

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Third Session — Nineteenth Legislature

Friday, April 3, 1981.

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NOTICE OF MOTION

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Tuesday next, move first reading of a bill entitled, An Act to Guarantee Certain Rights of Children Whose Interests are Affected in Domestic Disputes.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

HON. MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Speaker, through you and to the House, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce some 34 grade 10 students from Muenster High School. They are accompanied by their teachers, Miss Vataman and Mr. Yaeger and their bus driver, Mr. Wilson. I want to welcome the students to the legislature. This has been an annual event since I have been MLA. Of course, they come from the village and town of Muenster where I live. I want to welcome them here and will be meeting with them later this morning.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce a group of some 14 students from the town of Luseland in my constituency. It is an excellent rural town. They are just a great number of very good people from rural Saskatchewan. They are accompanied today by their teacher, Bernie Etcheverry. I will be meeting with them afterward for pictures and refreshments. I hope you will enjoy the proceedings this morning. I know your stay in Regina will be a very pleasant one. I would like to wish a very safe journey home.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Premier and the government, I have the honour and privilege this morning of introducing to you, Sir, and the Assembly, some very special guests, a delegation headed by the Ambassador of France, His Excellency Monsieur Pierre Maillard who is in the Speaker's gallery.

Monsieur Maillard has just come from Saskatoon and Cluff Lake where he joined with the Lieutenant-Governor in officially opening the Cluff Lake mine. Members will be aware that the French company, Amok, is principal partner in this important resource project with our Crown corporation SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation). The ambassador is a senior diplomat in the French public service. He has served his country in Switzerland, London, Vienna, and at Unesco (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization). He has been ambassador to Canada since January 1980.

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Je voudrais au nom de l'Assemblée législative souhaiter une très chaleureuse bienvenue à Monsieur l'Ambassadeur Maillard, et à ses collaborateurs: Monsieur Vannini, Monsieur de Zorzi et Monsieur Luguet. Les liens entre la France et la Saskatchewan sont cordieux et étroits. Nous espérons, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, que votre visite va renforcer ces liens.

We are delighted to have you here with us for your first visit to our province, Your Excellency, and trust that the remainder of your stay will be both pleasant and productive.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Au nom de l'opposition il me donne un si grand plaisir de vous accorder une chaleureuse bienvenue, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur Maillard. Je comprends que ce soir on se rencontre aussi pour dîner, alors ça me donnera un grand plaisir de vous y rencontrer. Aussi, je vous souhaite une chaleureuse bienvenue à la province de la Saskatchewan.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. NELSON: — Monsieur le Président. De la part de tout le monde ici, je voudrais aussi souhaiter une chaleureuse bienvenue à Monsieur l'Ambassadeur Maillard; bienvenue à notre province, à notre capitale de Regina et à notre Assemblée. Nous sommes très fiers que vous êtes venu à notre province. Et je veux vous dire que nous sommes très fiers que votre pays et le nôtre sont de bons amis. Aussi, nous sommes fiers que votre pays a contribué beaucoup à notre culture au Canada, et même en Saskatchewan. Comme vous le savez peut-être il y a 6 pour cents des habitants de la Saskatchewan qui sont des Canadiens français d'origine. Il y a plusieurs de petites villes dans notre province où la plus part des habitants parle le français. Ce sont quelques-unes des raisons parmi bien d'autres pourquoi nous sommes dans la Saskatchewan, et dans le Canada, nous sentons une forte amitié avec la France.

Je veux vous dire que vous êtes bienvenue ici. Nous voudrions que vous disiez à votre compatriote qu'ils sont aussi bienvenue chez nous. Merci.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Uranium Investments

MR. ANDREW: — A question to the Minister of Mineral Resources. I understand yesterday at the opening of the Amok mine there was an announcement or an acknowledgement that the uranium markets have deteriorated and will for some time. In fact, the life of the mine is going to be extended down the road because of that deterioration. I might say this is a position that members on this side of the House have been taking for some time. Would you now admit that the investment made by the Government of Saskatchewan, as an active player in the uranium industry, was a poor investment? Would you admit that it is time you cease that investment in the uranium industry, and that you act as a referee in that industry, and simply, as a producing province, take your revenues by way of royalty rents?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Mr. Speaker, obviously I disagree with the statements made

rather than the question posed by the hon. member for Kindersley. I think the opening yesterday, the day before and the day before that, the three days of opening, indicate the confidence that our partner, Amok, has in the future of the uranium industry. I don't disagree with the member that at the present time uranium prices are not as high as they have been recently. We believe in SMDC that our investments will still provide more than an adequate rate of return to the people of Saskatchewan. We are confident that it is a good investment. I think members opposite made the same comments with respect to potash some four or five years ago. One can look at the results to see how well they forecast there. I am quite willing to let the people of the province decide at the appropriate time whether or not the investments in uranium have been good ones. I will put my seat on the line with respect to how well we do, as I am sure the member opposite will with respect to his projections.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. ANDREW: — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, this is from the March 31 issue of the *Toronto Globe and Mail* and with the indulgence of the Speaker, I will read a story out of New York which says:

For almost two years uranium prices drifted down to \$25 a pound from \$43 a pound. Nuclear fuel talk was still hopeful of a turnaround.

That hope has finally faded, even in spite of the fact of the election of Ronald Reagan in the United States. The producers are now saying that new demands for their product are going to be years away. I think one executive even quipped, "They have put bars on my windows to keep me from jumping out."

That seems to be a common position by the industry; that the markets are bad, that the investment is a long way off, and there is not much expectation for return. Why is it that you and your government seem to say that that investment and return will be there for the people of Saskatchewan when everybody else in the industry seems to be looking at a gloom and doom situation, or at least says that returns from investments will be a long way off?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that the member draws a generalization from an article in the *Globe and Mail* referring to the American nuclear industry. I want to make some comments about that. First of all, the United States is not the only consumer of nuclear power in the world. I think if one looks at France, for example, one will see a very active nuclear program continuing. Secondly, the American producers of uranium, for the most part, are very high cost producers. So obviously their costs are very radically different from the costs of producing uranium in Canada.

The member says there's no encouragement or enthusiasm or anything else with respect to the uranium industry. I think the member only needs to look to Australia where one sees a fair amount of activity in the uranium industry. One needs only to look to northern Saskatchewan where SMDC is certainly not the only company that is involved in a very active exploration program. We have Midwest Lake, for example, of which a major partner is Exxon. Obviously from what they are saying publicly they are anxious to get on with their project.

MR. ANDREW: — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you have invested on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan in the neighbourhood of \$500 million. Obviously

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you are taking care to ensure where the market is going. You have, no doubt, market studies and information given that size of investment. Would the minister be prepared to table in this Assembly those market studies and information at your disposal, so the people of Saskatchewan can make the decision whether or not it's a proper investment?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if the member thinks that we are going to table our marketing information, our estimates of where sales are, how we should go at those sales, who are the likely customers, what are the other likely producers in the world going to do and what's our strategy to deal with them, I think the member knows better than to ask that. Obviously we're not going to table it.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Minister, in your answer to the preceding supplementary, you indicated that your government was depending very heavily on France as a customer for uranium produced here. Since France is one of the non-signatories on the non-proliferation treaty, are you suggesting that your government approves of this position and in effect puts its stamp of approval on the potential use of Saskatchewan uranium in the expansion of nuclear weapons?

HON. MR. COWLEY: — Well, first of all I did not make any comments with respect to whether or not France would be a potential market. Mr. Speaker, the member said that no one was proceeding in the nuclear industry. I said France had a very active and progressive nuclear program; and that's exactly what I said. The member can check the record if he wants to. With respect to whether or not France will be a market, time will tell. Whether it's signatory or not to any international agreements, what we have said consistently is that we will be bound by Canadian government policy in this regard. If it has a bilateral arrangement with Canada, for example, which is acceptable to the Canadian government, that will be the policy which we will follow.

Possibility of a Teacher Shortage

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, question to the Minister of Education. Mr. Minister, it seems evident that elementary enrolments are levelling off. In view of this, there is likelihood of a serious teacher shortage in the province of Saskatchewan within the next two or three years. What action has your department taken to offset this problem of a shortage of Saskatchewan-trained teachers?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, the current situation is that the teacher supply and demand are pretty well at balance from the most recent studies undertaken by Dr. Gathercole. I might add that there is a stabilizing of students at the elementary levels, a continuing decline at the high school levels, but a stable teacher population in the province even with these changes in numbers. We have not had the declines in teacher populations in Saskatchewan, I'm rather happy to say, that have occurred in Manitoba and Ontario and other places as enrolments have declined. In view of the stable teacher population, the likelihood that there will not be substantial declines in teachers. We are undertaking continuing teacher supply studies and another one is just being started at this time.

I say to the hon. member that I think presently things are in balance. The concern is certainly about the future, because there have been some declines in enrolments in the colleges of education where our new teaching personnel come from. So we are having a further study done and will take steps when that study is completed, if it does confirm that there is an imbalance in the future that will materialize.

MR. TAYLOR: — Supplementary question. Surely, Mr. Minister, if we're going to address the problem of teachers three or four years down the road and the universities do feel that there is going to be a vast shortage of them, we have to be taking steps right now

It seems to me that the story of enrolment decline has been sold very well throughout the province and perhaps has not been the correct story. Mr. Minister, why don't you take action to inform the guidance counsellors, who are in the schools where the students are, and the principals of the schools of this problem that is existing? Will you do that?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Yes, indeed that is done, Mr. Speaker. There is information which goes to the schools each year on the outlook with respect to different kinds of jobs and opportunities. Certainly there have been a number of recent studies that have indicated aspects of the future in terms of likelihood of certain kinds of personnel being wanted in certain kinds of professions. Those have been made widely known. I am also looking at a further development of our guidance program in our school system through the Department of Education.

MR. TAYLOR: — Final supplementary. Mr. Minister, have you talked to any high school graduates? Because if you go out and talk to them, the vast majority have no idea what they're going to do and they have no idea where the opportunities abound in this province. I say to you that this is just an indication of a broader problem in education pointing to the need for vocational guidance at the high school level. I am asking you today: will you put moneys into a program of vocational guidance so that situations such as the shortage of teachers that's going to exist in this province can be offset? As well, will you inform the young graduates of this province what the opportunities are out there, so that they can share in the future of this development in Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Certainly, Mr. Speaker. We are putting money into such programs now and will continue to put money into such programs. We base our planning and our programs on long-term information that is available. We don't simply listen to a radio program at 9 o'clock on a particular morning and make a decision that something has become an emergency. We undertake a continuing program of review of what is needed here and I think our guidance program is doing very well.

New Steps for Mental Health Services

MR. SWAN: — My question is to the Minister of Health. In today's paper, the headline on third page says, "Mental Health Services said Seriously Lacking." The task force on mental health finds that the delivery of mental health services in the province of Saskatchewan has seriously declined and they see problems arising in the next 20 years if immediate action is not taken.

What has your department done, in the last short while, to put in place a new method or new facilities for the delivery of mental health service?

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, I hope you don't rule me out of order, but I've got a list that's a mile long about what the Department of Health has done. He asks me what we have done, and I want to indicate to the member, first of all, that the statistics that were given by Dr. Masters in the news item that you are referring to did not take into account the number of psychiatrists who are on contract. Many of our psychiatrists are on contract. I want to indicate to the member that we do have, I think, six vacancies at

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the present time. I promised the House that I would bring that down to 11 last year; I promised that in estimates. I am pleased to announce that we have only six vacancies at the present time.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the member that I agree that much more needs to be done in this particular area. But if you look at the headlines in other provinces, you will find that Saskatchewan is about 10 to 15 years ahead of what is happening in other parts of this country. I can just read some headlines: "Sick, Aged, Sent to Live in Squalor". "No Licensing Required for Guest Homes", "Sherman Vows Action on Care of the Sick and the Aged", (Sherman, by the way, is the health minister for Manitoba). "Some Guest Homes Rated Social Blight in Manitoba", and I could go on and on.

I think what has to be recognized is that there are some difficulties in this particular area right across the country. But Saskatchewan still leads the other provinces by at least 10 to 15 years.

