

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
April 9, 1980

The Assembly met at 2:00 p.m.

On the Orders of the Day

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. SPEAKER: — I would like to take this opportunity to opportunity to introduce a visitor to the Speaker's gallery to the members of the Assembly. He is the Minister of Justice of the province of Newfoundland and he is here to address the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's annual meeting and dinner this evening. I know all members will join with me in welcoming Mr. Gerald Ottenheimer to the province of Saskatchewan. He was a former speaker in the province of Newfoundland and has had a long and distinguished career in government in the province of Newfoundland. I wonder if Mr. Ottenheimer would rise and be recognized.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. R.J. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with you, Sir, on behalf of the government to extend our welcome to Mr. Attorney Gerry Ottenheimer has recently joined the — I don't know if I can describe it, Mr. Ottenheimer — club of attorneys general but he is there and I very much enjoyed our association on AG matters and on constitutional matters. Newfoundland, as everyone knows, with offshore resources and fishing rights and the provincial control and interests therein is very much involved in the constitutional issues of the day. To that extent, we find ourselves very much on common ground and I welcome him to the province of Saskatchewan. His predecessor, Mr. Justice Alex Hickman wanted to come to Saskatchewan frequently. He only got to Saskatoon. I shouldn't say only got to Saskatoon. I could never figure out why he wanted to come to Regina but he didn't make it. I'm very glad that Mr. Ottenheimer did make it to Regina and we all look forward to his address tonight. Welcome.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the Attorney General in welcoming Mr. Attorney. The Attorney General somehow indicates that Newfoundland and Saskatchewan and the AGs have something in common. We, of course, don't quite see it that way in that we would hope the member from Newfoundland looks to Alberta on how to win court cases when it comes to resources instead of the lack of success we have managed to have in Saskatchewan. I'm sure, however, the dialogue will be fruitful to both provinces. All parties are concerned and the provinces with retention of control of their resources and we wish you well in the future.

As well, Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to members of the Assembly, through you, some members of the provincial junior ladies curling champs from Kronau, Saskatchewan. Kronau, of course, is rapidly becoming known as the curling capital of Saskatchewan although it has a population of approximately 100. In the last four years, the community of Kronau has had four provincial junior curling champions and I think that indicates the interest and the support of the community of Kronau. This particular rink last year was runner-up in the provincial final and lost to what became the Canadian champions. This year, they came third at the national

championships, one game behind the leaders. They are accompanied today by Jeannette Ell, the chaperone, two men, Harvey Forner and Art Flett, who have been very, very instrumental in the program and the success of the Kronau program. It's my pleasure to introduce them and I would ask them to stand as I call out their names, if they would: Kathy Fahlman, the skip; Joan Herauf, third; Carolyn Forner, second; Lorrie Hanna from Richardson, lead. I ask all members to join with me and acknowledge their achievements. We wish them a very interesting day and thanks for the contribution they made to curling.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I too, on behalf of the government side, would like to congratulate the curling champions. I think this has really been a vintage year for Saskatchewan with respect to curling. I think it will continue to be that way, especially to have a fine bunch of young curlers such as we have had introduced today by the member for Qu'Appelle constituency. We all wish you continued success and congratulations on a job well done.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

SPC Profits

MR. R.A. LARTER (Estevan): — Mr. Speaker. A question to the minister in charge of SPC. Mr. Minister, your party and your government have stated many times that public utilities must be operated for public benefit. How then can you justify this public utility making a profit of \$40.7 million in 1979?

HON. J.R. MESSER (Minister of Mineral Resources): — Mr. Speaker, one has to take a look at what is really happening within the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. We are growing very rapidly in order to meet increasing demands in the province of Saskatchewan. For electricity we look at expenditure on a yearly basis up to something approximating \$0.25 billion. Our assets are well in excess of \$1.3 billion now. When you look at those circumstances it's not unreasonable to expect a return on investment of something in the neighborhood of \$30 million to \$40 million a year.

In percentage terms on investment, it's something only slightly over 3 per cent. I don't believe that Saskatchewan people would expect us to want to operate that corporation at anything less than that. That money goes toward offsetting ongoing costs, as I have already mentioned, of something in the neighborhood of \$0.25 billion a year.

I think one test that one should try in looking at what the corporation is doing for Saskatchewan people is what the real cost is to Saskatchewan consumers, the real cost of electricity. If we look at 1970, out of the residential per capita personal income, electricity costs were taking 3.7 per cent of the disposal income. Today that has dropped by more than 1 percentage point to just slightly over 2.5 per cent. I think that substantively answers the question for the member for Estevan.

MR. LARTER: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I believe the Manitoba government is being a little more humane in thinking of their people. They have put a five year freeze on power rates. I would like to ask the minister, are you going to raise either Sask Power electric rates or gas rates in 1980?

MR. MESSER: — Mr. Speaker, I will not answer that question because it's purely hypothetical. But in reference to the consumers of power in Manitoba Hydro, if he will look at the residential per capita income and where it is directed on electricity he will find in percentage terms that Manitoba is much, much higher than the province of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan is servicing consumers of power cheaper on average than they are in Manitoba, and for that matter in the province of Alberta.

MR. P. ROUSSEAU (Regina South): — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the minister. How do you justify — looking at your profits for the year of \$40 million which is really a 100 per cent increase, the highest in your history and over any year you've had almost — a 15.5 per cent increase in the price of natural gas last year, in the government's fiscal year, particularly in the fact that the corporation has guaranteed to the people of Saskatchewan a maximum of a 7.5 per cent increase in those rates?

MR. MESSER: — Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well that he'll have an opportunity to dwell on this in greater detail in Crown corporations. I do want to give the member a general response to the question he raises.

We're talking about the 1979 fiscal year. He knows that we have to establish in advance what we think the circumstances will be for the demand on power and the capabilities of producing that power at the beginning, if not before the beginning of that fiscal year. We did not know that we were going to be able to take advantage of cheap hydraulic power from our own facilities and from the province of Manitoba. We assume we would have to generate more power through thermal production. That turned out not to be the case because of excess power through our own facilities and Manitoba's in the hydraulic sense. We also had a very severe winter last year, and there was a much larger volume of power used, which is unusual, and that drove up the profit figure.

Now in order to be fair we have to look at the averages. In another year we may have a lower water flow. We may have to generate more power through thermal, which is going to cost us two or three times as much, and that profit figure will drop. You have to look at the average, and to do anything other than that is misleading the people of this province and the Assembly.

Premier Blakeney's Support for Ryan Proposal

MR. D.M. HAM (Swift Current): — A question for the Attorney General. Mr. Attorney General, during the interview on Monday in central Canada, Premier Blakeney stated his support for Claude Ryan's proposals for constitutional change in Canada. As I understand it the Ryan proposal will guarantee health and social services in English and French; the right to demand radio and television services in either language; and criminal trials as well as education in both languages. What steps are you taking to institute these changes now or are you planning any major policy changes to accommodate the Ryan proposals?

HON. R.J. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure of the interview the hon. member refers to but I do know the government's position with respect to the Ryan paper. It is broadly acceptable as the basis for further discussion and negotiations. We must keep in mind that the question of the referendum is coming up in the next several weeks — perhaps Premier Levesque will be announcing the date of the referendum shortly. We will have to await the outcome of the referendum result and of

course there will be the outcome of the general election which is slated to follow very closely thereafter. There may or may not be a new premier. There may or may not be a position which governments will have to respond to. Accordingly, at this stage of the game, the only thing that can be adopted is general support for the beige paper (so-called, as Premier Blakeney has described it); it just looks a heck of a lot better to us. The details the hon. member is directing his question to will have to be negotiated by all the provinces and the parties in constitutional discussion in the future.

MR. HAM: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. My concern, Mr. Attorney General, is Saskatchewan's point of view. Do you believe we can hold confederation together if we are not instituting changes sought under Ryan's proposals or are you prepared to make these changes in the future?

MR. ROMANOW: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat again the general thrust of my answer, which is that we indicate the beige paper is — when you compare it to the alternative — a basis of discussion and negotiation. Saskatchewan can do very little unilaterally to adopt provisions of the Ryan report even if we wanted to adopt it in total. Obviously the preferred way to go would be to have the matter carried out around a constitutional table with full discussions involving the various other governments. That is the policy we have taken and that is the approach we will continue to pursue.

Freeze on Power Rates

MR. D.G. TAYLOR (Indian Head-Wolseley): — A question to the Minister of Mineral Resources. In light of the high interest rate and the pinched conditions in Saskatchewan at present facing people on fixed incomes and many of the people in the province, will you follow the lead of Manitoba and put a five year freeze on power rates in this province?

MR. MESSER: — No, we will not follow the lead of Manitoba by putting a freeze on power rates but we will continue to service our consumers with electrical power cheaper than does the province of Manitoba, freeze or no freeze.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

SPC Profits

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Minister, could you tell the Assembly how much additional revenue the natural gas rates last year contributed SPC's profits?

MR. MESSER: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out to the member for Regina South a few moments ago, he will have an opportunity to be specific in his questioning when this corporation goes to Crown corporations I don't think it should be unusual for me not to know with precision the percentage increase, or the amounts of money that were generated through the increase in natural gas last year. I'd be more than happy to give some consideration to answering that question in crown corporations. I'll take notice of it here.

Assistance to Farmers

MR. J.W.A. GARNER (Wilkie): — Mr. Speaker, question to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, in light of your statements last night to the press about your concern

about the young farmers in Saskatchewan being burdened by extra debt regarding the higher interest rate, what is your department planning to do right now, today, in bringing in a new program or programs to help out the plight of these young farmers in Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. MacMURCHY (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member, the FarmStart program is in place and I don't think I need to talk to the members of the legislature, nor to the hon. member opposite, about the benefits of that program.

