidden cost as well of Sask Tel employees having to go out and hook up CPN when it was unnecessary. We had the hidden cost (and the minister that's responsible for this debacle, the Attorney General, may be able to give us the true cost if he has the political fortitude) of government employees having to go into CPN, the Department of Finance officials, to run it because it was such a mess, to try and find out the government's position and run it and operate it and keep it going.

If you want to know, Mr. Speaker, whether or not CPN was a good idea all you have to do is watch the government opposite. Because, if it was a good idea, the government opposite would be the first ones to go and tell the public how great it is, would be the first ones to go out and tell the exact cost to the public. They would be the first ones to go out and have the Sask Tel employees tell people how great it is. We would be having advertisements on standard TV of this family of Crown corporations, and how great the government program is and how great the involvement is. The fact is they have been silent and that silence is proof that this thing is an economic fiasco, a financial disaster and shouldn't have been started in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, we got subsequent justifications, as I say. We started out and once the battle with CRTTC had been fought and won, the justification then became as to the small towns. That's been proven false and a blatant untruth on the part of the government opposite because in every other province small towns are getting conventional cable, except for Saskatchewan.

The government said that CPN Co-operative Programming Network was going to be great for local programming. I just called for debate today so that the government opposite can go and check it. Let me tell you some of the great local programs that are on CPN. We have the Fabulous Talking Time Machine. Now that could be one of the government members opposite or it could be the Attorney General, but I haven't seen this program so I don't know if it is talking about the Attorney General or one of the other members opposite. In fact, if it is, I give him credit for having one program. Then we have that great local program (not Who Has Seen the Wind or some of the other government movies), we've got the great one — Jolson Sings Again. Now I can't see how, by any stretch of the imagination, anyone over there is going to take credit for that movie. But I have seen some strange things before, Mr. Speaker, and it wouldn't be the first time that happened.

Perhaps Death Race 2,000 could be local programming, but I wonder if any members opposite are going to stand up and take credit for that particular movie? C. C. and Company — now, Mr. Speaker, we know the contributions of the booze companies to the government opposite, but I don't think C. C. and Company is what they had in mind when they are talking about local programming. C. C. may be their contributors, but I don't think that's what they had in mind when they were talking about local

programming.

Then we have Looking for Mr. Goodbar (I'm just passing over some of them) and that raises a secondary issue. The government opposite talks about doing away with the booze ads and the liquor ads from conventional cable when they are allowing category X movies on CPN. It strikes me as a pretty strange choice of priorities when in fact you are allowing the category X movies on TV but you figure the beer ads are damaging to the social fabric of this province. That's why the people of this province are questioning your choice.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LANE: — They are questioning your choice of priorities in many other issues. Let me tell you, they are questioning your choice of priorities when it comes to conventional TV in this province.

Mr. Speaker, CPN got into a great advertising campaign. They probably used up half of that \$2.6 million. They talk about the fact that this is going to be community programming. Well, that turned out to be just absolutely untrue. As a matter of fact, I am sure that the minister responsible for Consumer Affairs would be quite happy to take this false and misleading advertising up with the relevant departments. He's anxious in other areas to jump on people. I don't know why he hasn't done it to CPN. They try to pass themselves off as conventional cable. The only true statement in this whole ad, Mr. Speaker, is that CPN was going to be a non-profit organization. Let me tell you that is an understatement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LANE: — That's an absolute understatement.

Mr. Speaker, the government opposite is going to attack the Opposition as being anti-co-ops. Let me tell you that if you embark on another financial mess and stupid project like this, you are doing a greater disservice to the co-op movement in this province than anybody could do deliberately attacking them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LANE: — The co-op movement itself is embarrassed by CPN. The interesting thing about CPN is that CPN a supposed co-op (a government arm we think it is) goes out and attacks and challenges Cable Regina, another co-op, for the same market and costs Cable Regina money. You're pitting co-op against co-op in your attack. That's a strange position for the government opposite to find itself in.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General (Mr. Romanow) is also going to say that the hon. member for Qu'Appelle is known for his opposition to CPN, has attacked CPN and has probably done more to destroy CPN. I will say, Mr. Speaker, I hope he does because I accept that statement as truth and I accept that attack proudly, because I may be the only opposition member who can stand up in this House and say that I attempted to save the public \$5 million. That is precisely what I am trying to do.

You want to attack the people of Saskatchewan who oppose CPN. The fact is you made an error. You made a bad error in judgment. You attempted to convert it. You converted it to a political arm. You made it a political football. You pitted co-op against co-op. You cost the people at least \$5 million. You thoroughly disrupted Sask Tel that wanted to

get on with the job of installing conventional cable as the people wanted. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they say they know what they are doing. There is not one thing in the actions of your work with CPN which indicates you do know what you are doing. In fact, it indicates just the opposite — you don't know what you are doing. In fact you are quite prepared to take \$5 million of the public's money and throw it out the window for your own partisan political purposes.