What specifically have we done? Mr. Speaker, the psychiatric services branch is funding Saskatchewan Mental Health this year to the tune of \$134,000, which is an increase of well over 100 per cent for 1976-77; we approved rehabilitation services funded by the Department of Social Services through the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan; the 1981-82 budget has approved five new positions. Our budget, by the way, has increased from \$9 million in 1971-72 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, he asked me specifically what we had done, and that's what I am relating at this time. From 1971-72, the budget of \$9 million is now \$23 million — well over 100 per cent increase.

Mr. Speaker, there are many other residential options. For example, within the last three years, we have eight new group homes set up in Yorkton, Weyburn, Swift Current, North Battleford, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Regina. There are treatment homes established — one in Regina; group homes will be on stream within three months in Moose Jaw and Lloydminster and we have treatment homes in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, I'm not even halfway through my list, and I'm sure you're going to rule me out of order. I'm waiting for a supplementary question.

MR. SWAN: — It's nice to make a speech of that type, but the statistics don't verify what you're saying. You know, it's easy to stand up and say, "Yes, we're the greatest", but to prove that you're the greatest you have to deliver that service.

The statistics show that in the last 18 years, suicide rates in this province have doubled. That doesn't indicate to me that you are providing the kinds of mental health services needed in this province. What have you done to provide counselling service to people with mental problems to discourage the suicide problem? You know, people who are 40 years of age and under face suicide as the second highest cause of death. Now, this is part of the good things you are talking about in our province, in mental health.

HON. MR. ROLFES: —Mr. Speaker, let me reply to the statement that was made by the member. I want to indicate that I am very concerned about the rate of increase in suicides. I think it is something that we must address ourselves to. But we really have to address ourselves to the question of whether it is too late when a person has to go to a psychiatrist. I believe we must address ourselves to the problem of preventative health and social and educational services. I have said that on a number of occasions. In my

own personal experience as a high school counsellor, on many occasions it is too late to start dealing with young people at the ages of 14, 15 and 16. One must address that problem at a much earlier age.

I have indicated in this Assembly, and outside this Assembly, that I will try to convince this government, the Minister of Social Services and the Minister of Education, to put a heavier emphasis on preventative health, social services and educational services. I think that has to be done. We need more counsellors in the elementary grades; we need more social workers.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, I'm always proud to meet with other provincial ministers and tell them about some of our programs which they are still looking forward to implementing. That doesn't mean that we should rest on our laurels. We should continue to lead the other provinces and convince them and the federal government to participate in these programs. I assure the member that I will do everything I can to make those services available. But, you must remember that stress, whether it is an economic stress, job security, family breakdowns in society — all of these bear very heavily on the suicide rate of young people. We have to address those problems. Government can't do that all alone. It must be done in the private sector, in our school systems and by society as a whole. I don't disagree with his statement. I think we're taking some strides in this particular area.

Beef Stabilization Plan

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Mr. Speaker, question to the Minister of Agriculture. I wish to thank the minister for handing me this 14-point program pertaining to the beef stabilization plan. Mr. Minister, after going through this 14-point program, it looks as if this plan may have some merit. There are just 3 points that bother me. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I'll read the 3 points.

1. Enrolment voluntary.
12. The board will market beef on behalf of producers enrolled in the plan.
13. The board will make arrangements for marketing beef in the manner that obtains the highest return for producers.

My question, Mr. Minister, is this: will you assure this Assembly and the cattle producers of this province that the plan is not a backdoor method of bringing in a cattle marketing board? Secondly, will you guarantee that the plan will stay voluntary?

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, I will assure all hon. members and the people of Saskatchewan that this is, in fact, a stabilization plan. Secondly, I will assure all hon. members that it will remain voluntary.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Supplementary, Mr. Minister. I thank you for those words. Mr. Speaker, I say to the minister as a cattleman and a producer in this province, I will support any plan which passes producer approval. Will you give your commitment that the beef stabilization plan or any other plan pertaining to the beef industry will only come into effect pending producer vote?

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, I heard the hon. member talk about his interest in the plan. I reported to the Assembly, I think last week, that discussions were going to

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be under way this week with representatives of farm organizations. I can report to the hon. member and the Assembly that my understanding is that the staff in the department has met so far with NFU (National Farmers' Union), SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and the Saskatchewan Stock Growers' Association. It met with each group separately. Their plans are to continue those meetings into next week in order to look at not only the principles of the plan as I have provided them to the hon. member opposite, but also the draft legislation itself. After that round of meetings, the government will be able to consider the approach which should be taken. Perhaps there will be amendments to the legislation. Perhaps there will be amendments to some of the principles as outlined. I think the round of meetings is necessary before we bring the legislation and the complete plan before the Assembly.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — Final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. You just answered that question the way you answer all other questions. You never answered it. Will you or will you not give the producers a vote? Yes or no?

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, I pointed out to the hon. member that this is a voluntary plan, and producers have the option to join the plan or not. It seems to me that that doesn't require a vote of all producers. If we were going to introduce a compulsory marketing plan for beef, and if it were supply management, I'm sure that the government would call for a vote of producers. And rightly so. The hog commission is not a supply management commission. It's not a hog marketing board. It is a selling agency. Therefore, there was not a vote. Mr. Speaker, I am saying to the hon. member that we do not plan a vote for the voluntary beef stabilization plan, but we do plan to discuss it with the farm organizations. We are doing that. We have been talking to producers about the plan. There's a great deal of interest in the plan, as the hon. member expresses a great deal of interest in the plan. In fact I think he said, "It sounds pretty good."

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Minister of Agriculture along these same lines. Mr. Minister, I did request a copy of the criteria from you a week to 10 days ago regarding this, and you had stated that you were meeting with these groups. But, Mr. Minister, in light of the fact that today in Saskatchewan the fat stock market is between 73 cents and 75 cents a pound, production costs 80 cents a pound for the pound of beef on that animal in Saskatchewan today, and in light of the fact that the herd maintenance program by the federal government is in total chaos, and there are thousands of producers in Saskatchewan that are not going to get paid, once again my question to you is: the part of the program that you gave to the member opposite does not specify much detail, in fact hardly any detail at all, and these producers of Saskatchewan are still calling our offices and want the information . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. All I hear is debate. I want to hear the question.

MR. GARNER: — My question, Mr. Minister, concerns the \$5 million that you are putting into the program. Do you think that this is going to be enough to take care of the depressed livestock prices that are in Saskatchewan today?

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, no I do not agree that the \$5 million will be the total costs of the beef stabilization plan. It may be sufficient for 1981-82, depending on how quickly we get the plan in place, and depending on the numbers of cattle that are enrolled in the plan. But if it is not enough, based on the funding formula, then certainly

we will respond with additional money on the 50-50 share that's built into the principle of the stabilization plan.

MOTION

Federal Constitutional Plans

MR. LANE: — I ask leave under rule 39 to move a motion to the effect:

That this Assembly urge the federal government not to proceed with the constitutional resolution until after the decision on the matter is handed down by the Supreme Court of Canada.

That's moved by myself, and seconded by the member for Kindersley.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! This motion under rule 39 requires the unanimous consent of the Assembly. Is unanimous consent granted? Consent is not granted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Schedule of House Sittings

HON. MR. ROMANOW: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Moose Jaw South:

That notwithstanding rule 3, this Assembly shall on Thursday, April 16, 1981, meet at 10:00 o'clock a.m. until 1:00 o'clock p.m.

Motion agreed.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — I move, seconded by the hon. member for Regina North-East:

That when this Assembly adjourns on Thursday, April 16, 1981, it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, April 21, 1981.

Motion agreed.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 39 — An Act to amend The Department of Intergovernmental Affairs Act

Section 1 agreed.

Section 2

MR. LANE: — I just wonder, as a general question, would the Attorney General mind advising specifically which organizations, societies, or whatever, have asked for grants? Are they in or outside the province? Which grants is the Attorney General

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contemplating? Some detail, please.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Chairman, we're under section 2, not that it matters. I can't provide that information right now, but I can undertake to provide it in writing to the hon. member within a few days. It's a matter of going back to the department and getting a detailed list of the requests for grants.

Essentially, the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs grants are limited (almost without contradiction; I may be subject to some error) to grants to national or regional organizations with respect to banquets and special functions of that nature. There is a criteria list given. We do not get into the business of granting, in too many special cases, any functions outside that perimeter. What I can do is get the department officials to go through that material and get you a letter that documents what it is. So that's basically what we'll do.

MR. LANE: — What about the term of your speaking engagements that you're taking that a grant would be forthcoming should the invitation go to the Attorney General to speak on matters of the constitution? Certainly it's well within the parameters of the Department of Culture and Youth, I believe, and certainly the protocol office in intergovernmental affairs, that they can supply grants for organizations that want to come to Saskatchewan to hold conventions. That's normal and routine. There are certain criteria involved in that that we find very questionable, but it's not relevant to this particular debate. But are, in any case, the grants tied to your speaking engagements on the constitution?

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — No, Mr. Speaker. I can answer without any equivocation at all. My requests (such as they are) for speaking engagements are, in every case, (and certainly in the last several months) 100 per cent without any connection to the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs or granting at all. I've been receiving request from individual organizations in the province and outside the province to talk about the constitution. I make a judgment call as to whether or not it's a responsible organization and one which would benefit both the province and others to articulate the province's point of view before, and I accept the speaking engagements on that basis.

MR. LANE: — Is there any possibility that the government would use its grant program to give the other side of the constitutional position and perhaps be a little more forthright with the people of Saskatchewan in telling them how much damage, in fact, has been done to the country because of the government's support or the government's sitting on the fence on the constitution? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The hon. member says nonsense. All of a sudden we see a great raft of government ad promotions, programs and everything else (the member back there is very proud of that fact) as to Saskatchewan's position. They're obviously very one-sided and I read through them all. I read through the ads in the newspapers and nowhere can I find statement to the effect that last August the Government of Canada had a position paper which stated in no uncertain terms how fearful and how afraid the Government of Canada was of a common western position and how much the Government of Canada needed a western ally before it proceeded.

I am of the view, and I think that most of the people of Saskatchewan are of the view, that the Government of Saskatchewan should have sided with the other western provinces from the beginning. Secondly, that failure to support the other western provinces in the court case and otherwise, in fact, led the Prime Minister of Canada to take the course of action that he did. It strikes me that when we have a fundamental difference between

the Government of Saskatchewan's position and the instinctive feelings of the people of Saskatchewan, perhaps a program which would indicate that possibly the people of Saskatchewan were right and the government was wrong would be the proper course of action, instead of the justifications or statements now trying to get the government out of a very sticky wicket.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Chairman, I note with interest the words of the hon. member for Qu'Appelle requesting consideration of grants to explain (the words that he used were) "the other side," on the constitutional debate. Mr. Chairman, I am prompted to ask the members of this committee and the public: what other side is the hon. member referring to?

There are two sides in this debate as it has resolved itself and, as the Government of Saskatchewan is explaining, there is the side of opposition. There are eight provinces in opposition. All of the eight provinces do not have identical reasons for opposition. Some are different, but they are all in opposition.

Then there is the other side, Mr. Chairman. The other side are those for the resolution. Now, the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (may I say, the former Liberal member in this legislature) wants funds for the other side. He wants funds from the government to explain to the people of Saskatchewan the other side in the constitutional debate. Now, those words can only mean a position of support for those who support the federal Liberal government's posture. There can't be any other rational explanation for this. Frankly, Mr. Chairman, I do not express much surprise at the position being taken today because, consistently in the last two or three weeks, the hon. member for Qu'Appelle almost exclusively among the Conservative caucus, has been asking questions related to our revealing our factums in advance (this is the legal argument by the province of Saskatchewan); he has been critical of the various efforts we have made in this regard.