My statements last night were directed out of the meeting held with the federal Minister of Agriculture, where the issue of interest rates was an item for discussion. The issue of interest rates was put on the table for discussion by myself to find out from the federal minister what the federal government policy is with respect to interest rates, whether the Minister of Agriculture, whether the Speech from the Throne, will contain programs to assist in the broad sense the problem of interest rates, but additionally to assist the farming community, the agricultural community, with respect to interest rates. Unfortunately, during our discussion there were no program proposals put forward to me, nor was there anything coming forward from the press conference with respect to a federal program although I think we could hope for some announcement in the Speech from the Throne, or perhaps early in the session some announcement from the federal government with respect to an interest rate policy.

MR. GARNER: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I think you're very much aware that cattle prices are down in Saskatchewan; hog prices are at an all-time low, wheat prices are to go down in the new crop year; interest rates are higher. My question to you is, Mr. Minister, can you not bring forth some short-term financial aid to help these young farmers, and all farmers, through this period of crisis right now?

MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, I think clearly interest rates are a matter of federal responsibility. Mr. Speaker, I say that just as I believe that stabilization is a matter of federal responsibility, just as I believe marketing is a matter of federal responsibility. I say to the hon. member I was alarmed at the statements at the press conference by the federal Minister of Agriculture making reference to the possibility of provincial governments, which are in a good financial position, introducing programs provincially in order to cushion such problems. Mr. Speaker, there are provinces who are not in that financial position. This says to me that it's a job of the federal government to bring forward programs in this area, and we will continue to direct our attention to the federal government in terms of resolving problems relating to interest rates because, after all, the Bank of Canada is an institution of the federal government. They are setting the interest rates, and therefore they should deal with the policy federally.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MacMURCHY: — It is alarming, Mr. Speaker, to find a federal government who doesn't assume its responsibilities there. It's alarming to find a federal government that's continuing the policies of the former government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

High Interest Rates

MR. TAYLOR: — My question will be to the Attorney General in the absence of the

minister responsible for Sask Housing. We have tried on numerous occasions to bring to the attention of this House the problems being faced by homeowners in this province. They are faced with very high interest rates. My question is, what immediate plans are you willing to institute in this province to keep people from losing their homes?

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, again, the answer here has to be of the same thrust as the answer given by the Minister of Agriculture. The primary responsibility of interest rates is the federal government's. I think a political party which advocates relief for interest rates on a provincial government basis really advocates a series of varying interest rates, depending upon the wealth from province to province. The job of this country's government is to make sure there is equality of economic opportunity and burdens fairly distributed among all of us. Saskatchewan may or may not be able to this, I don't know. But I do indicate that when you advocate this kind of policy you are saying the heck with the rest of the country. That may be good for us this year but if we ever run the pinch and cannot afford it economically then the policy really comes home to roost.

MR. TAYLOR: — Is this government telling me that you have no obligation to the people of the province who are facing drastic interest rates and at the same you can loan money, interest free to the Crown corporations for capital buildings? Is that what you are telling me?

MR. ROMANOW: — I am saying that in the hon. member's description of loaning money to Crown corporations, he doesn't know what he is talking about. That is an equity contribution and that's clearly a difference. I think the hon. member should know, if he does not know. The simple fact of the matter is that I invite the hon. member to indicate to the House where any province at all in Canada has a program of the kind he advocates.

If a province does come forward with this, given the ramifications of the finances which are tied into it, we'll certainly take a look at it. The fact of the matter, because no other province is able to provide this kind of solution, gives credibility and strength to the position of the government, that is, interest rates are the firm responsibility of the federal government. They were dangerously escalated by the PC government of Joe Clark. It was the Clark administration who put interest rates on the high rise and they are maintained by Prime Minister Trudeau's government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

High Interest Rates for Landlords

MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — I would like to direct a question to the minister responsible for the Office of the Rentalsman. I think we have all seen articles and press statements that the landlords are facing great problems because of the high interest rates and the rapidly increasing interest rates. The government has indicated that rent controls will stay on. Will the government consider an immediate short-term financial program for the landlords so they may weather the inflationary storm and the high interest pressures which they are facing today?

HON. D.W. CODY (Minister of Telephones): — Well, Mr. Speaker, if there was ever a flip-flop political party in Saskatchewan, it has to be on that side of you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. CODY: — The hon. member for Indian Head-Wolseley was just crying the blues for the people who own homes, the consumers of the province. Now the other gentleman is crying the blues for the landlords of the province. I think the two should get together — whom do they really want us to help, the tenants of the landlords? We certainly can't help them all, that's for sure!

With regard to rent controls, if the members would look at the legislation they would find that the retaining of rent controls in this province doesn't mean anything with regard to what the landlords can receive. It means absolutely zero. It means nothing, because the controls are on housing which is there since 1975 and prior, not which is after that. So, leaving the controls on means absolutely nothing.

With regard to programs for people in housing, we have more programs in Saskatchewan than they have in any other province in Canada.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. CODY: — We have residential rehabilitation programs. We have senior citizens' housing programs. We have section 40 housing programs.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order.

MR. LANE: — Obviously the minister is not listening to the question. Do you not feel in the light of your stated policy — and the Attorney General was quite wrong when he said it was strictly an equity position — whereby your government loans money to the resource industries interest-free, that you have a moral obligation to the people of this province to give some short-term financial aid so they can weather the inflation crisis and the high interest crisis they are facing today?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. CODY: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know why the hon. gentleman would be asking me. I just look after the mediation board and the rentalsman. I don't have very much to do with handing out low-interest loans and that kind of thing but again I want to stress that in the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation we do have programs. There is a co-operative housing program which allows for a \$150 per month subsidy, a program which can be taken up by any resident in this province on low income. I'm sure that's the kind of people we are looking at. There is little question that the programs the hon. members opposite are asking for are now in place. All they have to do is go to their people, tell them what the programs are and I am sure the people will be able to partake of them.

Interest Rates re Farmers

MR. L.W. BIRKBECK (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Minister, in light of your statements in the question period today indicating clearly that in your view interest rates are a federal matter — and of course that was substantiated by the Attorney General — is it your position that regardless of what conditions may exist in the province of Saskatchewan with reference to our farmers and their high costs in particular because of high interest rates, small

businesses as well being affected, is it your position as Minister of Agriculture just to sit on it and let them decline in numbers in this province?

MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, that's not my position as outlined by the hon. member opposite. Our position is that clearly there is a federal responsibility here with respect to interest rates and it's not our intention at this point in time or down the road to let that federal government off the hook with respect to interest rates.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MacMURCHY: — My question to the federal Minister of Agriculture is, what is the federal government's policy with respect to interest rates? He did not put forward any policy and therefore I was disappointed. I will continue to ask the federal government what its policy is with respect to interest rates. Now, there may be room for co-operation by provincial governments and the federal government in dealing with the issue of interest rates but clearly it's time to ask the federal government what is its policy. I suggest to the hon. members opposite that they do the same as the Government of Saskatchewan is doing and ask the federal government —what's its policy with respect to interest rates?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LARTER: — A supplementary to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, in this interview last evening, you made reference to the possibility the provinces with heritage funds could help themselves out better than the federal government. I would like to know what business you had in implying to the federal government that we had any cash in our heritage fund.

MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, I'll respond to the hon. member as positively as I can. At no time did I make any reference to Saskatchewan in my statements to Mr. Whelan or to the press with respect to interest rates. I took issue with Mr. Whelan, the federal Minister of Agriculture, that he should infer they remove their responsibility by saying that there are some provinces which can introduce programs provincially to cushion the problem of interest rates. I object to that. The Deputy Premier, the House Leader objects to that. That's our position — you have economic chaos across this country when you let provinces get involved in these kinds of programs. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, we retain our position that it's a federal responsibility. I don't think we should at any moment in time let them off the hook with respect to their responsibilities. We ask them to introduce and announce their policies with respect to interest rates as we ask ministers in Ottawa to introduce other policies with respect to as I pointed out, transportation, stabilization and marketing which are clearly federal jurisdictions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Water Supply Board

HON. G.R. BOWERMAN (Minister of the Environment): — Mr. Speaker, the last day the hon. member for Rosthern raised a question with respect to the water supply board. I'm sorry the member is not in his seat today but I'll place it on the record for his information as I said I would take it under advisement.

The city of Saskatoon has approved an increase for the volume of water for the towns

and villages on the north water supply system. The water allocations were based on population. I could give the hon. member the population increases as approved by the city of Saskatoon. I'll not do it here, Mr. Speaker, other than to indicate to the member that there have been population increases approved by the city of Saskatoon which will increase the volume of water supply to the communities in his area.

Department of Education Grants

MR. H.J. SWAN (Rosetown-Elrose): — A question to the Minister of Education. In 1979 the Rosetown School Division took a cut in grants of \$47,000. If the grants are adjusted to take into account underpayments carried forward and the employment of a locally appointed director of education, in 1980 their grant cut will amount to something like \$93,836. Are you aware of the costs of these being passed on directly to the local property tax base?

HON. D.F. McARTHUR (Minister of Education): — Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was not able to hear the whole of the question because of the intervention of the member for Qu'Appelle whom I was better able to hear. I understand the member has a serious question and wanted to ask with respect to grants to a particular school division. I must indicate to the hon. member I am not aware and do not have the information here on the specific amounts of grants that have gone to each individual school board. But I will indicate to the hon. member, as I think he well knows, that we have in this province a system of grant payments to school boards, which is an equalization payment system, which takes into account the local assessment in the area. It also takes into account the student population in the area. Through these mechanisms we provide an equalized revenue to all school boards in the province. I think in the case of the board he is mentioning, there will be mitigating factors in terms of student number decline or perhaps an increase in local assessment that might have the results he is pointing out. However, I will undertake to get further detailed information on that particular school division and provide the information to the member.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Opening of a Saskatchewan Government Office in Ottawa

HON. R.J. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to inform the hon. members of the House of the decision by the Government of Saskatchewan to open a Saskatchewan office in Ottawa. This office will hopefully commence its operations in June, 1980 and will be directly responsible to the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, it is evident that a substantial part of the impetus toward progressive development in Canada today comes from the West and, if I may say so, from Saskatchewan in particular. By progressive, I mean not only the shift in economic influence but also the important initiatives in social policy. We in Saskatchewan have a long tradition of going toward developing a society based on the sound principle of concern for both community and individual. As a result, we have programs and agencies which continued to be emulated throughout the western world.