The people of this province and the co-op movement don't like what you've done, don't agree with what you've done. We say cut your losses; get out of this mess. You have done yourself a disservice. You have made a fundamental error in judgment. I think if the government opposite were to bow to their conscience, know what they are talking about in support of good government, would endorse this particular motion from the member for Regina South (Mr. Rousseau) as I do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. R.J. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says that I must be on the television show called the Fabulous Talking Machine. That may or may not be but I want to tell the hon. member that based on his performance this afternoon he'll never get an offer for a television show based on that kind of a choice. In fact, Mr. Speaker, not only will he not get that kind of an offer, I think that he will find that the television companies of Saskatchewan, the television companies of this country, would be absolutely appalled at what I find is a contradictory and confused argument on the question of cable television in the province of Saskatchewan, in the Dominion of Canada. Let me just give you an example. Now, Mr. Speaker, and members of the press gallery and the public, I ask you to take note of this.

The member for Regina South (Mr. Rousseau) said words to this effect. I challenge him at the end of my remarks, if he wants, or subsequently when he wraps up the debate to correct me — it's in Hansard. He says that Saskatchewan, because of the position of the provincial government on cable ownership, was virtually the last province in Canada to get cable television, the last province to get cable television in the Dominion of Canada, because of our policies when we ought to have known that the people of this province wanted to get on with the job with American television — and we were holding them up. That was the substance of the words — not the exact words, that's the message. And he nods his head in approval behind here saying that's true. What's the member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane) just finished saying? He says that CPN (Co-operative Programming Network) was set up as a bargaining weapon for the Dominion of Canada with the DOC and the CRTTC for cable ownership hardware because of the policies of the province of Saskatchewan. He read to us that little portion of the brief; he says I'm all for it. Now, Mr. Speaker, not only does he say that he's all for it but then he advances this remarkable contradictory position. He says, Mr. Speaker, I'm all for CPN as a bargaining tool. You should have used it, you should have used it to its fullest tilt. You should have done everything that you could have done to get control of the cable hardware for the province of Saskatchewan — but don't let it cost you a penny in doing it.

Set it up, use it as a negotiating tool, do everything you can to get the cable hardware ownership resolved, he says, but don't you spend a penny in the process of doing it. On the one hand, he says, Mr. Speaker, we should be putting CPN forward in order to advocate the policies of communications for the province of Saskatchewan, but on the other hand we shouldn't be spending any money keeping CPN afloat. Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that the people of Saskatchewan have seen this kind of a performance from the Progressive Conservative Party not only from day one since the election was

over, but since the Progressive Conservative Party was elected to the legislature, the Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, confused and contradictory throughout. We see it every day in question period. Members get up and they say . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . now look, I know the member for Moosomin (Mr. Berntson) doesn't like a good dose of truth, but just sit tight and listen to it for half a second because the member for . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Progressive Conservative Party takes the position — I'm having difficulty being heard. Mr. Speaker, I think I'm making a very good speech right now, but I am having difficulty hearing it.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of position, in all seriousness for a moment, I think has put the PC Party, this contradictory position as is symbolized in the cable television argument, into the dire political straits that they are in currently in the province of Saskatchewan, provincially as a provincial party.

Mr. Speaker, on this very point that I have made, with the members for Regina South (Mr. Rousseau) and Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane), was the provincial government's position on cable ownership a good one or a bad one, I think the people of Saskatchewan are entitled to have a united voice coming forward from the PC Opposition, but they don't have.

On the question of whether or not CPN ought to have been used as an negotiating tool and as a result of having been used as an negotiating tool gotten the hardware concessions, they ought to have been speaking with a united voice, but they haven't, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say quite a bit more on this at a later date and I am going to adjourn the debate, but I just want to make a couple of comments about the member for Regina South and his speech. I have already pointed out what I think is the major contradiction which exists between him, his remarks and the member for Qu'Appelle, but he did ask the question. He said that we were the last province in Canada to be considered by cable television, and he is right, or almost right. I think the question has to be asked, why? Mr. Speaker, the answer is because the policy of the province of Saskatchewan was twofold.

1. We were not going to agree as the province of Saskatchewan, through Sask Tel, to allow the ownership of cable hardware to fall into the hands of the private cable entrepreneurs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — May I say, Mr. Speaker, that this is a position which has been advocated by Sask Tel every since the issue or the technological spectre, of cable television arose in Canada. That was the position taken by Sask Tel back in 1968, when the member for Qu'Appelle was on the Liberal Party side of the fence.

Mr. Speaker, if we were to adopt the Regina South position we would have rushed in our haste to have allowed the licensing of any kind of person out of the cable television system giving up the vital element of control of the cable hardware for Sask Tel.