To whose advantage, Mr. Chairman; to whose advantage? I have heard it suggested to me that the hon. member for Qu'Appelle and the hon. member for Thunder Creek, while they sit as Conservatives, are indeed very much supportive of the resolution. When they talk about the other side, about getting the province to table its legal position of opposition in advance, when they articulate these kinds of positions, in effect the only people who could benefit from that are those who are on the other side, namely, those who are for the resolution. This government is opposed to the resolution. We maybe do not have the identical reasons for opposition that the member for Qu'Appelle has. Maybe tactically we disagreed as to how we pursued it. All of those can be legitimate differences. But today in opposition, we are talking about the other side. I say, quite frankly, that we are here to explain the government's reasons for opposition — a position which was supported unanimously, or so we thought, by the Assembly. When someone argues that there should be funds for "the other side," frankly, I am distressed, because it is, in effect, saying that we should be funding the Liberal Party or those who support the Liberal position on the other side, namely, support of the federal constitution position.

Now, may I conclude by saying that if the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan disagrees with some of the tactics that we have taken, that of course is their full right, and I can understand some aspects of their arguments. The tactical decisions have to be made at the time, as best as one can make them. But with all due respect to the hon. members opposite, the tactical decisions to a large extent are behind us now. What is before us as a government and as an Assembly is the articulation of the positions of those governments or of this government, coupled with the appropriate explanation for the reasons therefor.

So, Mr. Chairman, I simply would beg to differ with the hon. member. I suppose if the hon. member is saying that we should be giving funds to the Liberal Party or those who are for the proposition, that that is something which can't be dismissed out of hand. We have had a history in this government of funding environmentalist groups who could be viewed as being on the other side of the government's development, say, on uranium. We have done that. Maybe there is some merit in considering that kind of a funding mechanism (I am not talking now in political terms, because I think that would be improper), to other organizations which would articulate a contrary position to that of the government. So, Mr. Chairman, I don't reject it out of hand, but I certainly say that it is an unusual request to put it mildly.

MR. LANE: — The Deputy Premier is a lawyer and has just made rather a shocking statement that the other parties have not made their positions clear. Obviously sitting on the fence for so long you are out of the battle and have missed the battle. Let's see who has made their position clear in public. The other six provinces have made their positions clear and public. They have filed their documents. They have filed their factums before their respective courts of appeal. They've made their positions clear. The federal government and the NDP have made their position clear. They've made their positions clear before the Court of Appeal of Newfoundland, the Court of Appeal of Quebec, the Court of Appeal of Manitoba and, I suspect, will make their position (the same position) before the Supreme Court of Canada.

So the Attorney General stands before this Assembly and says that it's only Saskatchewan that we want to get their position from, that the opposition is trying to get them to give their position in advance of argument to the benefit of the other side. The fact is everybody who has fought Trudeau, his proposals and the methodology, has made his position clear. The only one that is secretly hiding its position is the Government of Saskatchewan. The question is why? I was pleased to hear today that the Attorney General has admitted that tactical mistakes were made by the government opposite . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh yes, he did. He said tactical decisions were taken which had to be taken at the time, and quietly stated and admitted that in tactical decisions, mistakes were made, I think that's partially true.

The Premier the other day said that it was an endeavour that didn't work out, that he would do it again. I don't think he would do it again. I think that's as close as the Premier of Saskatchewan is coming to admitting a mistake. We called it a serious error in judgment, but mistake is fine with us. An admission of that nature was long overdue.

But the Deputy Premier says today that tactical decisions are behind him. And we say that that is not true: there are still tactical decisions being made by the government opposite. The tactical decision as to what position it will take before the Supreme Court of Canada, I think, is a very, very vital one and the Attorney General, as a lawyer, knows it.

If, for example, the sole position of the six fighting provinces is one of unanimity and the federal government says you can't have unanimity, and the Government of Saskatchewan, should it deign to go before the supreme court, says "Oh, you can't have unanimity, you must have a reasonable number" (whatever that may be and it's very imprecise terms used by the Government of Saskatchewan) . . . I could look through some of the material which indicates the imprecision of the words. I'm sure that if you do go before the supreme court, the question will be: well, how many provinces are a reasonable number? Is it six? Is it five? Is it four? Is it 10? Is it nine? These are the questions you are going to have to answer.

The Attorney General knows full well that that is going to be the obvious question. The Supreme Court of Canada is going to ask counsel for the province of Saskatchewan for a precise number. And unless you have a response for that supreme court we are going to look pretty foolish, and the province is going to look pretty foolish.

I come back to the Attorney General. We really have an unholy triangle here. We have the positions of the federal government (which I personally feel and I think the people of Saskatchewan generally feel is terribly wrong), the six fighting provinces and the province of Saskatchewan (whatever it may be) before the supreme court. For you to stand in this Assembly and say that we're giving help to our enemies by releasing Saskatchewan's factum in advance of everyone else is totally wrong. I think the Attorney General knows that the six fighting provinces have tabled their positions. They've made them public. They've stood and fought for them. They have argued and debated them. They've made them clear.

The federal government has taken its position and defended, fought and debated it before the courts. It's public. I can't believe that the Attorney General would say that the other positions are not public, which is precisely what he's saying. Are we saying that this whole constitutional court battle has been behind closed doors and the public hasn't seen it? That's what he's saying. In fact, Saskatchewan's position should be made clear to the six fighting provinces so when they go before the supreme court, they will know what they're faced with. They will know that they will have to argue against Saskatchewan's position because it's going to be different. They know they will have to argue against the federal government's position. That's clear.

Are there different sides? Of course there are. I say there are three sides. There is the position of the fighters, the position of the federal government, and the position of the Saskatchewan government (whatever it may be). The Government of Saskatchewan may decide, at some point, to take one side or the other before the courts. I suggest to the Attorney General that for him to say that tactical decisions are behind us is not quite accurate. You still have to make up your mind which way you're going to go. Are you going to go to the federal position and support them or are you going to go to the six fighting provinces and support them? So, I suggest to you that the tactical decisions are not behind us.

My concern, and I'm sure it's shared by many of the backbenchers opposite, is how much damage was done by the fence-sitting and the failure to take a position. How much damage was done to the image of the province of Saskatchewan by its failure to join the other western provinces in a common front? The public of Saskatchewan, in my view, has been opposed to Trudeau's unilateral patriation of the constitution from day one. Probably the only two groups in Saskatchewan that haven't been opposed are the Liberal Party and the NDP. I think that the Government of Saskatchewan, by putting (I use the phrase "the other side") the side of opposition to Ottawa before the public, would restore in the people's minds the feeling of how right they were all along, how correct the people of Saskatchewan have been in their opposition. Their deep opposition to the actions of Pierre Elliott Trudeau was the right way to go — morally, politically and I suggest in light of the Newfoundland Supreme Court decision, legally. So there are three sides. Now to take the position that the public of Saskatchewan has to further pay for an attempt by the government to extricate itself from a serious tactical mistake (and we finally had the admissions today) on the constitution, is certainly a questionable partisan action by the government opposite.

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So, I suggest to the Attorney General there is an opening for the Government of Saskatchewan to allow the people of Saskatchewan to give vent to their frustrations, their anger, and their hurt over this constitutional debate. I suggest the government opposite use government funds for that purpose, as opposed to merely trying to extricate itself from a bad position.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Chairman, I have made speeches on other debates on other occasions about the need for as much credibility as possible, not only for government, but for oppositions. I think this is one of the major problems that the member for Qu'Appelle, or at least the Conservative caucus, faces on this particular issue. For example, it is incredible to argue, as he has argued this morning, that the position of the province of Saskatchewan before the supreme court is not yet known. That is incredible! All one has to do is take a look at the newspaper reports of the Premier's announcement just a few days ago, that the province of Saskatchewan will be intervening in opposition to the resolution. It is incredible to argue otherwise. It is incredible for the hon. member to say, "Which way are you going — with the gang of six, the people who are opposing the group or the gang in the federal camp who are for the resolution?" It is incredible for the member for Qu'Appelle to argue that. The Saskatchewan position quite clearly is set out. We will be opposing it, if and when it gets to the Supreme Court of Canada. We will be mounting an argument in opposition which may be different from arguments in opposition mounted by the other provinces. But the fact is, in sum total, the position is one of opposition. That's point number one.

Point number two. Mr. Chairman, I don't care what the hon. member says I said, but the record clearly shows that I did not admit to tactical decisions by way of error. In fact, if anything, I would like to say that my own position is very much the tactical position which we took in substance at the outset, on April 2, which was to go that extra mile, to repair the constitutional resolution to make it more acceptable to more Canadians. That was indeed the right tactical decision to take for this country. I argue that the easiest thing to do would be what the Conservatives have suggested we always do (since October 2 that is) "Oppose, oppose, oppose, never propose; put your head in the sand; damn the consequences to this country; simply oppose it; don't work for any change, don't try to work for compromise. To heck with any operations which may be facing here in western Canada, any feelings of separatism or otherwise. Don't try to ameliorate those; oppose, oppose; use political language, fight it every step of the way." In my judgment, that was a tactical blunder on the part of the Conservative Party, a blunder which I am thankful our province and our government has not taken. I do not admit to major tactical errors in this position.

Point number three. The member says that the provinces' positions are public. The member generalizes. The provinces' current positions before the court of appeals are public. But the member either does not know or purposely overlooks that the Quebec Court of Appeal, for example, has a series of different questions to decide on; that the factums when it comes to the Supreme Court of Canada may very well be answering a series of questions which are more than simply the Manitoba or Quebec questions; they may be a composite set of questions, in order for the supreme court to coalesce all the issues before it.

The hon. member overlooks the fact that individual provinces will be putting forward new factums clearly based on the reasoning and decisions which have been articulated in different ways by different judges in different courts. That is not yet public. The

factums will be made public. Ours will be made public. Clearly, we can't keep a factum secret. It's not our intention to keep it secret. But to argue that a position taken by a province in the court of appeal means that it will be the same legal argument, knowing full well what the position will be — one of opposition — is to make a very large quantum leap in logic, which I cannot accept.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I don't know if we want to get into it this morning. I guess maybe we're kind of drifting into it. I would have thought we'd do it during estimates, but I am prepared to discuss it here. This whole question of the "other side" intrigues me, because what the hon. member is saying is (this is how it all started, Mr. Chairman) that because the Government of Saskatchewan is advertising its position on the constitution, there should be funds from the public purse to explain "the other side." Unsaid, but obviously the conclusion, is the "other side of that position."

I repeat, what is the other side? And who is advocating the other side? Mr. Chairman, I haven't figured it out, and the more I listen to the Saskatchewan Conservative opposition the more confused I am about the "other side." For example, Mr. Chairman, this motion, which I cannot refer to, which did not receive unanimous consent, is a motion that says in effect that this House agree that Mr. Trudeau should not pursue the federal resolution until the Supreme Court of Canada decides. Note those words, "until the Supreme Court of Canada decides." Who is taking that position today? That position, Mr. Chairman, is being taken today by the Prime Minister. That is his offer to the opposition parties. To say yes to that, puts all of your arguments on the constitution into the judicial basket of the supreme court.

When you say to hold off until the supreme court decides, you are overlooking the other argument that you should hold off until we, the governments, decide. And I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that the hon. member doesn't understand what the Premier's position is in this area. Our posture has been throughout the piece, Mr. Chairman, that the way to solve this constitutional matter is to have the governments of the 11 provinces and the federal government turn to a federal-provincial table to negotiate a political solution to the constitutional position and the crisis of this country . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, you challenge me on that because I want to debate that. But I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that that is totally in error. We agree that the resolution should not be proceeded with while it is sub judice. That is agreed. But to argue as the hon. member does for putting all of his eggs in the judicial basket has never been our position, nor is it the position of anybody except the Prime Minister of this country and the Liberal Party.

The only people who would support that are the Conservatives in Saskatchewan. No Conservative government in Canada would support that exclusive position alone, nor does this government. This is not something to be decided by the Supreme Court of Canada. It is to be decided by the political process of this country, Mr. Chairman. And I am saying that when he talks about the other side, when he talks about revealing the factums, when he talks about the other side's constitutional position, he is articulating the Liberal position, Mr. Chairman. Pure and simple, he is articulating the Liberal posture in this operation. And I say to the hon. member for Kindersley, yes, I am confused every day that I see the member for Qu'Appelle setting forth the Conservative constitutional position in this House. Every time he stands up. it is either "reveal your position," or "you've done a lousy job in London," or "you are trying to extricate yourself from a weak political position," or "put your eggs into the supreme court judicial basket." And all of those positions can only do one thing — aid those who oppose the position taken by the Government of Saskatchewan in opposition to the constitutional

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package. I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that I firmly believe that the Conservatives have to get their act together in this province. They are either with the Government of Saskatchewan in opposition to the resolution, or they're not. They are either with us, or they're with the Liberals. They can't have it both ways. Or they are with someone who is for the resolution (I'll put it that way, rather than "with the Liberals").