But, Mr. Speaker, the success or failure of western Canada endeavours, whether economic or social, depend a great deal on federal government action. A review of the regional make-up of the new federal cabinet is rather sobering — four western cabinet ministers, three of whom have no so-called western-oriented portfolios. Quite frankly,

the western representation in Ottawa leaves much to be desired. The new federal cabinet only highlights the growing need on the part of the western provinces to develop additional ways of ensuring that our interests are fully represented in Ottawa. Action is required now to illustrate both symbolically and practically, Saskatchewan's concern with the lack of representation in Ottawa from the West and to improve liaison between our government and the federal administration.

This decision by the Government of Saskatchewan to locate an on-site provincial office in the nation's capital is not unique. The province of Alberta has had a provincial office in Ottawa since the 1930s and British Columbia's Ottawa office, only recently announced, should be functioning fairly shortly.

Briefly, Mr. Speaker, the functions of our Ottawa office will be as follows:

1. To establish a continuing liaison with the offices of federal cabinet ministers on issues of major importance to Saskatchewan;
2. To develop a special liaison with federal ministers who are directly involved in Saskatchewan affairs;
3. To monitor political developments in Ottawa and in the province of Quebec and to advise the government on these matters;
4. To provide federal departments and agencies with information on Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan government policies to ensure our provincial points of view are fully considered in the development of federal policy initiatives.

We have not yet made a decision as to who shall be responsible for this office. That will be made in due course. I might add, finally, that the Ottawa office will complement, not replace, the direct communications between Saskatchewan departments and Ottawa and will assist, whenever and however possible, in communications between senior government people and their counterparts in Ottawa.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — The House Leader's announcement is a little like shutting the barn door after the horse has escaped. Alberta, of course, attempted since the 1930s to have some direct liaison. Saskatchewan was years behind in following Alberta and attempting to get that direct liaison. I suggest two things. The government opposite will be following a highly dangerous course if the individual it places in that office is a political partisan appointment such as the deputy minister of intergovernmental affairs. I suggest, as well, that the government opposite would be better advised to have offices in each of the other western provinces — Quebec has done it in the province of Alberta — and improve the liaison with our western neighbors instead of the confrontation policy followed by the government opposite against our western neighbors and our western allies.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. What is the purpose? . . . (inaudible) . . . Order. I can't allow the member to proceed. There are no bills to introduce.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR. SPEAKER

MR. SPEAKER: — Before orders of the day, I want to reinforce the direction for the

members this evening that are attending the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association annual dinner and meeting. It's at the Jubilee Theatre, which is entered from the southwest corner of the Centre of the Arts. So the members may keep that in mind and attempt to be there at 6:30. I want to take this opportunity to also reinforce the memo that I sent around to members' desks a couple of days ago about tomorrow at noon and the viewing of two items in the MLAs' dining room downstairs. And if the members could be there sharp at 12:10 we could get under way for those that are interested.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE — NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN — VOTE 26

Item 1 (continued)

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order. We're dealing with the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, item 1. Is item 1 agreed? The member for Moosomin.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I was just waiting for things to settle down. It looks more like a shopping mall in here right now than a legislature, with people wandering around. I thought, Mr. Chairman, in light of the events of the last few days in the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, and what has been considered by everyone involved in the discussion and the subsequent reports, there were rather heavy charges made on the minister on a number of counts. I think that at this point in time, possibly to get the day off to a good start, the minister might want to respond to activities of the last few days. If he needs some examples, there were charges made with reference to the Wounded Knee incident in the Dakotas. There was your letter of 1973, which was read into the record, at least in part. It certainly has cast doubt in the Chamber, in the minds of the members of the opposition I am sure, and in the minds of the people of Saskatchewan. I feel at this time it would be very appropriate for you to put it all together, if you can — sum it up, and try to alleviate some of those questions that have been left hanging. There are a numbers of issues, I think that might be a good way to start and we'll proceed from there.

HON. J.A. HAMMERSMITH (Minister of Northern Saskatchewan): — Mr. Chairman, I want to be very brief in the interests of perhaps getting into the programs and policies and estimates of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. I want to say I don't think there's any secret that in 1973 I was critical, and often sharply critical, of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, then in its infancy. In 1973, I remind hon. members, the department was only a year old. Many people were critical and I was among the most vocal of those critics. I think there's no secret that in 1972 and in 1973 the present member for Athabasca and myself had many differences of opinion. We had many private and public debates, and we did exchange, on occasion, strong words. I think there's no secret that the former minister and I had many sharp differences of opinion and many debates privately and publicly.

I think it's not unusual in this House for members currently sitting here to hold opinions in 1980 that may be somewhat different from the opinions they held in 1973. I think that, at least, would appear to be the case with the member for Qu'Appelle. My understanding is that the opinions he at least appeared to hold publicly were somewhat different from the opinions he holds publicly in 1980. I think that's also true of the member for Thunder Creek and it may be true for other members.

I think it's no secret that in 1973 I criticized my employer publicly, and my employer chose to not continue that relationship. I think that was the correct decision for the employer. I think it's not peculiar to this situation or this government. I think all of us

recall senior people in the Canadian Armed Forces who publicly disagreed with the then minister of national defence and that relationship was severed . . .

I would point out that regardless of whatever sharp differences may have existed between me and the present member for Athabasca and the former minister for the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, that I remain, from 1973 to this date, a member and supporter of the New Democratic Party.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. HAMMERSMITH: — I subsequently became a candidate for that party and was subsequently elected to this legislature. I've watched, unlike some people, the Department of Northern Saskatchewan closely, firsthand since 1973 when it was only a year old, and when some of us perhaps had expectations higher than they should have been with regard to the amount of change that should take place in one year.

But I've watched the department since 1973. I've watched the former and first minister of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, watched the member for Athabasca, and the member for Cumberland. I've seen both members, Mr. Chairman, demonstrate unusual dedication, unusual courage in the face of widespread, and often vicious, criticism — some of it in the early days from myself. I've watched them persevere and I've watched them hold up under that criticism. I think that the record of the former minister, the record of the member for Athabasca and the record of the department speaks for itself. I have relayed to the hon. member for Moosomin and to other members on other occasions some of the details of that record. I want to emphasize just a few areas.

Before doing that, I want to review for members, who may not have been here or been in northern Saskatchewan in 1971, just what some of the conditions were when approximately one-third of northern settlements were completely isolated in so far as land transportation was concerned. The majority of people in northern Saskatchewan didn't have access to radio. Citizens from Montreal Lake north were not able to receive television broadcasts. La Ronge, Creighton, and Uranium City were the only centres with telephone service. Very few people, comparatively, had access to electrical power. Less than two-thirds of the school-age population attended school regularly. Of those who attended, 60 per cent dropped out before Grade 5; 40 per cent between Grades 4 and 8; and 96 per cent between Grades 8 and 12. Approximately 50 per cent of Grade 1 students repeated that grade compared to an 8 per cent provincial average. Rates of major diseases were as much as 35 times the provincial rates, and those rates were on the increase. The number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births was 60, and in the years since 1973 that has been reduced to an average of 43. And that's corruption? That is something to be attacked?

Each public health nurse in northern Saskatchewan in 1973 served 2,000 people. That has been reduced to 1,100. And that's corruption, that's graft? In 1973 the percentage of students in Divisions III and IV in the schools was less than 20 per cent. That is now over 25 per cent. That's corruption? The percentage of teachers who held a university degree was 18 per cent. That's now over 60 per cent. And that's corruption?

We heard the department and people in the department attacked in blanket statements. I want to list the names of a few people I knew personally who served the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and the people of the North. Paul John, pilot, killed in a plane

crash near Cumberland House; Rod Morrisson, economic development worker, killed in a plane crash; Cliff Stanley, an economic development worker, killed in a plane crash; Tom Coughlin, killed in an airplane crash at La Ronge; Lorne Ziegler, employed by the construction branch, killed in a heavy equipment accident on the Besnard Lake road; Gilbert Ebert, killed in an airplane crash, Uranium City; Ann Ballantyne, social service worker, drowned in an aircraft accident at Channing while en route to Cumberland House; Allan Blythe, construction branch employee, killed in an aircraft crash at Emma Lake; Jerry Pidborochynski, construction branch employee, killed by electricity while moving heavy equipment at Green Lake; Benjamin Heggedus, construction branch employee, killed by a pulp truck on the Besnard-Pinehouse road; Lionel Deschambault, first chairman of the northern municipal council, killed in an airplane crash.

All of these people were killed while working for the Department of Northern Saskatchewan — providing service to the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and to the people of the North. They gave their lives because they believed in a vision of some substance, in a vision of the future to the people of northern Saskatchewan. They died in service to the ideas and the ideas that are now called corrupt — and that's corruption? That's corruption?