Why is cable hardware so important? Why is the control of cable hardware so important? Mr. Speaker, cable is going to be used by and be serving the people of Saskatchewan for services over and above the simple provision of television. Cable is going to be used for security systems, or banking systems, or a variety of other technological systems, something akin to say, the use of a telephone 30 years or 40 years ago, whenever it was introduced in the province of Saskatchewan. That kind of service is going to be developing technologically throughout the world and in Saskatchewan. This province was based on the fundamental premise that the Crown corporation owned by the people of the province of Saskatchewan should have control of the cable distribution system in order to provide the services equally to rural Saskatchewan and throughout, for everybody and not just at peculiar positions. The second aspect of this policy was the question of community controlled co-ops, if at all possible. Now I know that rubs the member for Regina South (Mr. Rousseau) particularly negatively. He doesn't like community controlled organizations, and he doesn't like co-op community controlled organizations in particular. I realize that but, Mr. Speaker, a basic fundamental tenet of this government is the belief that such things as communications and co-operative endeavors in a variety of areas ought to be in the hands of the communities, and not in the hands of private entrepreneurs or the government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, the motion from the member for Regina South (Mr. Rousseau) says that our policies have deprived rural Saskatchewan. Those are the two cornerstones of our policy — community hardware control and community ownership. I ask the member for Regina South to just consider that for a moment. If we had given up the hardware ownership to private entrepreneurs, as you have suggested and advocated today, would rural Saskatchewan stand a chance of getting either conventional cable or closed-circuit? The simple fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, it would not have done that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words about the remarks made by the member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane). The member for Qu'Appelle says the Government of Saskatchewan has not said that this is a good idea. Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the member for Qu'Appelle now, lest he lie awake at night tonight, I think CPN (Co-operative Programming Network) was, is and will be an excellent idea in communications and community controlled endeavors in the province of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — The hon. member for Qu'Appelle says that I'm going to get up and say that he has been one of the main antagonists, the main attacker, of CPN. You know something; he's right. Mr. Speaker, the member for Qu'Appelle has been one of the main attackers of the concept of closed CPN community controlled services. And not only that, but he and the PCs take credit for it. When I adjourn the debate and resume it next week, I'm going to run through for the hon. members a list of the organizations, not individuals but organizations, that belong to CPN, organizations that the member for Qu'Appelle has committed himself to attacking, and has taken pride in so doing, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I will do that too. But you're attacking CPN and that's the position you're taking; you and your caucus are opposed to CPN. You say you're opposed to it and you're going to take the main credit for doing CPN in. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, I'm going to get this list

and I'm going to recite it next week, if I can, for the hon. members, both lists. You can do that yourself, but I'll bring it forward.

Mr. Speaker, this is the position of the PC caucus. Was CPN a vehicle to fight Ottawa with? It may have been. Was that the reason that CPN was created? The answer is an emphatic no, Mr. Speaker. It was not created with that object in mind.

CPN is a new form of entertainment medium, not only in Saskatchewan and Canada but it is still on a pioneering edge in all of North America. CPN was inevitable, is inevitable. Either through CPN or through some other carrier agency — hopefully community controlled if the opposition was with us in backing it as opposed to private control — is the leading technological edge of the communications and entertainment industry. Paid television, Mr. Speaker, is a phenomenon which is now getting established in many parts of the United States.

Look at what the member for Regina South (Mr. Rousseau) says. The member for Regina South says, you shouldn't have gotten into CPN. He says, you knew from the start that it was going to lose you a bundle of money. He says it was a loser right from the start, then he turns around and he says, this is a bad deal but I understand there are several businessmen who are trying to buy it. That's the position that he says.

Mr. Speaker, what is the truth of the matter apart from a minor contradiction again? The fact of the matter is that the member for Regina South is dead right. Several businessmen are very interested in buying CPN. Co-ops are interested in CPN, I want to tell the member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane). CPN is interested in CPN, Mr. Speaker. I ask the hon. member for Qu'Appelle who says, sell it, is he telling this House that he would support closed circuit television in the hands of private entrepreneurs? That's what he is saying, sell it. If the answer is yes, that he favors it in the hands of private entrepreneurs, the converse is true. He is opposed to leaving CPN in the hands of the community co-op controlled people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — Is the member saying that there are several businessmen interested? Is the member saying that we should be selling it to the businessmen? Is the hon. member saying I take credit — as he said in those words — for attacking the closed circuit community controlled co-operative concept behind this new entertainment form of closed-circuit television? Is that what the PC Party is saying? Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says am I saying that we are going to keep it going. I'm saying that I am committed to doing everything reasonably possible to keep CPN going.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — I say to the hon. member for Qu'Appelle that I am behind the community organizations that are in CPN and you are against the community organizations that are in CPN. I am saying when the receiver manager gives his report on the financial viability and the financial position of CPN, keeping in mind what the hon. member for Qu'Appelle today has said on the issue of CPN, the answer to you I say again is yes. I am for CPN and the PC caucus is against the concept of community controlled co-operative operation.

Mr. Speaker, I relish this kind of a fundamental cleavage. I relish it because, Mr.

Speaker, the Conservatives opposite don't understand the first principles of a co-op organization. The member for Kindersley (Mr. Andrew) is applauding the member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane) on his attack on co-ops. This is the kind of argument you know, Mr. Speaker, that the PCs are very famous for. Oh, I'm for co-ops; I'm a member of the co-ops but I won't give those co-ops a penny; I'm a member of the co-ops is what the PCs say. But don't let them ever make any mistakes because I'm going to jump on them and I'm going to attack them with all of the vigor that I've got. The PC party says, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. LANE: — A little mistake, eh?