I'm saying, Mr. Chairman, that the position taken by the provincial Conservatives lacks credibility because of their continual attempt to say that they are supporting us. They stand up in a motion supporting us, but carry out the opposite verbally. But I really am puzzled and troubled, as members of the public have been (I must tell the member for Qu'Appelle that by the public. I mean the two or three people who have spoken to me about this), about why it is (I'm qualifying it) . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Bill Knight?

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — No, not Bill Knight. Frankly, it was members of the press who were saying, "Why is it that Mr. Lane keeps on advocating, essentially, these kinds of positions? What's your view?"

AN HON. MEMBER: — Name them.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — I'm not going to name them. That is their position. You can laugh all you want to, but that is exactly the position you're in. You are in the position of being for the other side in this constitutional debate, and as a result of being for the other side, you say, in my judgment, that you do not mean what you said, when you stood up for the resolution opposing the main motion.

Now, Mr. Chairman, you can argue tactics. The member says. "It's a tactical decision that we have to make; there's a tactical element to it." But it is a substantive position that the province has to take, and which is at issue here.

May I say finally before I close, Mr. Chairman, that the question before the Manitoba Court of Appeal is not a question of unanimity, strictly speaking. The question before the court of appeal was . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . No, the members don't listen, or they don't understand, or both. The question before the court of appeal in Manitoba is whether or not the consent of the provinces is required. That is the strict legal question. Some of the provinces have been arguing, yes, that unanimity is required. Our lawyers advise us that we might not need to argue unanimity is required. Yes, consent is required, and the court need not answer as to the level of support required by the provinces for that condition to be met. When you forward the position that you need an unanimity provision, that allows, in effect, the legal argument to focus on unanimity, when no legal argument needs to be so answered on unanimity.

What needs to be answered in the legal argument is whether or not it enjoys a level of support consistent with federal-provincial systems, without defining the level — unanimity, or less, or whatever it happens to be. And those are the issues before the court. Those are tactical, partly, but they are substantive as well.

Mr. Chairman, if we disagree on substance here, then we disagree. The fact is, it cannot be stated by the hon. member that we are not opposing the resolution; we've stated that we are. We have different reasons legally, perhaps; our main opposition remains as it is. There will have to be tactical decisions made from here on in. That's true. I would agree

with the member for Qu'Appelle on that, but the main tactical decisions, by and large, are behind us, if not totally behind us. Who knows? This thing is changing almost on an hourly basis.

MR. THATCHER: — I'm going to respond to the Attorney General very briefly, because frankly, I think my views represent the vast majority of western Canadians and maybe even Canadians generally. Somebody mentioned in this legislature about 10 or 12 years ago that of the initial 100 problems that we have in this province, the constitution rates 101. Frankly, I'm not so sure that that statement is still not true.

Mr. Chairman, there are many, many problems in this country that are affecting each and every individual. We have a bill in this legislature that some gentlemen in the gallery are here to see something happen on. It's something that hits everybody. We have problems out there in agriculture with interest rates. We have difficulties wherever you care to look.

I think people generally have lost their zest for the constitution. I think that those who were caught up in the emotionalism of the Quebec referendum have long since lost their zeal. Mr. Chairman, I cannot help but comment to the Attorney General that the matter would not have gone this far, where the repatriation unilaterally by the Prime Minister is almost imminent, if the Government of Saskatchewan at that time had taken a solid position with the rest of the western premiers.

At your initial conferences last fall, leaked federal government papers classified you as the weak link in the western chain. Whoever leaked the document, I don't know. It really doesn't matter. But the fact is that it was accurate. You were the weak link in the chain. And I think it was a fair criticism at that time to acknowledge the Government of Saskatchewan as the western extension of Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

Now, as somebody who is not cognizant in constitutional law, or law, period, I can't help but believe that had you joined with the other western premiers, Pierre Elliott would not have dared to go as far as he has. And I suggest to you that this constitutional debate has taken a toll in this entire country and this Assembly because far too much time has been wasted on it. I don't think the vast majority of people feel that life is going to come to an end if that constitutional question isn't settled imminently. I have a feeling, and I think most people do, that things will go on relatively normally if the situation remains as the status quo, if agreement cannot be reached. I think people are sick and tired of the nitpicking that has gone on.

Mr. Attorney General, I think it's a valid comment to suggest that at this point in time the most prodigious nitpicking is coming from the Government of Saskatchewan, because last fall you had a great time putting the Premier forward as the statesman — the honest broker, so to speak. That was the image you put through. And the Attorney General was having his moment of glory on the national scene as the co-chairmanship of this committee with the Hon. Mr. Chretien. You were on a variety of national programs.

I think you were on CTV's "Question Period" and you looked good. You handled those eastern reporters pretty well. I think you brought credit to all western politicians with the ease in which you handled those eastern reporters on "Question Period." I think I commented to you personally that you did an excellent job. But none the less you were both playing your game, and I respectfully suggest, Mr. Attorney General, both you and the Premier were playing bigger games than the constitutional debate.

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And then, do you know what happened early this year? You and the Premier did the basest thing that a politician could do. You sniffed the political wind. I don't know whether you took a poll. Maybe you were just out in rural Saskatchewan, but you found out what the people were really thinking. You found a change in the opinion of the people of Saskatchewan. The euphoria of the Quebec referendum was over; people were more concerned about interest rates, more concerned about inflation and the day-to-day problems, and then you did the most common political act that, I guess, politicians do. You flip flopped, and don't try to tell us that you flip flopped because of something that the federal government did. Don't try to tell us that there was some great philosophical reason you had to alter your position. Don't try to tell us that it was the Trudeau position on the Senate that caused you to virtually turn down everything that you had been asking for last fall. Don't try to tell us it was the position on the Senate that gave you the unpleasant duty of going to Hawaii to convey the offer to the Premier. I know it was a dirty job; I know somebody had to do it; and I admire your courage for taking on this very difficult task. Nonetheless, don't tell us it was their position on the Senate that caused you to flip flop.

Prime Minister Trudeau (I'm not going to be very long if that's what you're concerned about, Mr. Whip) gave you everything you had been asking for last fall, but it wasn't enough, then, because you checked the political wind — the basest thing that a politician does is to check the political wind — you flip flopped.

Mr. Attorney General, I'm not interested as to what the technicalities of the appeals are. I'm not particularly interested in what's going to happen in the supreme court. All I'm interested in is that we get down to the real problems in this country today. If it is necessary, we must get in line with the other premiers to stop what is (as the member for Nipawin termed it) the rape of western Canada by eastern Canada, which is what this constitution is. For the life of me, because it is so obvious what it is — an outright rape of western Canada — I don't know how you could have taken so long to make the flip-flop.

Say what you want; everybody has his good and bad days on issues. But, Mr. Attorney General, I don't think there is any question that from square one, the Conservative Party has been dead on, in its position on the constitution. The only Conservative provincial party that's deviated from our position has been Ontario, for the most obvious of reasons. That is simply because it is popular there . . . Well, heavens, we saw it. Premier Bill Davis won an election by flogging Peter Lougheed. It's the old story — bring western Canada into line.

Mr. Attorney General, one of the prices of this constitution has been the enlargement of the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs: again, an increase in our bureaucracy. I think it's all been a regrettable, regrettable exercise. Because, Mr. Attorney General, had you and the Premier called a spade a spade last fall, Pierre Elliott would not be this far down the road with bringing this constitution back. Nobody argues that that the provinces must defend themselves, but it's regrettable that it had to go this far.

Mr. Attorney General, I have to wonder what led up to some of these positions. It's common knowledge that you were openly courted by the Liberal Party for months last fall, and early this year. They didn't even make any secret about it; they're that desperate to get some Liberals out here. They're so desperate to get some Liberals in western Canada that, for awhile, they had a Liberal Party under the guise of the New Democratic Party, much to the disgust of Ed Broadbent.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Still do.

MR. THATCHER: — Well, I suppose they still do. I guess that's a fair comment. Usually when you change parties, there is some degree of discreteness involved. Generally, that's the accepted rule — a little bit of discreteness. But the offers to the Attorney General to join the Liberal Party weren't even discreet, they were right out front and centre, on television and in the press. The fact that they were openly courting him was right out front and centre. What the Premier's motive was, I just don't know.

Mr. Attorney General, one thing is indisputable and inescapable: had there been a solid, clear western front against Pierre Elliott last fall when this thing got into the serious stage, we would not be on the verge of unilateral repatriation. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Trudeau has indicated that he is dissatisfied with Joe Clark's compromise.

I think all Canadians know, and I think you know, that bringing this constitution back from London is going to be Pierre's place in history, at least as he views it. No matter what happens at this stage of the game, somewhere, somehow, Pierre Elliott is bringing that constitution back with all the havoc it means for western Canada. Mr. Attorney General, I state that when history is written, I think it is going to be very harsh on both you and the Premier for the position you took last fall. Sure, maybe you got in tune with the political wind by your flip-flop, but when the history of this whole business is written, I suggest that you and your seatmate will be cast in a very unfavourable light as far as the future of western Canada is concerned.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Chairman, I must respond briefly to the remarks made by the member for Thunder Creek.

How history judges the Premier and me or others in this Assembly can only be left to history. Time will tell and others will be the wiser for it. The fact of the matter is that the Conservative position in Saskatchewan will be judged even more harshly. Here is the situation.

In western Canada we have, unfortunately and regrettably, much dissension. It's something called western separatism. That's the extreme form of it. Western alienation, for sure, is more or less a political fact. The Conservatives argue, as the hon. member for Thunder Creek just finished doing, that we should leave the constitution as is, on a status quo. You said that the people of this country would have no objections if the status quo were left, and we returned to more important things.

On one hand you say, "Don't do anything to appease or to remove that alienation, but on the other hand if you try to remove the alienation or to appease it, you're going the wrong way; you're in the sell-out, in the hands of Pierre Elliott Trudeau." I'm saying that the position of the Conservative Party in this province is a position of absolute, total intransigence and commitment to a document which is worn out and neither aids nor abets the unity of this country, nor does it make any positive step to the alienation of the regional dissents which are fracturing this country. I say history will judge Premier Blakeney and me and others. The fact of the matter is that the one thing it will look on kindly is that we tried and tried and tried to come to terms with those alienation things which you people are simply prepared to let stand unattended.

The other thing I would like to say is about this question of, "Sniff the political winds." Mr. Chairman, my proposition in this committee today (and I think it's the first time I've

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articulated it publicly) is very simple . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You can go, but I make this comment to all of them over there because they are all tied into this. My proposition today is simple. What position does the Conservative Party in Saskatchewan really adopt? Again we have just seen the spectacle of a former Liberal, now a member of the Conservative Party, taking almost word for word the arguments of the Liberals in this province on the position of the Saskatchewan government sniffing the wind. I have here the *Moose Jaw Times Herald*, March 21, 1981, and there's your former leader, member for Qu'Appelle — Davey Steuart, Senator Steuart. He's flagged by your former pals, Vern Brown and Roy Dickinson. They're the kind of Liberals who say that Premier Blakeney sniffed the political wind and came out in opposition. You're using the identical arguments in this House today and you have in the weeks before — the Liberal position. That's exactly the position you're saying should be taken. The member for Thunder Creek just gets up and talks about the same thing, like Dave Steuart does, about the sniffing of the wind . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that the two leading articulate spokesmen who talk about sniffing the wind and attack our position are the two former Liberals in the Conservative caucus. They say that they're Conservatives, but I'm saying that their position is aiding and abetting the federal Liberal government in support of this resolution. If they wanted to help the province of Saskatchewan, they would be actually taking seriously the words and the deeds needed to support what they already did in a standing vote a few weeks ago in this House. But they don't mean it. If they don't mean it, the only conclusion which can be reached, and this is apropos of the members' views that we should be giving money to the other side, is that they are basically for the proposition. You can't be opposed to the proposition, you can't be supporting the Government of Saskatchewan's position in opposition to the proposition, and still follow the positions that the member for Qu'Appelle and the member for Thunder Creek do. They're the only two spokesmen on this issue. All you need to do is to take a look at the arguments advanced by the Liberal opposition in this regard.