I'm afraid, Mr. Chairman, I can't agree. Presently, in 1980 employees of the department give up their evenings, give up their weekends, give up their vacations in service to the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and to the people of the North. I'm surrounded by six of them as we attempt to get on with considering the department's estimates. And that's corruption? Corruption? Mr. Chairman, I think when we consider and if we honestly reflect on the conditions as they were in 1971, and we recognize the magnitude of the task that was undertaken, a task, I remind you, that no other government in Canada, provincial or federal, has been prepared to undertake. We must recognize the achievements have been great, the achievements will go down in not only the history of this province but in the history of this country as a milestone in human endeavour. You know, it was once said that if you wish to launch great ships you have to go where the water is deep. And the member for Shellbrook and the member for Athabasca and the member for Cumberland and the people who died in service to these goals were courageous and strong and dedicated people. I am proud to serve in this House with them.

I repeat, I think in this House I'm not alone in being a member whose views may be different from what they were in 1973. There have been some mistakes made and there have been some problems along the road but, you know, a mistake at least proves somebody stopped talking long enough to do something.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. HAMMERSMITH: — I want to say I have been very encouraged by the number of telegrams, phone calls and personal visits I have received from people from the North since this personal attack started. It is the people who make the issues. The opposition doesn't make the issues and the media doesn't make the issues.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. HAMMERSMITH: — The people make the issues, and with regard to the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, the people of the North make the issues and the people of the North continue to be even more supportive of this government and of this department.

The member for Qu'Appelle on Thursday last made a speech in this House. When I saw him afterward outside the House I congratulated him on a masterful performance because it was a masterful performance in the use of words and oratory. But I say to this House that a masterful verbal performance stands in insignificance beside the masterful performance of substance on the part of the former minister of northern Saskatchewan and on the part of the department.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. HAMMERSMITH: — And I ask members to reflect in history on the performance of masterful orators in other places at other times. If you recall the McCarthy era of the early '50s in the United States, the masterful oratorical performances were not unlike those we have heard here, but they had very little substance. People in other parts of the world, at other times have carried on masterful performances.

On Thursday, April 3, on page 1468, the member for Qu'Appelle moved a motion calling for a royal commission into (and note the words) the operation of and administration of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. He said that's different; that's much more broad than the motion for the judicial inquiry moved by the member for Moosomin.

I would like to read on page 1257, the motion by the member for Moosomin where he called for a judicial inquiry into the operations of and the administration of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. I fail to see how the operations of and the administration of, on March 28, is narrower than the operations of and the administration of, on April 3. I think it points to a weakness in the masterful performance.

You know, Mr. Chairman, last night officials of the department and I were at a meeting in La Ronge with the northern municipal council, and they are anxious to get on with the issues of the 1980s in northern Saskatchewan, the issues of the 1980s reflected in the estimates of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. They are anxious to get on with planning the long-term role and structure of local government in northern Saskatchewan; they are anxious to get on with economic development; they are anxious to get on with education; they are anxious to get on with the new training programs and continuing education programs outlined in the budget and in the estimates. I wish to repeat that we too are anxious to get on with it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, I would ask the minister a question. Mr. Minister, in my questioning on the Department of Northern Saskatchewan estimates, have I at any time cast any doubt as to your personal integrity.

MR. HAMMERSMITH: — No, I think it is fair to say (and I appreciate this) that the member for Moosomin has not personally cast what I would interpret as such, doubts or aspersions.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for the record, I would appreciate it very much if the Government Whip would mind keeping his place. If he can't keep quiet, then remove himself from the Assembly or stand in his place and be well heard on the

record. I think likely it would be appreciated by members of the House. I see we do have some people in the galleries; if the hon. member for Kelsey-Tisdale might take his foot off the desk. I don't think that's very parliamentary, Mr. Chairman, I think that would be a reasonable point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Is item 1 agreed?

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, I raised that as a point of order. Are you going to rule on my point of order?

MR. CHAIRMAN: — What is your point of order?

MR. BIRKBECK: — I raised a very simple point of order. You heard my point of order and if you weren't listening to what I was saying then maybe I should be raising another one.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Well, you state your point of order and do it quickly.

MR. BIRKBECK: — I did.

MR. CHAIRMAN: —. Don't cast aspersions on the Chairman.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, I raised my point of order. Are you asking me now to repeat my point of order?

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Yes, that's what I'm asking.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Well, for your benefit I'm not going to bother repeating anything, Mr. Chairman. O.K.?

Mr. Chairman, the minister responsible for northern Saskatchewan has set out in a very quiet toned-down manner to allay and waylay the charges that have been made in this Assembly, not on himself but on the administration and particularly prior to his becoming Minister of Northern Saskatchewan. This subsequently leads the members of the opposition to be suspicious of the present administration.

You use examples, and I don't know how many you used but there must have been at least a half a dozen or eight or nine examples of people in northern Saskatchewan who were killed in the line of duty. I really don't see, Mr. Chairman, and, Mr. Minister, what that has to do with the question we raised here today when I asked you to comment and sum up and reply directly to the charges that had been made on the department, questioning its integrity and its honesty. It didn't seem to relate at all to me. I have no doubt in my mind that there are many individuals — employees and people who live in the North and work there for the benefit of other northern Saskatchewan residents who are doing a good job. We have no doubts about that whatsoever. So, for you to spend 15 or 20 minutes telling us of all the wonderful things they have done and how many died and so on in the line of duty is quite irrelevant to the estimates before us today.

You talk about corruption. You say, is that corruption? You said that, I don't know, four or five times. I think it's very clear what is corruption. What seems to be corruption, Mr. Chairman, is the matter of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan's supposed involvement in a fraud case. That seems to be corruption. The actions of the former minister of northern Saskatchewan, in your own words not in ours — we're just looking at what you said. We were having some confidence in you that you were right at that

time. We believe that the actions then, because of your letter with reference to the former minister of northern Saskatchewan, are corruption. Now that's corruption. But today I see you very gently and softly attempting to back away from the issue and support the former minister of northern Saskatchewan. Very gently again, and softly attempting to tell this House that all is well between you and the former minister of northern Saskatchewan and the member for Athabasca. There are no problems there anymore. You even seem to be attempting to apologize for your letter in 1973, to withdraw those comments by way of your statements today in the legislature, that all you said then you didn't believe, or if you did, you don't now. So I think the obvious question is, when you made statements and then in fact actively involved yourself with regard to the Wounded Knee situation in the Dakotas, when you wrote this letter in 1973, it would follow you either have to be thinking the same as you were then or you have changed and you think differently now.

That is basically what the opposition members were asking. We were asking what are your social views now as the minister responsible for northern Saskatchewan with the many social problems that exist in northern Saskatchewan. That's what we were attempting to get. So I think that's the question I want to ask now. Do you no longer hold the views today you did in 1973 with reference to the Department of Northern Saskatchewan? Can you answer that question, Mr. Minister?

MR. HAMMERSMITH: — I think I answered the question. I answered it in my opening remarks.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Mr. Chairman, if I am to believe the member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake now believes all of this to be untrue because he is a member for the NDP, ran under that banner, was elected under that banner, and was appointed as Minister of Northern Saskatchewan as a result of his adopting NDP policies (which we're not too sure of as they relate to northern Saskatchewan), I feel it's incumbent for you to be more specific, more specific as to what you believe your role is as Minister of Northern Saskatchewan.

MR. BOWERMAN: — Do you believe the same things you did seven years ago?

MR. BIRKBECK: — Well, now, for the first time the Minister of the Environment, the former minister of Northern Saskatchewan, has come into debate — not by, of course, taking his place. He is now attempting to support the concept I believe to be true today, that you in fact do not believe today what you believed seven years ago. The Minister of the Environment now feels that is the case as well. So, Mr. Minister, if you wouldn't mind just elaborating very briefly on that and being somewhat more specific, I would appreciate it.

MR. HAMMERSMITH: — I think I said in my opening remarks the situation in 1980 is considerably different than the situation in 1973. I think I listed (and I have on previous occasions in this House, in a great deal of detail) the very specific difference in the situation. I think I said in my opening remarks that perhaps in 1973 some of us were expecting too much to have happened in one year, that we were hasty in our judgments. I think the motives the member attributes could just as well be attributed to members of this House. I think I remember not too many days ago, the member for Qu'Appelle exhibiting considerable distress when he had read back into the record his remarks in this House in 1973. I think that he and his colleagues would agree that in 1980 his opinion and position on certain matters is different than it was in 1973. I think that all members opposite, including the member for Moosomin campaigned, and campaigned hard (in the case of the member for Moosomin with considerable success)

under the leadership of the member for Nipawin in 1975 and 1978. I think in the first session in which I was a member, when the member for Nipawin was still leader of the party, that the member for Moosomin supported his views. I think that two years later he does not support those views. I think that is reasonable.

I would remind the member that I sought office as a member of and candidate for the New Democratic Party. In 1973, I was a member of the New Democratic Party as I was in 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979 and 1980. I became a member of this Assembly representing the New Democratic Party. As a member of the government, I represent the party and subscribe to the policies, philosophies and principles of the Blakeney government. As a member of the cabinet I share in the making of policy. It is my responsibility to administer the policy of that government through the Department of Northern Saskatchewan in the northern administration district. My views are clearly part of and supportive of the views of this government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. J.L. SOLOMON (Regina North-West): — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is with a great deal of reluctance that I participate in this discussion on the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. But I am more than willing to participate considering the fact that the opposition members have continued to display huge amounts of ignorance about northern Saskatchewan and the operation of the department which is in charge of that area.

I am also a little bit reluctant and I certainly will continue to be reluctant about lowering myself into the mud with members opposite in their continued effort to offer destructive criticism, not constructive but destructive criticism, of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. It is not only the Department of Northern Saskatchewan but other government initiatives that they have berated since I was elected to this legislature on October 17. But I won't lower myself to become involved with that.