MR. ROMANOW: — . . . we'll see how much of a mistake it is in a few weeks when the Strang report is opened. We'll see how much it is. But, Mr. Speaker, what the PCs are saying is that they're against this kind of a concept.

MR. LANE: — Do you know what's in that report?

MR. ROMANOW: — I say to the hon. member for Qu'Appelle you've had your chance to speak today, let me try and get a word in if I can just to outline the Saskatchewan line.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Qu'Appelle says there's no Canadian TV content on CPN.

MR. LANE: — Oh, no, I said . . .

MR. ROMANOW: — He says he takes a list of four or five shows. He says Looking for Mr. Goodbar, I think is what he said, an American show which of course he and the members of the PC caucus, the movie being X-rated, would never dare dream of seeing. That's why therefore the position of doing away with Playboy and Penthouse — the member for Qu'Appelle of course, would never allow Playboy to cross his eyes. I'm sure that's the case.

I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that that position is sheer political hypocrisy. It results in a lack of political credibility not only on the CPN issue, Mr. Speaker, but generally. Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says that there is no Canadian TV content. He takes four or five programs and says these are American programs and not only that, they're X-rated programs to boot. Mr. Speaker, I say that the Canadian content level of CPN is in the neighborhood of 40 per cent of the total programming that's available on CPN now, when you look at the totality of the picture. About 40 per cent. I'll provide the details to that next week. And I invite the hon. member for Regina South (Mr. Rousseau) to challenge me on that because I say there is a Canadian content of significant importance on CPN. Not as much as I'd like. Perhaps not even as much as the hon. members of the PCs would like, although I doubt that. But there is a Canadian content. But then he follows through on this kind of an argument; he says, you know, why, they have these X-rated movies on television, he says, and they're fighting against liquor ads. He says why, if you're going to allow Looking for Mr. Goodbar to continue, why in the world don't you allow liquor advertising on conventional cable. That's the argument and there was loud applause by the PC caucus at that particular point, Mr. Speaker. I noted it. Their argument is that because CPN or Cable Regina on conventional cable or any other agency should put on a movie which offends the sense of decency of the hon. member for Qu'Appelle that that should justify liquor advertising on conventional cable, Mr. Speaker. I say that's hogwash! It is no justification for liquor advertising

notwithstanding what the PC caucus says should be the position on liquor advertising. Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) and the new member for Arm River (Mr. Muirhead) who I know is interested in this, that this government is unalterably opposed to the concept of liquor advertising, be it on conventional television or cable television and it's going to do its best to stop it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — Not the member for Qu'Appelle though. He says if you're going to allow X-rated movies, you might as well be able to open up a can of beer to watch those X-rated movies, or turn off the television set. Not the member for Qu'Appelle, not the PC caucus. They think liquor advertising seems to be O.K. on television. Isn't that right, Leader of the PC Party (Mr. Collver)? He's here. I'd like him to tell us if he, in fact, confirms the position of the member for Qu'Appelle when you have the floor on the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, you know this debate will continue for a little while. I can guarantee the PC opposition that. This debate will go for a little while on closed-circuit television, community co-ops and liquor advertising. I'm glad to see that the Leader of the PCs will tell us clearly and unequivocally, when that debate resumes, exactly what his position is on liquor advertising, because I say, Mr. Speaker, that it is a duplicitous position. I say that there are some who profess to have a moral concern in our life (like the desk mate of the member for Qu'Appelle), who profess to have that concern but who don't back it by words and statements when it comes to this particular legislative action in the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — I hope that I'm wrong. I hope that the leader of the PCs will get up on this point. The point is, nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, that the member for Qu'Appelle took this position and, Mr. Speaker . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — You'd like him to, wouldn't you?

MR. ROMANOW: — I want to conclude my remarks today by just making one or two general comments about closed-circuit. (Yes, I'm going to adjourn debate.) I listened to two very stimulating speeches from two very stimulating potential . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — . . . two very stimulating potential leaders of the PC provincial Party and I think that I'm entitled to put forward my one position here. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I don't agree with the PC Party in their opposition to closed-circuit television. I want to say that I don't agree with the member for Regina South (Mr. Rousseau) when he sort of says that somehow we should be rushing to allow American television to come in. The words you used were that it was clearly contrary to the interests of the people of Saskatchewan (that our policy was) when they clearly wanted American television, words to that effect. I think the member will agree that that's roughly what he said and I'm translating that to say that a communications policy, based on more and better American advertising is the right communications policy . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . All right, he is not saying that. I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, that kind of a

policy, I oppose. I say that in Canada, we have been struggling to build an identity. In Canada, we have been struggling to build a culture. We are 22 million people, a small little ribbon of people within 100 miles of the United States border and we are flooded culturally by American periodicals and American newspapers and American radio and American television, and we are struggling to establish a Canadian cultural aspect.