I'm saying, Mr. Chairman, very clearly, that I am increasingly puzzled, the more this debate drags on, about exactly where the Conservatives stand. They're either for this or against this. Just tell us. You're either for the government's position of opposition or you're against it. I tell the member for Qu'Appelle or the member for Kindersley (whoever wants to follow), you tell us now if you're for the province's position in opposition to this resolution, or if you're not.

MR. ANDREW: — Before I get into that reply, I think the Attorney General is fully cognizant that the view of this caucus has always been in support of the position taken by those you refer to as the group of six, but whom we refer to as the people who are standing up for the interests of the provinces.

I'd like to ask a question of the Attorney General. The Attorney General, in response to the question of the member for Qu'Appelle, says, "No, we can't disclose any position because we're coming in with a new position. We're taking a different position on the supreme court argument." I'd like to hearken back to his speech on the constitution resolution before this House. I quote from page 556 of the *Hansard* of March 3, 1981. These are his comments with regard to the court challenge to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal.

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the House defeated that motion . . .

He was referring to the motion of the members of this side suggesting that a challenge

should be mounted in the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal, which has a history of standing up for provincial rights.

I'm glad the House defeated that motion because we now have three court of appeal actions on the very same resolution. The Conservatives want to make it four . . . Mr. Speaker, there is virtually nothing new which can be put by way of legal questions on the principle of the issue of the resolution that hasn't been covered through the arguments in Newfoundland, Quebec, and the province of Saskatchewan — virtually nothing new.

One of the spokesmen from that side says that things have changed from that time, that now there is something new that has come up in this whole question of the legal argument. I go back to that question with regard to your statement. I ask the Attorney General to spell out to the House, if it's so clear, what this government's stand is with regard to the challenges. The questions put to the Manitoba Court of Appeal and to the Supreme Court of Newfoundland addressed three questions. Clearly, the Attorney General should be able to state in this Assembly the position of the Government of Saskatchewan on those three questions.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Chairman, I note (and I hope the press and the other members of the Assembly note what the member for Kindersley did) he said, "Oh, I will answer your question whether I am for the provincial government's opposition or not, in a moment." And then he never did. He never did, Mr. Chairman, and I am concluding that the Conservatives never will. I am concluding that the Conservatives in this province of Saskatchewan are the surrogate Liberals on the constitutional position. All right, you laugh at me. I ask the member for Kindersley and the member for Qu'Appelle . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — The public is not Qu'Appelle.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Fine. Maybe even the public is. I am asking you to get up and tell me whether or not the Conservative opposition in this legislature supports the position of the Government of Saskatchewan in opposing the constitutional resolution as indicated by the resolution passed three weeks ago in this Legislative Assembly. I think that answer can be made very simply . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Do you want me to answer it right now?

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — In just one moment. I want to answer the questions taken here. The hon. member, first of all, is wrong. There are four questions, at least, in the Newfoundland case. Three questions in Quebec: a variation of the questions. I have said to the members opposite (as the Premier has) that our position is one of opposition to (in the legal case) what is being done by the federal government on the legal arguments. Our argument will be, among others, that the constitutional proposal does not enjoy the level of support which is consistent with the federal-provincial structure: a federal system. I said to the hon. member for Qu'Appelle . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — What level of support should it be?

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — I don't need to answer that.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Well, the court is going to ask you.

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HON. MR. ROMANOW: — How do you know the court is going to ask? How do you know? The court has never asked that of anybody anywhere else . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — They haven't taken that position.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — They have not asked that of anybody else. It is the six provinces which are proffering the view that it has to be unanimous, but they don't ask that in the legal question. The hon. member shakes his head. If I am wrong, they should have put that as the legal question. They should have said to the Supreme Court of Manitoba and to the Supreme Court of Canada: is it correct that the convention of the constitution requires unanimous support? But they didn't. The question was asked whether or not it is a convention that you need the consent or the agreement of the provinces. It was purposely drafted that way to avoid the question of defining what level of support. You can argue that the answer to that is, yes you need the conventional support, without going to the next question of answering the degree, because other provinces argue unanimity does not mean that the question is framed in that legal basis. Don't tell me otherwise because if you do, you don't know what you are talking about.

So I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that the simple fact is, if they believe it should be unanimity, fine; we disagree. That is one thing. But if they argue that we have to maintain that position legally in order to maintain a credible position of opposition legally, then they are talking through their hats. The question doesn't obligate it and the question doesn't ask it. Now, we can disagree on what the level of support may or may not be, but clearly the fundamental issue, legally and politically, is whether or not Mr. Trudeau's current proposal enjoys the level of support which is consistent to a federal-provincial state, or a federal state. We can answer that legally and politically without having to go to the next step of unanimity and without endangering at all the posture of opposition. Anybody who would argue otherwise is arguing the Liberal government's federal position on this constitution, pure and simple.

AN HON. MEMBER: — You really don't understand that.

HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Well, fine. You can say that. I won't accept it. I can hear you saying it, but I think after a year and a half of kicking both around legally, and attending conferences virtually day in and day out on this operation, I might have just a little inkling (maybe not as much as the member for Qu'Appelle or the member for Kindersley, or maybe not as much even as the Leader of the Opposition) about some of the legal and political issues involved in this operation.

So, Mr. Chairman, the member questions what position we will be taking generally. I have said that. That's a restatement of what the Premier has said publicly in opposition. I can only repeat what I have said so many times. There's the position that we take.

MR. LANE: — We've made it clear that we've been supporting the six. As a matter of fact, we take it a step further. Last spring, if I recall, we were urging that the Government Saskatchewan take a common position with the other western provinces and I think that was when the debate was going on between the member for Nipawin and the Premier. We advocated that most strongly at that time. Unfortunately, it fell on deaf ears. And, I think, regrettably, it fell on deaf ears. But we come back to the statements that you very pointedly didn't refer to and those are your statements on March 3, 1981, in the previous constitutional debate.

You got up here this morning and said you don't want to tip your hand. You don't want to give a new position and yet on March 3, 1981, you made it very, very clear in this Assembly that there is nothing new to be added. You said:

Mr. Speaker, there is virtually nothing new that can be put by way of legal questions on the principle of the issue of the resolution that hasn't been covered through the arguments of Newfoundland, Quebec and the province of Saskatchewan — virtually nothing new.

AN HON. MEMBER: — But his parliamentary secretary says that was just a temporary position.

MR. LANE: — Well, you know, I hope that wasn't a temporary position because obviously then the public at that point was misled by the position of the government. You know, that's really one of the difficulties you're in. You have flip-flopped so many times on this constitutional issue that even your own members don't know what your position is from day to day. You don't know what your position is vis-a-vis the Premier. One says we're going to challenge; one says we're not; one says we're going to go before the constitutional committee; the other one says we're not going to go; the other one says no, we're going to appear on such and such a date; the other one says no, I didn't know about that. That statement that you made on March 3 and your statements today really indicate the confusion that runs rampant through the government opposite on the constitutional position, and why you have to go to the great expense of trying to sell your position.

I think the Deputy Premier will agree with me that the vast majority of the people of Saskatchewan and the vast majority of western Canadians oppose unequivocally Trudeau's unilateral patriation of the constitution. I don't think there is any doubt about that. Then why does the government have to advertise? There has to be an obvious reason. The only reason that the government is advertising is because its positions (I use the plural pointedly) have been so out of touch with the people of Saskatchewan and so confusing that they have to use general statements now to leave the impression that they are in opposition to Pierre Trudeau.

But it strikes me as a rather inconsistent position for the Attorney General to state that he can't give out the Saskatchewan position because he doesn't want to give aid to our enemies. The other provinces all have theirs out publicly — the other six fighting provinces — and the Premier on March 3 said there was nothing new. So I think the Attorney General would be well advised to make it clear to the six fighting provinces precisely what Saskatchewan's position is. If you refuse to make it clear to the public of Saskatchewan with precision what position you are going to argue, I think that you do it early. I would hope the other six, if they find that your position is going to cut them off at the knees (which I suspect it will), say it's going to do that, and that you would have the good sense and the good judgment to then take their position so that finally we have a united front from western Canada. I harken back to what I believe to be a very fundamental document, and that is the leaked federal government position. The Government of Canada cannot proceed with a constitutional position against the four governments of western Canada. It would not dare, and it could not. It would not have proceeded with its constitutional position against the four western provinces. So I suggest to the Attorney General again that you take that approach, and that you do no further damage to the position of western Canadians and the position of the other three western provinces.

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HON. MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Chairman, two brief comments in response. First of all, so far as I know, all of our colleagues in the provinces welcome our intervention in opposition to the supreme court and there have been ongoing consultations and discussions with the officials. They know fully of our position and we're there. I think when the Premier made the announcement, that even on the basis of our position that has been welcomed — with the exception, as I say, of the Saskatchewan Conservatives, which is a source of great puzzlement to me. I'm disappointed that the Conservatives in Saskatchewan seem to be sliding away from this posture, but I make that point number one.

Point number two, the hon. member can again draw any conclusions he wants about divisions and the like. That's purely a figment of imagination. Our posture and our position has been consistent throughout the piece. We could have opposed it effective October 2. We didn't because we wanted to negotiate, to go that extra mile. I think history will prove that to be the right decision.

Finally, if the member says that because we did not do so at that time, and if we had done so at that time we would have stopped the federal resolution because of a united West, how, then, does he answer to the fact that there is a united West now and the resolution is still proceeding.

On October 2 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The argument has validity. Either the federal government was fearful of facing four united western Canadian governments when it tabled its resolution or it wasn't. And if it was on October 2 because of the political impact, it will be on March 2 and April 2, 1981 because of political impact. So it's really not a very solid or credible position. I'm only saying I plead with the Leader of the Opposition, and this is one time I wish Mr. Devine were in the House, to take control of the Conservative caucus and make sure that they give us support in opposition to this resolution, and to please get the individual members of your caucus in line and away from this kind of pro-Liberal stance in undermining our position on the constitution.

Section 3 agreed.

Sections 4 to 7 inclusive agreed.

The committee agreed to report the bill.

Bill No. 47 — An Act respecting Dental Therapists

Sections 1 to 5 inclusive agreed.

Section 6

MR. BERNTSON: — On section 6, I know that the minister will have his logical explanation for this: he has on every other bit of legislation similar to this that's been brought forward. Nobody will quarrel with the establishment of a dental therapists' association. It's their will, they want it and that's wonderful. It gives them the vehicle for policing their own association, their own members, etc. But I'm always puzzled, when the council is established — it was done with the denturists, it was done with the nurses, it was done with everyone else — why the government insists on sticking a

couple of government moles onto the council or the board. as they have done again in section 6(1)(b)(iv) and (v):

one person who is an official of the Department of Health; and

one or two other persons, as the minister considers advisable.

I know your answer. It's indefensible, and there's nothing we can do to stop it, but we're certainly voting against that particular section.

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Chairman, there is a logical explanation. Simply, it's consumer representation; that's all it is.

Section 6 agreed on division.

Sections 7 to 16 inclusive agreed.

Section 17 as amended agreed.

Sections 18 and 19 agreed.

Section 20

MR. BERNTSON: — On section 20, Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the minister would explain why this division is necessary in the Act.

HON. MR. ROLFES: — That's to allow the graduates of the Fort Smith School to practise in northern Saskatchewan.

MR. BERNTSON: — Tell me what Fort Smith is.

HON. MR. ROLFES: — It's a federal school for training dental therapists.

Section 20 agreed.

Sections 21 to 25 inclusive agreed.