I wish to make a few comments about the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. I wish to make those comments tempered with the knowledge that I was an employee of the department for two and one-half years, from 1975 to 1978, under the former Minister of Northern Saskatchewan, Ted Bowerman. When I joined the Department of Northern Saskatchewan as the minister's executive assistant in 1975, the turnover rate of the staff of the department was around 35 to 40 per cent per year. That was because the department was, in 1975, approximately three years of age. As many members of this House know and understand, when young babies are born and until they become a little experienced in life and go through life learning a number of things from their parents or their guardians, they have a few growing pains. There are always some problems. The Department of Northern Saskatchewan was not unlike any new department in government or any new department in business, if any of the members opposite have ever had experience with business (and I'm sure some of them have although I don't know how successful they've been). But the opposition continues, Mr. Chairman, to offer unfounded and unsupported comments on all topics, not just DNS, in order to get the unwarranted and undeserved headlines which they are receiving from the more than co-operative media.

Now it's always easy to criticize something when you know nothing about it. Change is always difficult to handle for most people. But in particular, change is difficult to handle for those who do not know what has brought about this change or those who do not

know what implications the changes will bring. The members opposite, the members of the Progressive Conservative Party (and I have problems pronouncing that term because I think the term should be the Regressive Conservative Party) know little about northern Saskatchewan. None of them across the floor has ever spent any time in northern Saskatchewan visiting the communities such as Pinehouse, Sandy Bay, Pelican Narrows, Black Lake, La Loche, Cumberland House or Ile-a-la-Crosse as I have. I've worked in all those communities in northern Saskatchewan. I saw developments occur between the years of 1975 and 1978 which would totally amaze the members opposite in the sense that they were very positive changes and very progressive changes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SOLOMON: — All that the PCs know is that there is water and soil in northern Saskatchewan. They, therefore, attempt to convey to the public of Saskatchewan what little knowledge they have and they talk about their limited knowledge — of the water and the soil of the North. Everyone knows what happens when you mix water with soil. It turns to mud. That is exactly what the Tories are putting forward as their policies in northern Saskatchewan — mud — as far as I'm concerned.

It's the same tactic the PCs used in the Regina North-West by-election — statements based on hearsay, fear of change and ignorance. The electors of Regina North-West clearly indicated on October 17, 1979 their indignation at those mud-slinging racist statements. They indicated on October 17 what their indignation was for the Progressive Conservative Party as they will do in the next election and I can assure them of that. Mr. Chairman, I am as indignant now as I was last October with regard to those racist statements and their attempts to decry the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

The Progressive Conservative Party, in my view, is rudderless in terms of leadership, knowledge and direction. I challenge the members opposite to perhaps grab hold of that rudder and take a trip up to northern Saskatchewan and see what kind of changes have evolved in the last number of years.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I take further exception to some comments made by the member for Qu'Appelle who is very conveniently absent this afternoon. He stated in Hansard, April 3, 1980, page 1466 and I quote him:

We know, Mr. Chairman, there were serious problems in DNS. We also know there were serious administrative problems in DNS from the outset.

He goes on to talk about what he thinks are serious problems but he doesn't clearly indicate what the problems are. His problem, as he perceives it with the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, is a public letter which was written and distributed to all newspapers and to anyone who wished to read it in 1973. That's the tremendous research the caucus office and the new talent brought in from Ontario are producing for these pathetic members opposite in terms of their research in constructive criticism — totally irrelevant, totally irrelevant to the estimates of this departments, totally irrelevant to new policies and new initiatives. Completely bankrupt is all I can say about the members opposite.

The member for Qu'Appelle goes on, and I quote (referring to the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan):

He wants some positive and constructive suggestions. He says the government has always acted. I have here releases going back to 1973 where every time a problem becomes public the minister of the day covers up and refuses to bring the problems out so they can be resolved. Don't blame the opposition for the mess in DNS, blame the government.

Well, that is the feeble attempt of the member for Qu'Appelle at putting forward policy supported, constructed, and promoted by the members opposite, by the members of the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan. Unbelievable! That's the enlightening policy. The enlightening policy is to dig up a letter from 1973 — reinvent the wheel.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, when I was first hired on in 1975, had a few problems even then — as all departments and all people usually have problems throughout their lives. I would like to give a little history to the members opposite about northern Saskatchewan and perhaps allow them a clear perception of what, in fact, is actually going on in the North. Northern Saskatchewan, the area which we refer to as the northern administration district, consists of 100,000 square miles of timber, lakes, rock, soil and rivers. Twenty-eight thousand people live in northern Saskatchewan approximately, with a breakdown of the population as one-third of the people being of white extraction, one-third treaty Indian, and one-third Metis.

Northern Saskatchewan, even though our province is this year celebrating our 75th anniversary of being a province of Canada — which I am very proud of — is over 100 years older than southern Saskatchewan. The communities of Cumberland House and Ile-a-la-Crosse, in 1973 and 1974 respectively, celebrated their bicentennial — 200 years of age over six years ago. The point I am trying to make, Mr. Chairman, is that the northern part of the province, and the settlements in the North, are over 100 years older than the settlements in the South. But when DNS was created in 1971, it was created for a specific purpose; that purpose was to attempt to bring northern Saskatchewan into the same sort of economic and social time frame as southern Saskatchewan.

The life of people in northern Saskatchewan in 1971 was one of hardship. There were no sewer and water systems in any of the communities outside of La Ronge, Uranium City, and Creighton. People lived in tar paper shacks, terrible housing conditions. There was no comprehensive health care program, no dental care, no local government. There was chronic unemployment among all peoples including the whites, poor education facilities: the NAD (northern administration district) was run almost by 100 per cent southern people — which is similar to the way the government of the Northwest Territories is still run. It is run by 99 per cent of people who live in the South or have lived in the South for most of their lives.

In 1972 the government of Allan Blakeney had the foresight to create a department which would pull together all of the government services and produce many new services to alleviate the problems that were being created in northern Saskatchewan. The DNS was formed and they had a number of growing pains, as we have discussed and the opposition had difficulty in really finding out what they were. But over the years most of the problems have been resolved. In eight short years northern Saskatchewan has come from the communities I have just described to communities where people are proud of their North, and are proud to be working in the North.

I would like to enlighten some of the members opposite with some very interesting

statistics about the accomplishments of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan in addition to what the minister has already provided to them.

The welfare dependency in 1972 was 47 per cent; as of 1978 it had declined to 16 per cent — a pretty significant development by the department. The percentage of people who were involved with local government or controlled by local government was 63 per cent in 1972, and by 1978, 100 per cent of the population of northern Saskatchewan was participating in local government: local advisory councils, local community authorities and villages and towns. Grants to local governments went from \$31,000 in 1972 to \$4.3 million in 1978. That's a 13 times increase — a pretty significant development but absolutely necessary and even more money is necessary than that.

Let's take northern employment in mining for example. In 1972, almost no northern people were involved with mining opportunities in terms of employment. By 1978, 52 per cent of the employees in AMOK were native northerners. They earned, including AMOK and other mining operations, \$3.7 million in wages in 1978 and had \$8.7 million in contracts. That in my opinion is a pretty impressive statistic. Grants to schools increased in the same time period six times from \$2.1 million to \$13.5 million. Road inventory: 540 kilometres to 1,769 kilometres. Airfields: 12 airfields upgraded and constructed.

The member for Meadow Lake who sitting behind the bar should take note of these because the Department of Northern Saskatchewan works in the area just on the northern boundary of his riding. He will know better than anyone in this Assembly can tell him that the people in northern Saskatchewan are very pleased with the operation of the department and the operation of this government under Jerry Hammersmith.

I could go on, Mr. Chairman, with many more details to illustrate my point but I would like to provide a final illustration of what I believe to be a legacy of this government in northern Saskatchewan and of course the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. That is a trip I made up to Deschambault Lake in 1977. Deschambault Lake at one time in 1972 was not accessible by road. People had to fly in or come by canoe or overland with a lot of portages.

In 1977, I was in Deschambault Lake and I talked to the community leader. The community leader was a member of the Peter Ballantyne Band who was a council member of that band whose chief comes from Pelican Narrows I understand. But that individual was participating for the first time in any sort of government outside of his own Indian government. Cornelius Ballantyne is the gentleman I am referring to. I was there, not as an executive assistant to the minister but as a traveller on holidays because I am very fond of the North. I asked him what his honest impression was of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and he told me that his involvement with his local advisory council (he was the chairman of the local advisory council; it was a local advisory council set up through the efforts of the DNS) was more productive for him than his involvement and his father's involvement and his family's involvement with the federal Department of Indian Affairs for over the last 100 years.

What he was telling me, Mr. Chairman, was that they actually had an input into running their own community. They made their own decisions and they made their own decisions for their own people. They didn't have people from outside of the community coming in and making those decisions. And that in my opinion, Mr. Chairman, is what makes my involvement with DNS one of the most satisfying experiences that I have ever

had and I have had quite a few.

In my address and reply to the speech from the Throne last October for which I was honoured and the people of my constituency were honoured, I talked about a thumbs-up approach to government and a thumbs-up approach to the people of Saskatchewan from this government and there are countless actions to support this statement. Look at the record and you will see. I went over it in great detail on December 3. but the message of DNS for northerners, in my opinion, in this province is also a thumbs-up message, not just because of the by-election victory but also for those people it serves. It is not the thumbs-down message which people are now saying is being conveyed by the phantom Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, Grant Devine, who encourages his colleagues by example.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make one final remark in support of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. It is a follow up to what the minister has already suggested, that many people in northern Saskatchewan — almost all of the people I've spoken to — are supportive of this department, are supportive of the minister now in charge and are supportive of the government's direction in northern Saskatchewan and have gone to the bother of telexing some messages. I'd like to read these messages into the record. I have one from 14 native and non-native DNS staff in La Ronge. I quote, Mr. Chairman:

Staff in the department sincerely hope that the obviously racist tirades of the opposition will only strengthen your resolve to continue moving the department towards the goals which were originally set forth in 1971.