The CRTTC in Ottawa, I think, made a good policy. They said you had to have 60 per cent Canadian content on broadcasting. What do we have with conventional cable? We don't have 60 per cent Canadian content, or putting it the other way around, 40 per cent American content like we now have on our own Canadian Broadcasting Corporation TV. Now we have 100 per cent American culture flooding through the gates on conventional cable — 100 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know, Mr. Speaker, I let the hon. member for Nipawin (Mr. Collver) talk about Tony Merchant. I think he is eminently qualified to understand the workings of the mind of Tony Merchant. But I say, Mr. Speaker, that is basically a very fundamental question. The question is, whether or not closed-circuit television is an attempt to develop a Canadian culture policy in this country of ours and in the province of ours.

I am not against those who want to watch 100 per cent American television, morning, noon, night and day, but I tell you, Mr. Speaker, it does precious little to develop an identity, a Saskatchewan identity. Maybe CPN is not the vehicle to do it, but I tell you one thing that CPN is. It is an attempt by people, supported by the government, to use closed-circuit, which is an alternate medium, as a mechanism of establishing a form of Canadian culture and Saskatchewan culture . . . in this country.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — It is not surprising that that attempt should be challenged by basically, the broadcasting industry. I think it has been challenged by the conventional television and radio broadcasting industry in this province of ours, for which I think the member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane) and the Progressive Conservative Party are the leading political spokesmen. I think it has been challenged by the private television networks, right from day one, in court, outside court, in this legislature and outside this legislature. Why wouldn't they challenge the concept, Mr. Speaker? There is big money involved. Advertising dollars are involved. It's a comfortable way of living with a semi-American lifestyle which we have now culturally, nothing against it. It simply is not a development of a Canadian lifestyle. The Saskatchewan government says, here is a concept where we can at least develop, not overnight but develop over a few years. Sask Tel didn't develop overnight into a province-wide or a nation-wide telephone company utility, but over a period of time, will develop an entertainment industry or a communications medium, whereby there will be at least, to the community controlled side, a chance to develop a Saskatchewan-Canadian aspect of the cultural scene. That's what CPN is all about. Mr. Speaker, the hon. members opposite oppose that vision every step of the way. They are doomed to their petty views and their petty thoughts. They have no concepts or visions of culture or of the economy. That's why we see the goings on that we see at question period day in and day out. That's why we see these contradictory operations. They have no idea of the sense of the cultural Canadian worth of this country and, furthermore, Mr. Speaker, have no idea of how they'd like to fashion it. Well, I say, Mr. Speaker, that I don't belong, thankfully, to that class of politician or person who is not going to give it a try.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — I'm not going to be party to a political party which just simply says turn it over to the CKCK-TV's of this world, turn it over to the CTV's, turn it over to the ABC's and the CBS's. Let those boys advertise the liquor advertising. Do everything to allow this country which is already struggling for its survival economically and culturally — do everything that you can to not help it along in that cultural determination. I am not going to be a party to that kind of a position, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — Do you know something, Mr. Speaker? The people of Saskatchewan on October 18 when CPN was still an issue by the member for Qu'Appelle he tried to make it in his riding and he did. The people of Saskatchewan with resounding votes showed that they aren't prepared to support that position either, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have a few more words to say on this issue. I'll take any questions that the hon. member puts to me upon resuming my place and, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF CADETS

HON. A.S. MATSALLA (Canora): — Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity, and I thank the members of the House as well. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature 50 young men and women. Of this group 20 are from Canora and 30 are from Ottawa. You will note that they are cadets. Accompanying the cadets we have Captain Victor Shigal (?), Captain Dennis Legaul (?), and Lieutenant Kathy Zremiak (?).

The cadets from Ottawa are visiting Saskatchewan on a cadet exchange program. I want to wish our guests a very warm welcome to the capital city and to the legislature, and I do hope they have an interesting and enjoyable stay here. I will be meeting with the group following their stay here in the Chamber. I want to say to the cadets that we appreciate your coming here and hope that your visit here is going to be a memorable one. I am sure that all members of the House will join with me in expressing our appreciation to them.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENT

Resolutions 19 and 23 out of Order

MR. SPEAKER: — I have a statement here which I possibly should have made after item No. 2, under motions, was dealt with. I will make it now because it relates to that particular point and we should get it out of the way.

Members will note that Resolution No. 23 standing in the name of the member for Morse (Mr. Gross) deals with the same subject matter as that of a government motion which has already been moved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. MacMurchy)

and on which debate has been adjourned.

Resolution No. 19 standing in the name of the member for Wilkie (Mr. Garner) deals with the same subject matter as that of Resolution No. 2 which has already been moved by the member for Melville (Mr. Kowalchuk).

I rule both resolutions, No. 23 and No. 19 out of order on the grounds of anticipation and refer all hon. members to Sir Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice, 19th edition, page 371, Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, 5th edition, page 119 and a ruling of the Chair dated March 22, 1977, Journals of Saskatchewan 1976-77, page 103.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 8 — Road Maintenance Areas.