Section 26

MR. BERNTSON: — Why would you set up a dental therapists' association under this act and then virtually retain the right to set their regulations, by-laws, amendments, etc.? If it is going to be an autonomous body, surely it doesn't need you on its back constantly.

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Chairman, I think the section itself is self-explanatory. If the council or the association were to make regulations that were not within the public interest or would inhibit the providing of dental services within the province, there must be someone who has the final authority to say that that's not within the public interest and protect the public . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, that's why it's there. I mean they could make, for example, some regulations that would not be within the public interest or would not allow dental therapists in this province to carry out their services and their duties. If that happens, then I think that it is incumbent upon the minister to protect the public and he needs that particular authority to do so. As long as they live

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within the bounds of this Act, there is no problem.

Section 26 agreed.

Sections 27 to 31 inclusive agreed.

Section 32 as amended agreed.

Section 33 as amended agreed.

Sections 34 to 42 inclusive agreed.

The committee agreed to report the bill as amended.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 39 — An Act to amend The Department of Intergovernmental Affairs Act

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, I move the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 47 — An Act respecting Dental Therapists

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

Motion agreed to.

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — By leave now, I move this bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY CASH OUTFLOWS

LABOR

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 20

HON. MR. SNYDER: — While people are assembling, I'd like to take this opportunity introduce my staff. I think you'll know Don McMillan, the deputy minister of labour on my left; Robert Sass, the associate deputy minister and director of occupational health and safety; Mr. Craig Dotson directly behind me, executive director of the development branch; Mr. Pat More, the acting director of administrative services; Mr. Sheasby is behind the rail, the director of safety services; Agnes Ananichuk of the women's division; Tom Needham, director of apprenticeship and standards, and Mans Crozier, the superintendent of pensions and I believe that's our backup people today.

Item 1

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, I believe in your department you are responsible for the workers' compensation board as well as the other areas that you indicated here. Let me first ask one question. It may take a little time for you to dig out the figures. That's why I am asking it first. Could you inform me of the funds that occupational health gets that are not voted in this budget? For example, funds that it gets from workers' compensation and other areas.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, to give the member some information in terms of the bookkeeping entry that takes place. The arrangement is that all of funds which occupational health receives are described in the estimates, as you see them. The arrangement is that the money is voted; it's spent by occupational health for providing the services which they do. Some billing to the workers' compensation board takes place; the workers' compensation board remits that amount of money to the Department of Finance. It does not flow back through the occupational health and safety branch of the Department of Labour. Any moneys that are paid, I understand, are paid directly to the Department of Finance from the workers' compensation board.

MR. KATZMAN: — Well, that's in direct opposition to your workers' compensation board report. One page 30 of your board report, it indicates that it is paid to the occupational health and safety branch for occupational health. It doesn't say, "paid to the consolidated fund." It says, "paid to the occupational health."

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I presume that you're reading from the same statement as I am — statement 10, workers' compensation board, under total administration expense: administration of industrial safety programs, under The Occupational Health and Safety Act, RSS (Revised Statutes of Saskatchewan), 1978. It shows the figure of \$1,224,661. I'm told that it does not go to occupational health and safety, that it does go to finance. Perhaps an asterisk could accompany this statement to indicate clearly that it is paid to the Department of Finance, to the consolidated fund. That's where it goes, notwithstanding the fact that the indication is that it's paid for under the industrial safety program of The Occupational Health and Safety Act. It does go to the consolidated fund.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, my concern is that it is misleading. As you indicate, perhaps it should have an asterisk. How many other areas in your report are the same? I don't know. I spotted this one because of a concern brought to me by individuals who spotted it before I did.

My next question obviously has to be that through this report there are other indications of funds going to different areas. Are they also going to the consolidated fund, and is everything you receive in those areas voted?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Yes, we made it clear that the estimates of the Department of Labour show in clear, unequivocal terms the amount of money that is being voted for the operation of the various divisions and responsibilities of the Department of Labour. They are to be found in the estimates that are under discussion at this time.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, the workers' compensation board probably gives me more work than any other area, with people coming to me with complaints of how they have been treated. The end resolution of problems and the inadequate service which they believe (I repeat, they believe) they are getting. I suggest that workers' compensation is lacking in the amount of funds which it pays to injured workers. Maybe

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it needs some changes to upgrade the basic amount, and then you have 70 per cent of that. I don't know what the total answer is. Certainly people who are on a fixed return of, say, \$3,000 a year, because they were hurt many years ago and there has been very little upgrading of their pension, have a problem in living on that amount. Fortunately, family assistance plans and other plans help them keep their heads above water.

These people were hurt while working at an occupation and paying what they thought was adequate into a plan to protect them should they be injured. We could get into the same discussion of adequacy in pensions, and we probably will later.

With regard to workers' compensation, Mr. Minister, is there any intent to improve the formula or paying system? Is there any intention to assist people by deciding the claims more speedily? I realize that getting all the facts is very important. I don't want to see you speed things up and not do an efficient job; everything must be known so the person receives a fair and equitable settlement. But, we must have a method whereby we can speed things up; is your department considering anything on that?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — The hon. member makes a number of fairly general comments with respect to workers' compensation and the inadequate nature of it. I think the member will agree with me that steps have been taken in order to address some of the problems which have been manifesting themselves over quite a number of years with respect to workers' compensation. The member will know that as of January of this past year, a program was put into place to provide for an income maintenance system. It was recommended by members of a committee which was set up for the purpose of studying workers' compensation. I think this, in itself, goes a fair distance in terms of addressing the problem of income maintenance, which has been very much of a problem in the past.

The member will also know that workers' compensation has been, since its origin, a mutual insurance program to which the employee pays nothing. I think if he will check the *Hansard*, he will see that he indicated that somehow the employee contributed to the plan and, accordingly, was entitled to consider that he should be receiving something more from it than he is. The point has to be made that this is a contract which is entered into by the employer for the purpose of providing protection for himself from ruinous lawsuits, and, secondly, to provide his employees with a form of payment in the event of an industrial accident.

We know that the system has been inadequate in the past, and that's why we attempted to address that problem. You will know, for example, that a person who was injured, and for one reason or another was deemed to be 50 per cent disabled as a result of the loss of a limb, or something of that nature, received the same payment as another person in a completely different occupation. But in one set of circumstances the employee could return to work and earn the same amount of money, notwithstanding the fact of his industrial accident, while another employee would be inhibited or unable to return to a high-paying job because of that physical disability. Yet both of those people received identical payments because of the fact that a set of tables were referred to. The person was 50 per cent disabled perhaps and, accordingly paid 50 per cent of the earnings adjusted at the whim, I suppose, of the legislators in the province of Saskatchewan.

We've gone a different route, and we have attempted to base the payment to be made to an industrial worker who is injured on his or her income loss. I think we're heading in the right direction, in spite of the fact that we have discovered some soft spots in the

legislation. We are in the act of attempting to address that. In a matter of a very few days, I hope, we'll have a piece of legislation brought forward which will improve, to a very marked degree, the benefits payable. I don't expect it will solve all the problems. There will be some difficulties related to workers who were injured when premiums were paid on their behalf — let me put it that way. Assessments were paid by the employer on the level of income that was being earned at the time the employee was injured.

I suppose, in some ways, it's like a retirement income. Those people who were unfortunate enough to retire at a time when their gross earnings in that particular year were \$6,000 are being served very badly by the pension system in place today. By the same process, a worker who was injured when the employer was paying an assessment on wages earned by that employee 10, 14 or more years ago will be served in a very inadequate way by that pension.

We hope to have corrected some of those problems, at least a great many of them, by the new system that is in place — the one of income replacement. We trust that that will go a long way.

With respect to the administration and speeding up, as you suggest the need, I think probably you raised some valid points where difficulties are encountered. I receive calls from time to time about non-arrival of cheques. Sometimes that originates as clerical errors. More particularly, it arises as a result of incomplete statements and medical reports that have not been received. The member is nodding his head; he knows that is the case. In a great many instances the fault rests with the passage of correspondence and the delivery of medical reports in order that the board is able to adjudicate on the claim and make prompt payment.

I know that the board exerts all efforts in order to make that happen as quickly as it can. Sometimes it's not possible and we have to be ever-mindful of attempting to be as prompt and efficient as we can in the delivery of benefits to employees who in most instances are operating on the basis of that cheque for meeting their daily requirements.

The point is well taken and we keep close watch.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, you made a comment about income replacement. I think that was a step forward. It is important, as has been said in this House, that a man who is left-handed and loses his right arm does not lose his chance to earn a wage, but a man who is right-handed and loses his right hand has a very large disability placed upon him.

My next question. Mr. Minister, is on workers' compensation again. Have you reviewed the past cases which are really on subsistence (a very poor level) either because of payments that were made on their behalf . . . Let me correct a statement, as the minister has corrected me, before I go further.

I referred to people paying. Let's be point-blank. Any payments on my behalf by my employer are really part of my pay cheque, one way or the other. At least, when I am at a bargaining table I presume pension and all other benefits are really part of my package. So, what we have is a technical argument. We'll just leave it at that. But, agree, that's the way it's done.

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Are you going to review past claims which, I believe, need some upgrading? Certainly, it becomes a debt of the whole province and the consolidated fund, if you'd like to place it there, to bring these people up to a standard.

I don't think we should be putting them on social services. They were hurt on their job. They are not social services recipients. They earned pensions because they were hurt on their job. I think that when we put them on social services they feel that they are degraded. Let's give them a pension within the compensation area to show them that our concern is there rather than saying, "You are a social burden." I think that is improper. Maybe we will need funds from the consolidated fund. I am not sure. Could I have your reply to that?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Well, I have to express some concern with respect to some of the suggestions made by the member for Rosthern. First of all, as I suggested, it has to be recognized that traditionally, since the beginning of time, workers' compensation has been regarded as an employer obligation to provide benefits to a worker injured on the job. It has become recognized and continues to be a condition of employment in most industries in the province of Saskatchewan, and one for which the employer, over many years, has assumed responsibility. I don't know whether the hon. member for Regina South would agree with you that the employers of today should be responsible for the negligence of the fund and the inability to provide, in this day and age, for accidents that happened in 1925 or 1930 or whenever. It is a fully funded program, as you will know. The intention is to provide enough money in the workers' compensation fund to discharge the responsibilities and obligations to that particular employee, until some actuarial table says that if he is a white male Caucasian, he will pass from this earth at age 78, or whatever. So, enough money has to be put in in the current year to provide for those benefits, to discharge those obligations to that injured worker.

For the hon. member to say that the employers today, then, should pick up the responsibility for past sins — I am not sure that that is entirely an obligation that we wouldn't want to have a look at. I think it has been a contract entered into and acknowledged by the employer as overhead, the same way as paying his light, water and telephone is. It is a condition of doing business, not only in Saskatchewan but across the entire country. I would have to subscribe to the fact that rather than getting contributions from the consolidated fund, the fund itself must carry its share of the load as it has done, with one exception that the member will recall, when we attempted to bring the workers' compensation program into the twentieth century and contributed something in the order of \$6.5 million back in 1972, in order to bail out a fund that was badly undernourished at that time. Essentially, I agree with the upgrading. I think the fund is now stable and healthy enough to provide for some of the past pensioners in a major way by raising the minimum. That will be done by the amendment, and it will apply in the vast majority of cases, perhaps except for those who have been injured very recently. But the intended increase in the minimum payable will largely affect many of the injured workers. In addition, there has been a case-by-case review done in each instance. I think that was the other question the member asked. There has been a case by case review by applying a complicated formula of multiplying by 1.3333 and equating it back to the time of the industrial accident and applying the consumer price index, which has allowed some adjustments. But we believe the minimum described in the new Act will go a long way toward improving some of those injuries which took place in days gone by.

MR. KATZMAN: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. You have answered most of the questions. Part of my statement was that many of them are on the social services program for one

reason or another. I think if we are going to pay them out of the consolidated fund through social services, then that same amount could be transferred to the act, and we could pay them from where they should be properly paid, so they do not feel like recipients of charity, as they do when they go on the social services program. I am quoting the words of many workers who have spoken to me and said, "Why can't it all come from the program?"