These are addressed to the minister, Mr. Hammersmith.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SOLOMON: — I continue.

The progress which has been made in the last eight months is very encouraging, and any disruption of it will severely damage the future of the North and its residents.

That's one of the concerns of a group of 14. They are seriously concerned about the damage the department and the people of the North are suffering as a result of the continuation of the mudslinging by the members opposite, and degradation without facts. If you have facts, let's have them; produce them; table them; make them public — don't just make your accusations public.

I have another telex from the executive of the native women's organization in La Ronge.

We wish to express our support for your endeavours to achieve meaningful changes for the betterment of the people in northern Saskatchewan. We strongly condemn the actions and verbal attacks directed at you by the members of the Conservative opposition. We request that you continue to champion the cause for social and economic development of northerners.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SOLOMON: — . . . an additional 16 members of Department of Northern

Saskatchewan, and I quote:

We have heard the racist and personal attacks which Conservative MLAs have made against you in the House. We want to reaffirm our support for you and the direction you have set for DNS during the past eight months. Our hope is that these tirades will only strengthen your resolve to lead the department in directions which ensure the benefits.

That was from the non-native and Metis staff. I have another one from the Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan. There are two of them. Here is a very short one.

Hang in there, Jerry. We support your ideas and we need you to ensure that the people of the North get a fair deal.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SOLOMON: — That's from AMNSIS local. There's another one from the native staff committee, and if the chairman permits me I will continue. I'll leave it to him to judge.

On behalf of the native staff committee we would like to assure you that we agree in the direction that you have moved the Department of Northern Saskatchewan in trying to assure native northerners have first opportunity in working in the department and ensuring that the department moves towards giving more local control to northern communities.

That is a pretty progressive and supportive telex in my opinion. I have another telex from the people of northern Saskatchewan who the Conservatives opposite allege are being harmed and being put down by this government. And this is a good one, a couple of paragraphs:

The northern board of directors of AMNSIS fully support the position we have taken rejecting a public inquiry into the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SOLOMON: — According to the Prince Albert Herald April 2, 1980 you stated:

There are four individuals awaiting trial on charges connected with DNS and to engage in a public inquiry now could well prejudice their right to a fair trial.

I've heard those comments before.

We feel your decision to reject an inquiry at this time is a courageous and a responsible one. In a democratic society every citizen is entitled to a fair trial. It makes us feel proud to have a good working relationship with a minister with such high calibre and courage.

We need more cabinet ministers that can stand up and fight for the democratic rights from the people they represent in the legislature like Jerry

Hammersmith has. Your 1973 letter brought into the legislature by Graham Taylor is a crystal clear indication that racism is still rampant within the Saskatchewan Progressive Conservative Party. We believe a political party that will bring out in public seven year old letters of a private citizen for the purpose of discrediting that individuals is repugnant. The Saskatchewan Tories must be desperate for issues and lack good party leadership.

And finally, Mr. Chairman, the final quotes:

We must never forget that the Indian and Metis people once owned and controlled all the land and the rich resources of this country. Once they lost control their culture also started to disappear as did their self-respect. We must all work as a team and help the Indian and Metis rebuild and develop their cultures. Only then will they not be a tax burden to the Euro-Canadians of this province. Walk tall and keep up the good work.

And that is from the northern board members of the Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of northern Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SOLOMON: — Mr. Chairman, I've made my point and all I can finalize my remarks with is, I support Jerry Hammersmith in his endeavours as Minister of Northern Saskatchewan as do all of my colleagues. We are prepared (the ones who have had experience in the North) to stand up and debate any time, anywhere, the positive attributes of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. That can only be witnessed by the results of the last provincial election in delivering Norm MacAuley, right in front of me, and Fred Thompson as New Democrats to this legislature. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. R.N. NELSON (Yorkton): — Mr. Chairman, I must say I too am rather saddened and appalled at the level to which debate in this House has descended. The continued attack on the minister even after he has withdrawn is not worthy of this House, is not worthy of parliamentary procedure. I have been long convinced our freedoms and the style of government we have and are privileged to enjoy in this land, can last only as long as the people of this land want it. But it also can be lost, Mr. Chairman, if the members of this legislature and members of parliament conduct themselves in a way that is not in keeping with the long history of British parliamentary democracy. I cannot believe, Mr. Speaker, name calling is a very elevated form of debate or any other parliamentary procedure. I cannot believe, Mr. Chairman, constant searching for muck and dirt constitutes any elevated form of debate or any other form of parliamentary procedure. I cannot believe it adds to parliamentary procedure to talk about wrongdoing where there is none, and if you call a person an insurrectionist, and an anarchist or what else have you, certainly that is talking of evil where none exists. It is a real McCarthy-type activity. Certainly if there is wrongdoing with government, it is the duty of an opposition to bring wrongdoing to the fore. But to concentrate on a search for wrongdoing alone, to imply that there is wrongdoing when there is none at all, at the expense of challenges to policy directions, is muckraking, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. NELSON: — If an opposition can do nothing but muckrake (and name-calling is certainly the worst form of muckraking) then the government process deteriorates. It deteriorates because no department is given cause to rethink its policies.

AN HON. MEMBER: — I'm sure Judge Noble didn't write your speech.

MR. NELSON: — Do you want to repeat that again?

AN HON. MEMBER: — You brought out the same attitudes you have toward the judiciary. You showed it right there.

MR. NELSON: — No department is challenged . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'll get to that later. No department is challenged in its day-to-day activity on policy, and government deteriorates. If the opposition only muckrakes, the government process deteriorates because we on this side of the House have to spend time on defence of our members. If the whole parliamentary debate is defence and attack of personalities instead of defence and attack of policy, then parliament, Mr. Chairman, is as good as dead.

Both Mr. Devine and the member for Indian Head-Wolseley know that the rule of law depends on law-abiding citizens. If citizens in general disobey the laws we have a lawless society. Both Mr. Devine and the member of Indian Head-Wolseley know that if parliamentary government is to succeed, the members of the legislature or the members of parliament must have the will to see that it shall succeed. If the debate here degenerates to name-calling this legislative process cannot go ahead. Then, Mr. Chairman, we would have the anarchy which the member for Indian Head-Wolseley talked about.

Teachers who have been in the classroom know what happens when a teacher allows anarchy to develop within his classes. Teachers like Mr. Devine and the member opposite, the member for Indian Head-Wolseley, cannot be ignorant of the results of name-calling in a classroom or in this Assembly. The member for Indian Head-Wolseley (just imagine the member for Indian Head-Wolseley was the one who aspired to be the leader of his party and sought to be the premier of this province), a teacher, stoops to name-calling in the legislature. Mr. Chairman, in a free system of government, for which our schools try to teach people respect, this man comes from these schools and lowers himself to name-calling. Just imagine, Mr. Chairman, the cries of dismay that would come from the opposing side if we applied similar epithets to them.

All we need is to go back, Mr. Chairman, and look at the remarks that have been made from time to time. Let's take some of the remarks made such as, farmers are not efficient, or the remark the member for Moosomin made when he said that bigger is better in farming. We could apply, Mr. Chairman, all sorts of epithets, all sorts of names to people like that who attempt to bring about and propose such policies. But it is beneath our dignity. We have too much respect, Mr. Chairman, for this parliamentary democracy, too much respect for the long history of parliamentary democracy. It is obvious, Mr. Chairman, the new Devine Leader of the PCs approves. I give you in evidence — almost one hour the bells rang before the members opposite returned on the challenge to the Chair when the member was required to retract — almost one full hour! Obviously the Devine leader was contracted, and agreed with the process.

Further evidence of the Devine approval — no repudiation of the member for such name calling. And his retraction was made grudgingly, very, very grudgingly. Only on

threat of expulsion did he retract his statement.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I would like to compare the conduct of the member for Indian Head-Wolseley with that of the member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake. Certainly the member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake wrote letters — rather damning letters that he agrees were damning — wherein he attacked the policy of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and the people who were there, an attack which he himself today said in effect was overzealous. He was not ready to wait for actions to be carried out. Of his own free will, Mr. Chairman, he made that statement. No one demanded he should make it. Of his own free will he made it. Of his own free will he ran for this party, he won the election for his constituency. He didn't run for the Liberals; he didn't run for the Conservatives. He ran for the New Democratic Party. Of his own free will he stood up in this House, as I said before, and said the things he had to say today with regard to that letter he had written. But it is not good enough for the members opposite; it is not good enough.

Out of his great desire to work for the people of the North, the member for Prince Albert- Duck Lake became the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan, the department he had damned before. But here Tories again can see only evil, something evil and sinister. They can see nothing worthwhile. They look for evil coming out from around every corner. It is evidence in every move they make within this House. You can go through Hansard and find this whole policy of looking for evil under every bush — looking for something sinister where none exists.

Mr. Chairman, rather than some . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order, order I would ask all hon. members to allow the member for Yorkton to speak, uninterrupted.

MR. NELSON: — Mr. Chairman, thank you for calming the members opposite down. Instead of something evil and sinister, why not look for something positive for a change? Instead of something evil and sinister, look on the fact that he has run for this party; look at the fact that he is now the minister of that department which he criticized, that is now a vindication of that whole department. Here is an intelligent man who has made his criticisms, who saw what was developing in that area and who said this now is the way to go. It is a vindication. With all the warts, wrinkles and problems that are there, that have been there and, yes, that will be there, this man has decided to go with that party. But it's not good enough for the Tories opposite. It's not good enough. We have to have something evil. There has to be something sinister.