MR. H. SWAN (Rosetown-Elrose) moved, seconded by Mr. Muirhead (Arm River):

That this Assembly condemns the Government of Saskatchewan for imposing road maintenance areas on the rural municipalities of the province, thus promoting the county system through a backdoor method.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity today to share with you some of my concerns as registered under Resolution No. 8. I would like, first, to share with you the reasons for bringing forth this resolution. I have had numerous phone calls from around the province and numerous contacts with people in municipal work. They express a fear that the Government of the province of Saskatchewan is trying in an unfair manner to bring about the issue that they have long spoke of, a county system or something along that line for the municipal boundaries of the province.

I think that municipalities are a strong group, a group that is very capable of making decisions. If the government wants to have county systems then they should go back to the people with that type of proposal, not come at it in the method of introducing road maintenance areas, forcing amalgamations between municipalities. If they do not agree to the amalgamations then they just don't get grant funding under the super grid program. Some of the R.M.s because of different interests find it very difficult to amalgamate. I would like to use, just as an example, some that are very close to my area. Take the municipality of Snipe Lake. When they build roads they have in mind the centre in their district as the town of Eston and other services which are provided within their boundaries. For that reason they build roads that are going to lead to the main centres within their communities. They were asked to amalgamate with Monet and Lacadena. Now the Monet R.M. would sooner be building roads that would lead into Elrose than Eston and for that reason they find it very difficult to work together and come up with a reasonable solution. Lacadena again has different centres. They like to build towards Kyle and in some cases towards Elrose. So these R.M.s are finding it very difficult to agree that the maintenance area is a good proposal. They might agree with the proposal had they been asked in a different manner — if they had been asked first if they would agree to this type of proposal, not to have the grants withheld if they didn't agree, but rather if they agreed then proceed.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that this has been a major concern in our province and this remains a major concern today. Now the government has long talked of local control and local autonomy. I don't believe that this is showing they are interested in local control or local

autonomy when they force amalgamations of municipal groups in this manner. I would just like to read to you a short statement made by T.C. Douglas back in 1956 when the municipal boundary realignment committee had a meeting here in Regina. The same quotation was also made in this legislature in 1958 by T.C. Douglas. The statement reads like this:

The government itself believes that some kind of basic reorganization, at least in the rural areas, is an essential and inevitable step in meeting with the problems of local government today. I want to make it abundantly clear that the government will not embark upon a program of municipal reorganization unless this program is assured of the co-operation of the local governing bodies and has the widespread support of the general public.

Then a further statement was made in 1958 and on the same day, again by T.C. Douglas:

Once we are started upon the creation of a basically sound structure of local government, the way will then be opened for a sound and realistic strengthening of local financial resources.

It seems that each time he spoke of reorganization he was not willing to go ahead until he had the general public with him. The government today is apparently willing to go ahead without having the general public with them.

During the debate on the county or the modified county system, the public in this province made their position abundantly clear. They were not ready to proceed with a county system and they voiced that concern loud and strong. I'm sure that every government in this province then and later remembers some of the debate that took place. For that reason, I see this government, then, moving to do it in a different manner, not coming forward, straight forward, and saying, we think you should have a county system. But rather, calling it a road maintenance area and causing quite a bit of concern and disruption in the thinking of local people.

The former president of SARM suggested at their convention that he thought there should be some amalgamation of municipalities, that the municipalities were too small to function effectively. Even though that dedicated president spoke from his heart and was convinced of what he was saying, when the election was held later on during the convention, that man found that he didn't have the support of the SARM people. He lost his position as president and has not been able to regain it.

Another concern I have with the method that has been used to coerce the municipalities into amalgamating is that some of the R.M.s in this province were very prudent operators and they built up a small surplus that would tide them over the tougher times in our province. But when they see this forced amalgamation taking place, they lose confidence that they're going to continue to have the right to operate as a free operating municipality, they cease to see the advantage of maintaining surpluses. They say we're going to lose it if we don't spend it, so we better spend it quick before the government takes it. That's exactly what has been happening. They have spent much of their surplus. Today, many of those municipalities are operating on a day to day basis financially and that is not a good way for anyone to operate.

Because of the concerns that I have found around the province, I put forward this resolution. I make no apologies for condemning the province of Saskatchewan

because I believe the province of Saskatchewan needed to be condemned for its action in this regard. Mr. Speaker, I so move.

MR. G. MUIRHEAD (Arm River): — Mr. Speaker, on speaking to this resolution I would like to point out that in the process of setting up these road maintenance areas, the government sent out representatives from the Department of Municipal Affairs explaining to all the municipalities involved the importance of these super grids.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, I as a councillor for the R.M. of Craik, along with the other members of the council, agreed with the government proposals, but must add, with serious reservations. When I say reservations, Mr. Speaker, I mean the proposal was such that either we went along with the Department of Municipal Affairs or else found ourselves in the position of not being able to rebuild roads which were prime arteries for our rural population.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would hasten to add that in the case of the Craik municipality we have approval granted by the Hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs to build the portion within two miles of easterly border of the Craik municipality. I would, at this time, Mr. Speaker, like to thank the Minister for Last Mountain-Touchwood (Mr. MacMurchy) for his co-operation and his consideration to the Craik R.M. 222. It has been very much appreciated by the local council. However, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to advise this House that the portion of the road remaining to join Highway No. 2 is in limbo and it is quite apparent to me, and many others, the reasons are:

(a) rail line abandonment, (b) federal election.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that possibly (b) is the most important obstacle in the completion of this road. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the government at one point in time says, we must build a super-grid road, then in midstream says, we have changed our mind, because at this particular moment it is not politically sound to the NDP with the federal election in the offing.