I have several other questions, but there are a few other members who would like to speak.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Just a comment or two, Mr. Minister, on the point that you raised. I agree entirely that the employers today won't want to be paying for the sins of the past in the accidents that happened 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 years ago. The member for Rosthern has not suggested such a system, but rather that you would fund the plan through government assistance. I agree that the fund is fully funded by the employers and employees. I ask you: why not put an injection of funds into the plan in order to take care of those people who were 50 per cent or 100 per cent disabled 10, 20, 30 years ago and today are living below the poverty line level?

I think of a particular case of a man who had the same job as you had on the railroad as an engineer some 25 years ago. He is totally disabled, and today receives a total amount of \$683 per month, where his income if he were back as an engineer on a railroad today would be close to \$3,000. It wasn't his fault that he was injured and he had the ability to run the train as well as you have. Now that man today has to live below the poverty line level and has no recourse to your department or to the government or to anyone else.

I don't see justice being done for these people who are not to blame for the particular accident.

I want to take you back to about two years ago, Mr. Minister, when in this very Assembly, legislation was passed to index pensions of members of the Legislative Assembly. I'm not talking about today's members, I'm referring to the past members of this Assembly. We talk about funding a plan. Where does money always come from? It comes from the public. That's where it comes from. The people, who are responsible for putting the money into these funds, whether it be legislative or whether it be workers' compensation or whatever, are the public.

The members of this Assembly (I hardly believe it was two years ago) two years ago voted an indexing plan for past members of the legislature and the present ones as well. Do you not really believe that those individuals out there who were disabled as a result of an accident are entitled to the same consideration? I really don't see how you can argue the point that the member for Rosthern brings up. How can you say that because it's a funded plan the government can't do anything about it? Fund it in what ever way is necessary.

I don't like indexing of any kind but we have to live with that fact today. It's a fact of life. The members of parliament have indexed their salaries and their pensions. The members of this legislature have done the same thing. They don't create inflation and they didn't cause the accident. They didn't ask for that accident. And you are leaving them high and dry, living in poverty, on welfare, because you say that you can't go to the employers.

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This particular case, by the way, happened to involve the CNR, which is a Crown corporation of the federal government. It is a government-funded plan in other words. Mr. Minister, your logic escapes me. I can't believe that you can leave these people high and dry when you can look after yourselves, us, past members of the legislature and the members of parliament in indexing salaries, expense accounts, pensions. Surely you must have a little more concern and sympathy for some of these people who are in dire need and on welfare, and so on.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I have to tell the hon. member that I am most impressed with the amount of milk of human kindness flowing through him at this stage. I can't help but agree in terms of a program which failed to acknowledge the fact of a very major increase in earnings which have accelerated at a rate unimagined by people in days gone by. He fails to recognize that is what we have attempted to solve, and have solved, in a very major way by income replacement and indexing.

If the hon. member knows any of the contents of the Act which we passed in this legislature, providing for all beneficiaries injured since January 1, he will know that we are the only province which has moved in the direction of providing income replacement. In the event that the person is totally and completely disabled, we provide 75 per cent of all the benefits that he was receiving, indexed to the cost of living until age 65 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, didn't you know that? You voted for that indexing arrangement and the passage of the new Workers' Compensation Act. That is for new injuries under the Act. That is right . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, and I am not at all sure that we can solve all the sins and difficulties of years gone by. Certainly, we have made an attempt to equate wages earned at that time to bring them into the 20th century. But there will always be the problems, which I understand very well of Mr. Yankow, a person for whom I have a great deal of sympathy. I know him well, and I have a great deal of consideration for that problem.

If the member is suggesting that out of the public treasury we should be subsidizing past accidents and bringing them up to current levels of wages, I would hope that when the committee of review starts its four-year statutory review, the opposition members would present their point of view and include in that review the major changes which they are suggesting. I would like to see them enunciate their position and their suggestions which they will have an opportunity to do, hopefully later this year. The statutory review, which is required by law, will be set up and public hearings will be held. I would certainly welcome the opportunity in a more definitive way for the members of the opposition to present their case to that committee of review when it convenes.

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Just one more comment, Mr. Minister. You keep referring to what you did on January 1 and what is available for injured workers today. Of course, I am referring to those who were injured before that date. What amazes me and what I can't understand is that you will in consideration, in other words by the individual coming to you and begging, increase his pension. You have done it many times for Mr. Yankow, as we have mentioned. You have gone from \$300 a month, I believe, to \$683 a month. But every time he has had an increase, he had to beg for it.

If you are able to do it on request, why can't you legislate to do it automatically, rather than having these people come to you. Every time they need more money to survive, they have to get down on their hands and knees and ask you for it. If you have the money in the fund to do it when they ask you, then surely there could be an automatic situation

where they don't have to come on their hands and knees to ask you for it. At least that would be saving some of their dignity. That is the point I am trying to make to you. I realize that the funding of the project to take care of all these people, to bring them to today's standards, would probably be an impossible task because of the vast amount of money required. However, notwithstanding the fact that you could inject some funds to do some indexing of some kind or some adjustments of some kind for these people who have no other recourse and have no other place to turn but to come on their hands and knees and ask for more to keep them at a decent level of survival.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I find myself a little annoyed and aggravated by the suggestion that workers have had to come on their hands and knees and beg. The inference seems to be, Mr. Chairman, that somehow or another when times get tough enough and people complain enough and invade my office and beg of me, something happens. That isn't the case. Have a look at the history of things since 1972, since we put an infusion of \$6.5 million in the fund out of the public purse in order to bring it into the 20th century after it had been starved into submission by a former Liberal government for seven years when virtually nothing was done. We had a big backlog of things that had to happen in order to bring it into any kind of reasonable status in terms of other compensation acts across the country.

In addition to that, on each occasion (if you'll look over the records), I think on each 24-month period, we've had an amendment to The Workers' Compensation Act that has, indeed, upgraded it in keeping with cost of living. It has been done on an ad hoc basis. If the member is making that point, we have ad hocced it and there is not a formula that has applied. But had the CPI (consumer price index) been applied, it would probably have been less generous than the changes that were made during that period of time since 1971 until this point in time. Since 1971 CPI has applied. My impression is that it would have been less generous to have it attached to the CPI than the way we have done it on an ad hoc basis in making that adjustment on a 24-month basis. That has been the rule throughout. It has not been a matter of people coming on their hands and knees and begging, but a conscious act of this government and the workers' compensation board to improve the benefit. It has been done in a major way on a matter of about every 24 months.

You'll know, if you've been watching the legislative program of the government since I've been here, that on each successive occasion at 24-month intervals it has been improved. It has not been improved on the basis of people coming on their hands and knees and begging of the minister. That puts a very demeaning and a very degrading status to the manner in which legislative changes have come about. That simply is not a fact.

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, first of all I would like a list of your executive personnel: names, salaries, vehicles that they have within your department. Next I would like to turn to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No. I don't need the licence numbers. It wouldn't likely be in the public's interest.

Mr. Minister, we're expecting this. We might as well get to Mr. Ron Duncan. Number one, what was his job classification? What salary did he receive last year? How long has he worked for your department? We'll just take those for a starter and then get into the thick of it a little later on.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I'm wondering, first of all the hon. member asked for a list of all of the executive officials (was that the way you phrased it?) and the salaries and those that

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have an automobile. I don't have anything to provide it to you. Do you want it immediately or can we provide it to you by hand at some later point? I'm not sure that we have it all here precisely, but we can get it to you in a matter of a few hours in any case or at the next sitting. I rather presume that we may extend beyond this sitting day for estimates, unless we decide to stop the clock. So we'll get that material to you.

With respect to Ron Duncan, he was the executive director of the industrial relations division of the Department of Labour. His salary was between \$3,191 and \$4,352. We'll get the precise figure for you if you wish. He was in service with the department between October 1977 and December 1980 in the management series two. His title was the executive director of industrial relations.

MR. GARNER: — He worked for your department as of October 1977? He was not employed by your department prior to October 1977?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — No, he was not.

MR. GARNER: — Who has taken Mr. Duncan's place since December 1980?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — The position is vacant at the moment. I expect that it will be filled in the next few weeks.

MR. GARNER: — Okay. I guess we'll get into the real meat of the question. Mr. Minister, why was he fired?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Mr. Duncan was terminated because the services he performed did not meet, to our satisfaction, the requirements of the position.

MR. GARNER: — Whose satisfaction, Mr. Minister? Yours or the deputy minister's? Could you be a little more specific on that please?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — If we need to be specific, the buck stops right here. He didn't meet the requirements of the minister.

MR. GARNER: — In what way?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I believe, Mr. Chairman, that there is no useful purpose to be served by laundering the discharge of senior civil servants in the legislative Chamber. If it's the wish of that senior public servant to expose himself to the public (as members obviously would like to do), then I will leave it to that person to make that judgment. It's not my intention to stand here in my place and describe what may be an inadequacy. I think that it is inappropriate for a minister to perhaps compromise future employment of an employee who, for whatever reason, was not able in some circumstances to adjust to the terms and conditions of his employment. It's not my intention to elaborate on, or provide to you, the precise reasons that, in all sets of circumstances, employees sometimes do not necessarily fill the bill with respect to the jobs required of them. I think, quite frankly, you're being exceedingly unfair and unkind to an employee who has many talents and has a valuable contribution to make in a number of different circumstances. But, under these circumstances, I believe he was probably misplaced.

MR. GARNER: — Mr. Minister, I am not trying to damn — not at all. By your admission, you said he was inadequate. If anybody's trying to hang a cross around his neck, it's you. You just stated that. It will be on the record. You said he was inadequate. But you don't want to talk about it. He worked from October 1977 to 1980 — three years — and then all of a sudden, overnight, he's inadequate. It took you three years to find out, by your admission, that the man was inadequate for the job. I can see a trial period in here, but three years and then all of a sudden he's dumped. How much time was he given on notice of termination of his employment? Could you give me specific details on that?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — You are making my point for me. The matter is a subject for discussion between his solicitor and the department at this point in time, and I think it makes it even more inappropriate for me to be discussing that matter with you in this Chamber at this time.

MR. GARNER: — Well, then, Mr. Minister, you have just stated that legal action has been taken by Mr. Duncan. At what stage is that?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Legal counsel has been retained and some negotiations are taking place. That is the state at which the matter is, as you put it.

MR. GARNER: — Well, could you tell me how much time was given him on the termination of employment? I asked that question earlier.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — No, I place no time limit on the negotiations. I never do.

MR. GARNER: — We're not missing on the negotiations, but from the date that he received notice that his employment was terminated with your department.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — My understanding is that one month's notice was given, or one month's pay in lieu of notice, and whatever flows from that is, as I indicated, subject to negotiation. His legal talent has been retained and is acting on his behalf.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, your associate deputy and I very seldom get into a dispute. I have a lot of respect for the man and his abilities, but unfortunately today I'm going to change that. In Moncton, New Brunswick on Tuesday, November 13, 1979, the associate deputy, in my opinion, did something that will harm occupational health for a long time. He indicated in a statement in that newspaper that occupational health and safety is a political question.

I think that's the wrong place for occupational health to be. It is not a political question in my opinion. It is a question of the best that we can do for the employee working in the province. In Mr. Sass's statement to the Canadian Labour Congress convention on occupational health, he is supposed to have made those comments. I think it's unfortunate. I hope he was misquoted but do not believe that occupational health should be a political issue, Mr. Minister, and in no case has that become a political issue in this House. We have always discussed it from the standpoint of the benefit for those who are being covered by it. I suggest that's the way it has been handled during the whole period of time Mr. Sass has been the director, and I compliment him for that. My only concern is that the press is either taking him out of context, and I hope that's the case, or I think we have a new twist in occupational health that we should try to put under the table and leave there. I think we should be talking on occupational health for the betterment of the employee. not the political side of it. And I ask you to respond.