Certainly we need a great deal more work and a great deal more work will be done. That's why we have a Department of Northern Saskatchewan, to deal with the special problems there. There is nothing evil or sinister about it. Look on the positive. Talking of the positive and the negative, Mr. Chairman, I think a thing that typifies the attitude of Conservatives opposite as much as anything is the actions of the member for Moosomin whenever I wish to speak. He saw I had difficulty with my speech. He chuckled and laughed. He thought it was a great joke.

I just wonder what would have happened if I had come in, in a wheelchair. He would have rolled in the aisle. He would have rolled in the aisle, Mr. Chairman. That's typical of Conservative reaction, typical of what they're like. It doesn't bother me, really. You take it only from the source from which it comes.

A further proof of vindication, I think as has been mentioned before, from the North is the election and the re-election of the member for Cumberland and the member for Athabasca. But not only that, it is indicated by telegrams sent to that minister (telegrams of admiration and support) that nobody can deny. That shows he is loved and respected in the North - -the North that he serves.

Let us compare that again with the member for Indian Head-Wolseley, a school teacher who knows, who has to know that name-calling and this sort of activity is certainly undesirable to put it in the least. He grudgingly gives his withdrawal. He withdraws only because he is forced to. Compare that to the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan, who of his own free will, arises. I think all on our side will say the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan is a man.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. NELSON: — But let's go right back again to the letter which the opposition members made so much of. Does it relate to the present? No. Back to 1973, Mr. Chairman, way back to 1973 when the department was one year old. It was just getting off the ground — 1973, when the problems of the North were barely being touched.

The member for Qu'Appelle brings another document in which he purports to deal with the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. If you look on page 1467, I believe, of Hansard of April 3, he said:

As I say, here's a headline from a 1973 editorial in the P.A. Herald.

In 1974 — no modern evidence. He continues to go back. Not today's problems. — they don't want to deal with today's problems. They will make vague generalities about the new direction in the North. Nothing specific. The only thing they have to pin their hopes on is one person's statement, the statement of one judge. The man who made so much of that statement is himself a lawyer and he knows, at least he should know, that you do not destroy a man's case in court by . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . There are more trials to come that are connected with it. And you don't bring in a public inquiry.

AN HON. MEMBER: — That's public information. Don't misconstrue the facts, now.

MR. NELSON: — Mr. Chairman, these gentlemen wouldn't know anything about facts.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. NELSON: — Mr. Chairman, obviously I'm not trying to criticize the judge's decisions or his facts. What I am saying and what I did say, and the record will prove it so, is that there are other court cases tied to that and it would prejudice those court cases if you have a public inquiry. You make so much of this because there's got to be something evil here. Everywhere you go, there's got to be something evil.

Mr. Chairman, these Devine Tories are showing the people of Saskatchewan what they can expect in the future politics of Saskatchewan. This is the new Progressive Conservative order of the day — slander, falsehood and muckraking emanating from the PC mouths and minds as a substitute for philosophical and policy debates. This is a complete break with parliamentary practice, a complete break with the rule of law. Mr. Chairman, I'm appalled that any member of this legislature should stoop to this level.

I'm appalled that two fellow teachers should be so ill-informed concerning the parliamentary procedures and practices that have been in existence in this parliamentary system for hundreds of years. I can only express my sorrow that it should come to pass. I shall be solidly supporting the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. G.S. MUIRHEAD (Arm River): — Mr. Chairman, I've been hearing a lot of remarks about what's been going on here this last week over northern affairs. The remarks I hear from the members opposite make me feel very sad. How could such a thing possibly happen in this province? Now you reverse it onto us? Now how could such a thing be? We're not the government; you are. You'd think we were the ones who made all the flip-flop mistakes. You would think that you people were the judges.

Now, I have some questions that I'm going to ask the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan but first I want to make a few remarks regarding the Minister of Education. He said the other day, when he got up to speak — I used to follow the activities of this Assembly perhaps because of influence by my parents. My father took a very lively interest in politics. Let me tell you that the father of that gentleman was a man of the soil. He was a man of toil. He was a man who wouldn't go for the tactics that you are doing over there, hiding things. He was a man who would want things laid out on the table. He would be ashamed of you people over there wanting to hide . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, sir. You people are hiding and hiding and hiding. If you had nothing to hide, why didn't we get an inquiry? Why didn't we?

I'm just going to read you something out of Hansard, page 1463, where the Minister of Education says:

What kinds of policies does this government have? Are they good? Are they bad? What is the matter with them? If they are lousy what's the matter with them? Get up and debate and say so. Criticize the government . . .

Well, I'm man enough to stand up and say you're a lousy government. And if you want to give us some answers we'll give you a good education in criticism if you'll just give us the facts. But we can't get them. We've had a real good example in Crown corporations — you wouldn't let the TV come in. You didn't want them there. I've been here one year in this House and tried to get answers . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . you bet. We put on the order paper, the Attorney General gets very excited about all these questions we've got on here — they shouldn't be here . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . yes, and they're going to need some profit — Service printers — to help you win that next election too. That's where it goes and you know full well.

Going back to the Minister of Education, I'm going to say a little bit about his father. I'm sure his father, if he spoke, didn't believe in hiding the facts; he wanted everything in front and on the table. We will not only criticize, we will offer valid solutions to the citizens of this province, if we can get the facts from you people, particularly to the citizens of the North — if you will allow the best education facilities we have, the televisions and radio, to beam the actions of this House and Crown corporations committee. You give us the facts, we'll give you some solutions to the problems. But we can't get the facts from you people. You talk about education. If you haven't got anything to hide, then send us the information in the most clear and comprehensive manner which is afforded by TV and radio. Let the population of the North get out from under the clutches of your socialist propaganda machine, which has proven in the

last couple of weeks to be of very questionable quality.

I'm going to ask the minister a few questions, Mr. Minister, when you sent this letter to the Premier in 1973 did you get a reply, verbal or otherwise?

AN HON. MEMBER: — Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — I'll call on the hon. member for Moosomin. I think he wants leave to introduce some students. Is that O.K.? Agreed?

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

MR. L.W. BIRKBECK (Moosomin): — I appreciate the Attorney General's apology in allowing me to take some time in the House, Mr. Chairman, to introduce a group of students from my constituency, from the town of Kipling, the school of Kipling of course. This group of students, 80 in number seated, is in the Speaker's gallery, as you can see. The students are accompanied by their teachers, Mike Coderre, and Sylvain Pre'Mont. I would just take a moment to indicate to the students in the galleries that we are in committee of finance. We are in review of the policies and estimates of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. I would just like to advise the students that I will be meeting with you later at 4:30, and I would like to ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in wishing the students a good afternoon here, an educational afternoon and of course a safe trip home.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE — NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN — VOTE 26

Item 1 (continued)

MR. HAMMERSMITH: — I'll answer the question very briefly. As I recall, I don't have a copy of it nor do I have a copy of my original letter. However, as I recall I did get a reply. I don't recall the details of it. I wouldn't like to depend on recollection, particularly for the hon. member for Arm River because he is particularly concerned with the recollection of ministers and does not wish to be misled. I won't try to recall it from memory except to answer the question in the affirmative.

MR. J.L. SKOBERG (Moose Jaw North): — Mr. Chairman, on adding a few words on Vote 1, I would like to make immediate reference to the statement, or the questions supposedly being asked of the minister by the hon. member for Arm River. I don't know whether those opposite, the Conservatives in this particular case, can remember back a few short years ago to '76-77 in public accounts, which are made available after the report is tabled in this House, in regard to the amount of subsidy paid to those fishermen in the North.

But I notice the hon. member is saying nothing is made available in response to questions asked by themselves. At that particular time it was adequately drawn out and explained in its entirety, exactly what payments were made to the people of the North in regard to subsidies for those fishermen. But still they tried to drag that in, Mr. Chairman — tired to drag it in to the debate. They don't want to debate nor do they want to ask questions on anything significant in so far as the accounts of that department are concerned. They want to completely make disrespeckable the minister of that department for their own selfish reasons. All I can say is, Mr. Chairman, it is disgusting;

it is despicable; it's degrading. It is immoral the way the opposition are trying to handle estimates in this House.

I have had a little bit of experience in the opposition at another level of government. At least at that level of government the opposition did ask questions in the House. They did not go for character assassination as I have seen in this House in this last number of days. If that's the new look — the new Devine look of the Conservatives — then I think everything should be televised so those people opposite could be shown for what they are — and that is disgusting.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SKOBERG: — There is no question in my mind, Mr. Chairman, that there are still a number of those members over there who still do have some degree of integrity but it is becoming less and less and less. When I actually listened to the hon. member for Indian Head-Wolseley the other day, who is reportedly a superintendent of schools, it is almost impossible to believe that hon. member would stoop to the gutter sniping that he stooped to. And it is also unimaginable to believe a superintendent of schools would try to move what he did in this House and try to go after the character of individuals in this House.

I would also like to say, Mr. Chairman, they may say they are not attacking the entire civil service in this province, but all you have to do is read the orders for returns. All you have to do is read what they are saying in this House at this particular time and you know it is character assassination of the highest degree. They can use any camouflage they may wish but the fact remains, that is exactly the intent of all of their questions at this time.

There is no question in my mind that anyone, no matter who he may be, can make mistakes. There is no question in my mind that we in our party at least, when we do go to conventions yearly, allow for open dissent and open discussion. We do not need the balloons and the bands to try to cover up ineptitude of the party you people happen to belong to. We do go to our conventions and we do discuss. We have some bitter discussions about points of view, of where we are going, morally, socially or economically, but I cannot say that for those people opposite.