It is the old story, Mr. Speaker. The NDP says to the local governments look, we know better than you where, when and how you should build your roads. Mr. Speaker, that is just the first step of the abolition of local autonomy. The next step is the county system operating from the Department of Municipal Affairs in Regina.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, if we have problems now with super-grid plans, under the present conditions, I presume under the county system we will have no say whatsoever.

It would appear that the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. MacMurchy) in his wisdom, or due to political pressure, has decided this road should not be completed until after the federal election and until he is sure of what the hon. Mr. Lang is going to do in respect to rail-line abandonment.

Mr. Speaker, my position on rail-line abandonment is the same as it always has been, and that is, I urge the local people in any area, be it Arm River or otherwise, to band together to fight whatever they feel is their right to roads, railways, schools and whatever.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in self-determination, not state determination. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would strongly urge the government to reconsider imposing restrictions in

respect to the building of municipal roads as far as grants are concerned. It would appear to many that the present system is a proposition based on, do as we say or do without. Which, Mr. Speaker, could be interpreted as a form of blackmail. Our way is right, says the NDP. You, the local governments, have little or no say, if you want we, the government's assistance.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I second this motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. G. MacMURCHY (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to the motion moved by the member for Rosetown-Elrose (Mr. Swan) and seconded by the member for Arm River (Mr. Muirhead).

Let me make it abundantly clear to them, to the members opposite and to the people of Saskatchewan, that this government has no plans for a county system, this government has no thoughts for a county system, this government has no plans for regional municipal government and no thoughts of regional municipal government. I think it would be clear, Mr. Speaker, that if we had had we would not have introduced the revenue sharing program with the kind of funding attached to it that we did. Now, it is no question, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. members observe the approach of this government it is obviously an approach of encouraging co-operation between local government. A major component of revenue sharing and a future major component of revenue sharing is, in fact, the co-operative approach. The formation of ambulance districts, the formation of fire districts, the formation of agreements for provision of recreation, which we will be announcing as a component of revenue sharing very shortly, is the co-operative encouragement by this government. So there are no plans. I make that clear. I used to — and the hon. members who are in the House during the previous three years, 1975 to 1978, will recall that I had to rise to my feet and respond to similar questions and similar arguments put forward. My response at that time, on behalf of the government, was the same as it is now. So, that's our approach to encourage co-operation and I think we're being very successful with that approach. This applies, Mr. Speaker, to the super-grid program. We encourage the co-operative approach in establishing this particular program. I think, Mr. Speaker, it's important for the hon. members opposite to get some understanding of the road system and the development of our rural municipal road system in this province.

Hon. members will know that when rural municipalities were formed back there in 1905, there really wasn't much of a road system. There was only horseback trail and oxcart trail. As the railways came and the population grew, there grew a demand for roads and equipment to be made available to construct those roads and we began the construction of our municipal road system. Most of it was done with the old horses and fresnoes and some of the members will remember those days; the horses and the fresnos grading the grades, filling up the low spots. During the '20s the power equipment began to appear. Now, during the '30s everything shot down and the poor old Bennett buggies had to manage on what was there. I can recall, we had a very special Bennett buggy at my home. It was a Maxwell cut down. It was a pretty good Maxwell since it had the top on and we even had side curtains, pretty snappy team on that Bennett buggy. As a matter of fact, we could go to town about as fast with a Bennett buggy as we could, I recall, with the Maxwell. That's back in the days of a Conservative government in Saskatchewan and a Conservative government in Ottawa. Those were good times, Bennett buggy days, good Maxwell.

Now, during the '40s, the equipment developed rapidly and the municipalities began to work on the roads and it became clear though, that the municipalities alone could not fund any systematic network of roads. So in 1956, the CCF government at the time, under Mr. MacIntosh introduced a cost sharing program to build a major network of all weather roads throughout the province, the grid system. Now, the grid system started out as a ten year program involving 10,000 miles of all weather roads. That system went from 10 years, to 20 years and was extended to including about 15,000 miles of road. I think, when you add in the abandoned highways, many of which go into the grid system, will find a system of 15,000 to 16,000 miles. Those roads are the most travelled secondary roads in the province, no question. I suspect many of the grid roads have more traffic than some of our secondary highways. With the grid system, you could get to town after the storm; the ploughs didn't have to come out. You could get out to the highway. All in all, it was a high quality system of road and it put Saskatchewan on the map in Canada as having the best municipal road system.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MacMURCHY: — By the 1960s, Mr. Speaker, farmers were beginning to press for roads right up to the farm so they could get to the grid in the spring and in the winter. So was born the main farm access system — a road below the standard of grid but sufficient to meet reasonable all-weather conditions to farms. Now the municipalities are still working on the network of roads — the target of 18,000 miles in the main farm access system. About 11,500 of those miles are complete. We hope to complete that system by 1985-1986 but grid, Mr. Speaker, and main farm access have resulted in the best network of roads per capita municipal roads anywhere in the country . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MacMURCHY: — . . . and government cost sharing and responsible municipal construction and maintenance by the municipalities have made that possible.