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HON. MR. SNYDER: — You know I think the hon. member needs a course in basic English. I don't know what he believes politics is. Politics is the art of the possible. Politics is the science and the art of government. Politics is what determines what legislative statutes are placed on the statute books of this province, and on those of the other provincial jurisdictions and the federal jurisdiction. To suggest that somehow or another occupational health legislation and what flows from it, and the benefits that accrue to employers, are no way involved in the political or the governmental process has to be a complete abrogation of any kind of understanding of what politics is all about. Webster describes politics as the science in the art of government. Somehow people opposite attempted to derive some kind of base meaning from politics. Politics is a science in the art of government. Because you are so used to taking political activities and dragging them into areas where they don't properly belong you somehow muddled your own thinking with respect to what politics is. Certainly occupational health is in the political arena; you bet your sweet life it is. If it had not been for the fact that there had been political pressure in governmental activities, we wouldn't have an occupational health program on the books of this province and subsequently in the other provincial jurisdictions. I think it is a play on the English language. I think the member is creating a concern where none exists. I have no problem at all with Mr. Sass' statement. I think it makes eminently good sense. I can't read anything from it except the highest of motives.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, in this newspaper quote, once again, it refers to:

Workers are village idiots, who don't know what is good for them.

AN HON. MEMBER: — You are quoting that out of context.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, it suggests as well in the article, that it is a dangerous time in political economics. It suggests the only method by which you will get occupational health in other areas is politically. I think that is wrong. You get occupational health by putting sound arguments. If you want to call those politics, fine. But the definition of politics as suggested here is not where the unions and the representatives suggest that no matter what, they're concerned and they think something needs to be done. It has been suggested that politically, it is the other way, modified by, as you say, elections and so forth. That is incorrect. We should be handling (as we have done in this House since I have been here) the concerns of occupational health, not on political lines but on what can best be done. That's why I am concerned about the article.

As far as respect for Mr. Sass, there is no one in this House who has more respect for him on his occupational health. That is a fact . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I am glad that the minister who says things in the House that should never be said, once again makes indications of things he has heard but he never stands up and admits to what he says. I can talk a lot about what you have done out in the constituency that isn't proper either.

Mr. Minister, let's stay on the topic. We've stayed on the topic of this pie and let's try to stay off it and ignore the member for Kinistino.

In this particular case, I hope Mr. Sass was misquoted. I would like to know if that is a fact, or if what I am reading here is correct?

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I think the major consideration in terms of what the hon. member has read into the record of this House, somehow attempting to convey the image while expressing his admiration for Mr. Sass, deliberately attempts to mislead this House as though the director of occupational health and safety had said that the workers are the village idiots. Read the record over, and anybody reading that paragraph out of *Hansard* and expecting it to stand on its own without any qualification would conclude that you said Mr. Sass claimed that workers were village idiots. That is what you attempted to convey in this House, and it is quite the contrary. The suggestion that Mr. Sass has made on a number of occasions, when I have listened to him, and I know you have, is that the conventional wisdom in some quarters is that the worker is the village idiot. He has no right to know; he has no right to participate. That is the impression that the member for Rosthern attempted to leave. I think it's out of keeping with the usual high plain with which he usually debates in this House.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Minister, I suggest that I did not take it out of context. It's all here; you can read it yourself. If you don't have a copy. I'm prepared to send this one across to you. I'll have it photocopied and sent across.

I repeat, to get back to the issue, that occupational health is there for the benefit of the employees. I'll even go a little further in the article by Mr. Sass, if you like, where he makes reference to:

... and I believe that's the way it has to be, and that's the way it is in Saskatchewan. I'm certainly glad it is, that an employee has the right to refuse to work if he believes he is in danger by doing something because it is unsafe.

He makes that reference. I compliment him on that. I suggest that the other reference shook me, because I had never heard that coming from Mr. Sass. That's why I asked if he was being misquoted. Occupational health is of dire importance to this province. It was founded here. Yes, it has been copied in many areas across Canada. They're looking at it and starting to copy it. Parts of the United States are looking at our program here and are starting to look at changes along the same line.

Mr. Sass is recognized throughout North America on this program. That's why I'm concerned when I see an article like that coming out quoting Mr. Sass.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Mr. Chairman, the member is quoting from an article which, I am sure, has either grossly misquoted Mr. Sass, or the member is reading it out of context. I'd like to see that document. I'd like to have Mr. Sass take a look at it. I know the context in which the expression was used. If the member is using it in the way in which I believe he is using it, then he should stop using it in that way.

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Minister, the concern I have is about fire regulations. I'd like to discuss these with you for a while. You were away for a while the other day when I brought up a letter to the Premier of this province from the fire chiefs in Saskatchewan. I'm going by memory, but I've read the letter a number of times and I think I have it well in hand.

There were the fire chiefs from Biggar, Saskatoon, Broadview (those are a few of them), who belong to a committee of concerned people — the volunteer fire fighters. Now, I've been led to believe that these people from time to time have approached your fire

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commissioner's office with the intent of getting more adequate training in this province for the volunteer fire fighters. Their concern was that every time they approached you they didn't get very far at all. So they thought, "Well, we're not going to talk to the underlings; we're going to go right up to the chief." That's why they went to the Premier.

In questioning the Premier it seemed that his reply to me in *Hansard* was that he agreed with me, that in Saskatchewan today there is definitely a need for improved fire protection. Now, we've cited things, and we've discussed this before, I'm sure. But, just to refresh your memory, take the movement of chemicals. You've had experience on the railroads and probably know better than I do what types of chemicals are being moved up and down the railroads of this province. Not only the railroads but also the highways are full of tankers with all kinds of things. So, that is one thing — products are being transported throughout this province that the volunteer fire brigades in Saskatchewan are not adequately trained to handle.

Secondly, as we improve our technology and our capabilities of handling and of fighting fire. There are new means, methods, and modes of combatting fire that these people are wanting training for.

Now, they have conducted their own poll and I would be glad to give you the letter. I am sure the Premier has it and I think he has passed it to you. If he has, I would like to know what action you are taking to give the training to the volunteer fire departments in this province that they are requesting. I would like you to respond to that and we will continue on with this.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — Mr. Chairman, I have an indication that questions were directed to me in my absence. I think I have not had a question in the legislature since it began. When I was out of town on business for a matter of four days, I think I had three questions directed to me in my absence. In any case, I think the member makes a good point. He is raising a question with respect to a letter that was written to the Premier.

Anticipating a reply, I had some material provided. A letter in response has been prepared, I believe over the date line of March 31. So it was not lost, nor did it drop between the desks, or anything of that nature. I think it has to be known that in the province of Saskatchewan for many years we have opted to take our training program to the communities. It has worked, I think, very effectively and very well over many years. We believe that it's better perhaps than having a fire-fighting college, or something of that nature. We go out to the community, bring our equipment, our pumper truck, etc., and train those volunteer firemen. We find on-site training is far more effective than it is to have them come into a central point.

We found that this was working very well until recent years when the demand became greater, I think, than our ability to provide those services to them. Part of that has to rest with the Department of Municipal Affairs. It has provided additional funds for these communities. They have upgraded their equipment and facilities, and become more aware of the need to have a more professional fire-fighting group of people. So grants provided by the government essentially began some of our problems.

More demands were being made on our two fire prevention officers than they were able to meet. Accordingly, over the last two years, to partially offset the shortfall, we had these two fire prevention officers who were full-time in that connection and had an additional person reassigned for that purpose. It is not possible for us to maintain that

without jeopardizing, I suppose, our inspection program, unless we receive some additional resources.

It is something that we want to pay some attention to, but we have attempted some other matters. We want to do what we can in terms of providing some alternative kinds of training. We have an experimental school that was held in co-operation with the city of Saskatoon Fire Department, where its training facilities were used to train some volunteer fire-fighting people. We are going to follow this approach within the department.

We have a meeting with the Regina Fire Department established for, I believe, May 5 and May 6 in an attempt to work out an arrangement with the city of Regina Fire Department and the Saskatoon Fire Department in that connection. In addition to that, we have arranged for a meeting with the group of people of the volunteer training program of the association of fire chiefs. There is a meeting to be held on June 1 at which time we will be able to discuss, in more detail, their program or their problems and receive from them their advice about how we more properly can tackle the training programs for those towns and villages outside of the 11 major cities where they generally have their own training programs and have a more sophisticated option in terms of training their clientele.

So we are meeting with the committee that wrote to the Premier because we want to have their views with respect to an expanding training program involving the city of Regina and the city of Saskatoon Fire Department.

In addition to that, we are going to have to look at our resources because the demands on the training program have exceeded our ability to deliver as we have been delivering it over the past number of years, where it was done very satisfactorily, at least in terms of the demand. We had a number of volunteer fire departments that were not aware of the training program that was in force. Over a number of years following, in recent times, they've been exercising that option, and we've been presenting these programs and training opportunities to volunteer fire departments, but I would be the first to agree that the need has outgrown our ability to provide that service as presently constituted. We'll have to look at enriching the program in the time directly ahead, I believe.

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Minister, just to correct a couple of things, I don't know if you were directing your remarks to me, by implying that I addressed a question to you in your absence. If you did, that's absolutely false. I addressed the question to the Premier of this province, because that's whom the letter was written to, because of the complete failure of your department to deal with the topic. So I didn't ask you any question when you were gone. He referred it to you. Let's get that straight.

Then you stand up and you tell me I've got a good idea. You bet that's a good idea. If you thought it was a good idea, why did these people have to write to the Premier of the province to get some action? I'm happy to see that you're going to meet with them on June 2, but for you to stand here and say that they've been adequately trained is just a bunch of nonsense. If they were adequately trained out there, then why are there figures showing that there are 5,400 people out there today who want training?

You know that there's a big turnover in volunteer fire departments. These guys do it of their own volition. They get very little or minimum pay (if any whatsoever), and if they don't get adequate training, some of them are going to stop volunteering for fire

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departments.

With regard to colleges, I am not advocating that we have fire colleges. I pointed out to the Premier that B.C., Manitoba, Alberta, and Ontario all have these. I agree with you, Mr. Minister, that for the Saskatchewan scene, if we go out to where the people are, take out the trucks . . . In this province (and I'll stand corrected) you only have one demonstration pumper truck to do for the whole province of Saskatchewan, and you tell me the people are being adequately trained. That's not right at all. Two people for the whole province . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I won't take it easy, because I live out there, Mr. Member for Moose Jaw North, and I want my buildings, my family and my interests protected in the best possible manner from fire. That's why I'm concerned.

For you to say that we are getting adequate training is not correct. If it were correct, then why are these people having to go to the Premier of the province to be heard, when Manitoba, I believe, has seven men out in the field. You say you've got to look for the resources. I say you're the minister in charge of that department; you say it's a good idea; you say there's a need. Then, at your meeting I hope that these people convince you and that you put something into place to satisfy this problem.

HON. MR. SNYDER: — I think the member attempts to misquote me entirely. I didn't indicate that I was satisfied nor did I say that the program was filling the current need. I think it did, in a relative way, in years gone by. Because of more sophisticated equipment and upgraded facilities, I think there's a greater awareness out there now than there has been at any time.

The figures indicate here that in 1978-79, the number of towns and villages that applied for assistance was 29. By 1979-80, 51 had applied. That's close to a doubling of requests for assistance. The number of registrants in 1978-79 was 2,564; that's up to 3,319. And that's only in that period from 1978-79 to 1979-80, so you can see that this has advanced upon us. It's descended upon us rather rapidly.

In any case, all I'm indicating is that there has been a remarkable increase in the demand for the kind of services that the training program is now unable to provide, because of the increased interest. A great deal of it, as I indicated, has to do with the upgrading of the fire departments in a number of rural municipalities, towns, villages, and accordingly, I think there's a greater awareness and it's something we'll have to address.

If you're saying we're not doing anything, I thought that I had indicated to you that we were meeting with the body, that a meeting has already been set in motion for May 8 and 9 or May 5 and 6 with the fire departments in the city of Saskatoon and the city of Regina, in order to attempt to work out some sort of a rational arrangement to perhaps use their training facilities to a better degree than has been done in the past. So, to suggest that nothing has been done or nothing has been attempted is erroneous. I think we're conscious of the problem and attempting to address it.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 1:04 p.m.