Listen to them on the radio — not very difficult to listen to the leadership convention — not one thing was discussed at that convention that I could hear that even remotely resembled a platform or a program, whether it be morally, socially, or economically. I had to really laugh when I heard their leader, Mr. Devine, speak about the family. And all I hear from those opposite is talk about the family I listened to that gentleman on the radio talk about how in Saskatchewan the mothers are circling the days, waiting for their families to come back from Alberta to visit them. I can tell those opposite, my mother lives in Alberta and she circles the date to wait to see when I come back from Saskatchewan to visit her. All of a sudden I look across the way and I look at those people who are suggesting they are the only great friends of the people in this province who are suggesting they are the only great friends of the people in this province. Their record speaks for itself without hesitation in the debate going on at this particular time.

Mr. Chairman, I always thought Vote 1 really dealt with the guts of the department. But these people opposite aren't worried about getting into the guts of the department or asking questions that will then bring out to the public any questions they may have on their minds. If they think that letters back in the early 1970s signify magnificent, monumental problems to the people of this province, they are badly mistaken. I

personally have made many contributions to causes which I believe are worthy in so far as this country is concerned and as far as the international area is concerned.

All I am suggesting, Mr. Chairman, is that if we are really interested in trying to go ahead in this Legislative Assembly, then it's not a case of trying to attack the personal integrity of individual people. It's a case of trying to find out, in the estimates of this House, exactly what's going on. That doesn't appear to be the new Conservative look. It doesn't appear to be their look — other than to go after, degrade, and make it so disgusting for the people listening to this type of debate, that they have little respect for the members of this House no matter what area they come from.

I am asking, Mr. Chairman, whether or not it might be possible for members opposite to realize what the integrity of the people who sit as members of this Legislative Assembly is all about.

I couldn't help but listen to the other day when the Speaker ruled a motion out of order. I couldn't help but listen to the member for Qu'Appelle say, phoney. Too bad it didn't appear in Hansard. But that's the disrespect they have for the rules of this House, the disrespect they have for the departments of government and the disrespect they have for parliamentary procedure.

I am suggesting, Mr. Chairman, it would be a marvellous situation if those people opposite would go to the churches of this country, the churches of this province. To try to substantiate the position they're putting before the people of Saskatchewan. I think the council of churches will tell them that they have respect for our parliamentary procedure. They will tell them ministers are elected for a purpose. They will tell them we do have a democracy in this country. The hon. member for Indian Head-Wolseley, being a superintendent of the school, should have told his students that we do have a parliamentary procedure here that is still the best in the world. It's slow, and sometimes it's burdensome. But the fact remains things do happen no matter how slow they may be. They happen in a democratic fashion without defamation of character.

I would say to those opposite — and I listen to the member for Arm River, talking about and screaming over there about hiding things — if they want to find out what's in the estimates, why don't they ask the minister then instead of going back to that letter and to things that have no significance at all for the people of this province?

As I suggest to you opposite, and I'll finish the way I started, Mr. Chairman, the actions of those opposite (some of those opposite, not all of them) — it's despicable; it's degrading; it's immoral. I think they will wake up some morning and realize it and wonder what type of new leadership they have under the Devine leadership of Mr. Devine!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. G.S. MUIRHEAD (Arm River): — I'm glad to hear the remarks from the member for Moose Jaw North that we should get to the topic of estimates. What more questions could you get from this letter? That's what it's all about. We'll stick to the letter. It's very important. It's all about the department.

I am also very glad, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the minister for putting it on the record that the Premier (we know now) received a copy of that letter. We know he replied. I

think you made a very smart statement. You made a very clever statement because it maybe clears you and puts the blame back on the captain of the ship — right back where it started from. It proves now to this House, and we have it on record, that the Premier received that letter and since 1973 has done nothing to clean that mess up.

Now if I were the minister of northern affairs it would take me 24 hours to clean up that mess you have — 24 hours! Fire the whole lot of them. Start over again; what's the matter with you guys over there. You are the bunch of lame brains I have ever seen in my life!

Nobody in this province of Saskatchewan is going to go against Judge Nobel saying that the department has run amuck. Now when you get there and try to throw it back on us, what kind of gentlemen are you anyway? Run amuck, Judge Noble says so. You all go against him, everyone of you. You sit there and smile and smile and smile.

MR. LARTER: — Ask the Attorney General what he thinks of the decision.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — The Attorney General is a very clever man and knows the situation right at hand. He knows that we're right. He knows that we would be some opposition if we didn't persist for all we have. We wouldn't be doing our job for the citizens of the province of Saskatchewan. It's not us who need to know this information; it's Saskatchewan. The people of Saskatchewan have to know the information and what is going on. You have been trying to hide it.

I admire the minister of northern affairs for writing this letter. He had something you people haven't got. The people up there elected him to come back to clean up this mess in northern affairs which the Minister of the Environment made. He put it in that mess. But you have gone wrong, Mr. Minister; you have been there almost a year and you've done nothing. This court order proves it.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Complete flip flop.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Complete. I have never seen such carryings on in my life. Get out to the boondocks in Saskatchewan and talk to the people on the street. I'll guarantee if you go to your seat, Mr. Minister of the Environment and Mr. Moose Jaw over there, the first 100 people you ask on the street will say, yes, we want the answers. I'll challenge you any place in the next election. I'll challenge you in Arm River. I'll go up and challenge you in your own seat.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MUIRHEAD: — I have another question. I have so many questions to ask it's going to take several days. Did you receive any reply from any other officials of the government when you wrote this letter to the Premier?

MR. HAMMERSMITH: — I don't recall, Mr. Chairman.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Now if you are a smart enough man to be the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan, you should be able to remember. You should be able to remember if you got a reply or if you didn't. Did you get any replies, verbal or otherwise, from the NDP people in Saskatchewan? Did you or did you not?

MR. CHAIRMAN: — I'll call on the member for Regina Wascana.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Come on, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Have you a point of order? State your point of order.

MR. KATZMAN: — The practice of this House has been, when a member is on his feet asking questions back and forth to a minister, he is allowed to continue his questioning without being interrupted. Are you now suggesting you are starting a new policy and therefore trying to close off . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order! I want to thank you very much for your comments but your comments are out of order. The practice of this House is the practice that is carried on by the Chairman and the Chairman has carried on, as long as I've been Chairman, by going back and forth if people have questions, comments, etc. If you have another comment on something you wish to make I'll certainly get back to you.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — State your point of order.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — I just have one more short question to ask.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — That's not a point or order. I'll call on the member for Wascana.

MR. LANE: — I would like to raise a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — State your point of order.

MR. LANE: — I'm going to state the point of order. I would like to know where the Chairman gets way from the basis of estimates, which is government accountability by the opposition, to the Chairman encouraging debate on a particular matter. Would you tell me where you get the basis for your ruling?

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order! This House and this committee belong to all the members, regardless of opposition or government. It's my responsibility . . . order! It's my responsibility to give every member an opportunity to participate and it certainly isn't my job to cut off debate. As I mentioned, I'll be getting back to the member over here after we hear from the member for Regina Wascana.

MR. LANE: — Speaking to the point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — There's no speaking to the point of order.

MR. LANE: — I'll raise a new point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Well, it better be a new point of order.

MR. LANE: — It will be a new point of order. I'm asking you where you make the decision that estimates become a debating forum and not a government accountability forum which is a basis of estimates?

MR. CHAIRMAN: — That isn't a point of order. I'll call on the member for Regina Wascana.

MR. LANE: — Oh, you're biased.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order! I demand you take that statement back.

MR. LANE: — I won't take that back.

Ruling by Mr. Deputy Speaker

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Order.

MR. J.A. PEPPER (Weyburn): — Mr. Deputy Speaker, during consideration of the estimates of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, the member for Qu'Appelle accused the Chair of being biased. The member has refused to withdraw the remarks.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — I call on the hon. member for Qu'Appelle to withdraw the remarks he made about the Chair.

MR. LANE: — First of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like you to show where in the record my statement is and secondly, I don't . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Order, order. I call upon you to . . . No point of order. I call upon the hon. member for Qu'Appelle to withdraw the remarks that he directed towards the Chair in the committee of finance.

MR. LANE: — You show me in the record where it is.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — I'm going to give the hon. member for Qu'Appelle one more chance. He knows the consequences for refusing. I'll be forced to name you unless you withdraw those remarks unqualifiably.

MR. LANE: — I want you to show me in the record where that statement is.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — I name you, Mr. Lane. One moment please. State your point of order.

MR. TAYLOR: — My point of order is that we challenge your ruling.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — You can't challenge my ruling.

MR. TAYLOR: — Can you explain to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how you can sit in there and be involved within the situation, then make the ruling there?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Order, order.

MR. TAYLOR: — Would you answer that?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Order. I want to reply to the hon. member for Indian Head-Wolseley. The reason I am here is because I'm the Deputy Speaker of this legislature. Unfortunately, and I feel badly about it as you can appreciate my position, the Speaker of the House is not available. So it's my duty to take the Chair and to enforce the rules of the House. I personally would much rather not have been put in this position, but that's the position I'm in and I'm enforcing the rules of the House.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Would it not have been possible for the member for Weyburn to take the Chair?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — No, it would not. I call on the Attorney General.

MOTION FOR SUSPENSION

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, I move in my capacity as House Leader, seconded by the Hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. MacMurchy):

That the member for Qu'Appelle be suspended from the service of this House for the remainder of today's sitting.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

YEAS — 32

Pepper	MacMurchy	Tchorzewski
Bowerman	Mostoway	Koskie
Romanow	Kaeding	Lusney
Messer	Hammersmith	Long
Snyder	Kowalchuk	Johnson
Kramer	Dyck	Nelson
Robbins	MacAuley	Engel
Baker	Feschuk	Poniatowski
Skoberg	Byers	Lingenfelter
Gross	Vickar	White
Shillington	Rolfes	

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Birkbeck	Swan	Katzman
Larter	Pickering	Duncan
Taylor	Garner	McLeod
Rousseau	Muirhead	

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE — NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN — VOTE 26

Item 1 (continued)

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order!

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise, report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:05 p.m.