Main farm access and grid have been conditional programs. By the late '60s, some municipalities had completed their grid system and were well into their main farm access system. They were thinking about further upgrading. Pressure began to develop from both individual municipalities, Mr. Speaker, and from Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) to build a system of dust free roads. Municipalities felt that they'd ease the demand for grave and be very popular with the public. It had spread so much by the early '70s that in 1973, the Hon. Edward Wood, then Minister of Municipal Affairs, appointed a committee of SARM to review the whole question of municipal surface roads in Saskatchewan and to make some recommendations to the government. Now the committee was named the Municipal Road Surfacing Commission. It was made up of the then president of SARM, Charlie Mitchell, the past president, F. Ward Murphy and one of their directors, Norman Allen from out in the Swift Current country. Now the Commission consulted with the municipalities. They held 24 meetings around the province. All of the reeves and secretary treasurers were invited to attend. As a matter of fact, 71 per cent of all reeves and councillors and secretary-treasurers did attend. The interest in the program was high. The committee did its studies, not only as to the type and nature of construction that would be undertaken, but also to the extent and the location of the roads that would be necessary in a surfaced system of roads for the province. Many of the members will have seen the report. This is the report of the Municipal Roads Surfacing Commission. If all of the members haven't a report and would like a report, just give my office a call. We will be glad to provide a report.

The report recommended 5,000 miles of primary surfaced road and 3,500 miles of secondary surfaced road. The 5,000 miles of primary grid, as they call it, would have a 28 foot subgrade, an inch and one-half, 20 foot asphalt mat. That would provide for shoulders. The right of way would be up to 150 feet. Secondary super grids would be the low volume traffic roads, probably under 150 cars per day and these roads would have a 26 foot top with still, a 22 foot asphalt mat.

The committee recommended that any roads that were worn out would be fully reconstructed before surfacing. Some roads would need work to bring them up to the appropriate drainage, snow clearance, safety standards. Our government accepted the recommendations of the commission and our government agreed to put \$100 million, plus inflation costs, on the table over a 15-year period to share in the construction, surfacing and maintenance of primary surface road system. The government would cost share with the municipalities, an average of 60 per cent government, 40 per cent municipal on construction and surfacing and 50-50 per cent on maintenance.

We said that the location of the roads would be a matter of negotiation between the municipalities and the supervising engineers from rural affairs. The Road Surfacing Commission had developed a tentative map of 5,000 miles but we were prepared to be flexible in the location of these roads, based on traffic volumes, connecting links, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, the commission had strong words about the maintenance of these roads in its reports. They had done studies. Each one of them had had experience, as each one of us has had, on an oiled secondary highway which is often much worse to drive on than a gravelled road, some of those old roads that were oiled, in the 1960s, I quote the report, Mr. Speaker:

The maintenance of astro surfaced roads is very important. The holes and broken areas in the road surface must be repaired as soon as they are noticed thus preventing moisture being absorbed in the subgrade which would cause large areas and possibly the whole road surface to soften and deteriorate, making proper maintenance very costly and time consuming, if not impossible. As cracks appear in the road surface, a seal coat must be applied. This not only prohibits the penetration of moisture but also provides a new driving surface, and if repeated as needed, extends the life of the road almost indefinitely. When seal coating is required, the municipalities must see that it is done at the earliest possible date. Because of the importance of proper timing, it is essential that equipment be available at all times. The life of the asphalt surface roads will depend completely on proper and timely maintenance. The investment of both the government and the municipalities must be protected by insisting that the required maintenance be done.

The report suggests, Mr. Speaker, that the payment of government assistance be withheld until there is evidence that proper maintenance is provided for. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, because of the importance of timing, the report recommends that municipalities own their own equipment, either individually or in groups. Mr. Speaker, in addition to accepting the recommendations as to the nature and cost sharing of the commission, the government accepted the view that having the necessary maintenance equipment immediately at hand and hence available at a moment's notice, was the only way to guarantee effective maintenance. Necessary maintenance equipment, according to the commission, consists of a heavy gravel truck with a sand

spreader, an oil truck, power brooms and an oil tank spray bar. Tools and an oil heater, pressure spray brooms and an available supply of mix and oil would also be necessary.

Mr. Speaker, most municipalities have found over the last decade that a construction and maintenance crew is too expensive to maintain for the amount of work that is undertaken in any one year. There is simply not enough work in one municipality, they argue, to justify the expense and management time of maintaining their own crew.

Mr. Speaker, I have a good deal more to say on this resolution put forward by the hon. members opposite, I therefore beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:59 p.m.