

28th Day

Tuesday, December 23, 1975

The Assembly met at 2:30 o'clock p.m.
On the Orders of the Day

STATEMENT

BILL NO. 18 - AN ACT RESPECTING THE RETAIL SERVICE STATION TRADE.

MR. SPEAKER: — Before the Orders of the Day I have a statement I should like to make. We have standing on the Order Paper Bill No. 18 - An Act respecting The Retail Service Station Trade. This Bill was introduced by the Hon. Member for Regina Wascana (Mr. Merchant) and first reading on December 18, 1975. The Bill received first reading with the customary Speaker's caveat that the Bill would be reviewed by the Chair to see if it was in order before considering the principle of the Bill by the Assembly.

I refer all Hon. Members to Rule 30 of the Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, 1970 as follows:

Any vote, resolution, address or Bill introduced in the Assembly for the appropriation of any part of the public revenue or of any tax or impost to any purpose whatsoever, or to impose any new or additional charge upon the public revenue or upon the people, or to release or compound any sum of money due to the Crown, or to grant any property of the Crown, or to authorize any loan or any charge upon the credit of the Province, shall be recommended to the Assembly by the Message of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor before it is considered by the Assembly.

It is stressed that a money bill may be introduced but must have the Crown recommendation before it is considered by the Assembly.

The question now is whether the Bill actually involved the expenditure of money by the Crown. I have checked the said Bill carefully and refer all Hon. Members to Section 4 which provided for the appointment of a commission; and Section 6 which allows the Executive Council to appoint employees for the commission. The concise Oxford dictionary defines employees "as a person employed for wages." I refer all Hon. Members to the Speaker's Ruling of March 30, 1965 where he stated that:

An appropriation of public funds within the meaning of our constitutional principle means an authority given by this Assembly to the Crown to pay money out of the consolidated fund.

Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, 1965, page 162:

It may be argued that there is no direct mention of expenditure of money in either Section 4 or Section 6 but

I find both sections give authority to the Executive Council to spend money out of the consolidated fund.

Whether the Executive Council chooses to use this authority or not is not the issue. Since the authority to spend money is given in the Bill it must be considered a money Bill and requires Royal recommendation.

In support of this Ruling I refer you to Erskine May's Parliamentary Procedure, 17th edition, page 781 and 782:

The most frequent case of expenditure of this type is that of charges of moneys to be provided by parliament for salaries and other expenses caused by the imposition of novel duties upon the executive government by the legislation of the session.

And further May lists the following examples of charges imposed upon money to be provided by parliament: (1) the expenses connected with the establishment of a new department; (2) the expenses arising out of the imposition of new duties on an existing department or authority; (3) a charge is also involved by any proposal whereby the Crown would incur a liability or a contingent liability payable out of money to be voted by parliament.

I also refer to Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, 4th edition, page 204 and to previous Speakers' Rulings. Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, March 30th, 1963, page 163 and 164 and March 24th, 1966, page 192 to 194:

The requirement that a money Bill must have a Crown recommendation is an important principle of responsible government.

I quote from the Speaker's Ruling of March 24th, 1966 as follows:

It is my firm belief that those charged and entrusted by the people with the work of raising the provincial revenues must be the sole arbiters of the institution of new and additional expenditures and that the privilege of initiating legislation which will be a new or increased charge upon the people must therefore be the absolute prerogative of the Government.

This is from the Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, March 24th, 1966, page 194:

I therefore rule Bill 18 out of order on the ground that it is a money Bill and it does not have Crown recommendation.

RETURN OF LIBRARY BOOKS

MR. SPEAKER: — There is one further item that I would - not in connection with that - that I would like to bring to Members' attention before the Orders of the Day and it is with regard to the return of library books that I wonder if Members can make some attempt to return any library books that they have out in their possession sometime later today.

BILL NO. 18 - AN ACT RESPECTING THE RETAIL SERVICE STATION TRADE.

MR. E. F. A. MERCHANT (Regina Wascana): — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might make a comment before the Orders of the Day. I am certainly not challenging or questioning your ruling I only wanted to say something in the nature of a Point of Order. I accept the ruling that you made and certainly this is something that I had considered in advance and that is the reason that Section 10 tried to daintily move around the problem of anticipated spending. I would only say that I have prepared some thoughts and arguments in that regard which I would like to have advanced to Mr. Speaker. I only say in that regard and it has happened to me on one other occasion where Your Honour is making a decision it seems to me appropriate that the area that is troubling, Mr. Speaker, is something where you might invite assistance of Members so that Members have an opportunity to express their opinion and perhaps advise you to investigate matters in a different area. I am not saying, indeed, that the decision that you've made is so bad that I could say that it is bad. It is a decision that I thought was very much on the watershed and you have fallen against the Bill and I accept that legitimately and I hope that the Government may consider bringing in some kind of a Bill of this nature. Obviously if they don't pass it or weren't prepared to give it their support, it couldn't have passed in any event. But I suggest or ask that in future on such matters, Mr. Speaker might consider saying I am troubled about such and such provision, is there an argument to be made? In this particular provision, is there an argument to be made? In this particular case I was ready with an argument. It might not have been accepted but it might have been of assistance to Mr. Speaker and the House had an argument been advanced in that regard.

MR. SPEAKER: — Past Speakers have taken the opportunity to suggest to the Chamber that they would be prepared to hear comments on a ruling when they felt they required some further guidance. I will take the Member's comment under consideration. In this particular instance I felt that there were clear-cut citations to support the ruling I made and consequently I hadn't referred the matter to the Chamber for their views.

QUESTIONS**PRICE OF OIL GOING UP**

MR. W. C. THATCHER (Thunder Creek): — Before the Orders of the Day, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Smishek).

It was indicated in the Federal Budget that the price of oil would be going up. First, I should like to ask the Minister if his Government is in favor of the price of oil going up and, secondly, what is the approximate anticipated revenue to be derived from that?

HON. W. E. SMISHEK (Minister of Finance): — Mr. Speaker, we have not received anything official from the Government of Canada on the preciseness of any increase.

Certainly we do not know how this would apply. The Federal Government has not discussed this with us directly and for that reason we are unable to give the Hon. Member an answer at this time.

MR. THATCHER: — A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I heard a press report this morning that the Minister of agriculture was asking the Federal Government to cushion our farmers and ranchers from the projected increases for their diesel fuel and gasoline. In view of the fact that obviously some additional revenue will be coming into the Provincial Treasury in Saskatchewan, is the Provincial Government prepared to consider action such as either freezing the price of gas and diesel or in some way cushioning our agricultural people from the projected price increase?

MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, the Government policy will be announced in due course.

MR. THATCHER: — A second supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Since we have such open government I should like to ask the third question. Would the Government, in view of the fact that the price is obviously going up, in view of the fact that you are obviously going to get additional revenue, will the Government now consider returning the farm fuel rebate as it was in 1974? Will you consider putting it back into effect for 1976? I note that the Government in 1974 did not include farm heating fuels in their rebate, this year they are and yet they have put the paltry maximum of \$200 on it and I would suggest that by throwing farm heating fuels into it probably 75 to 85 per cent of your farms are going to vastly exceed this \$200. So, therefore, with the price going up will you now consider restoring that program to its 1974 situation?

MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, Government policies and Government programs are constantly under review and this is one matter that is under review from time to time. The Government position will be known at some future date.

SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO BRITISH COLUMBIA

MR. R. H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I want to ask the Premier a question. Is the Premier aware of the fact that a group of senior officials of this Government or a Crown corporation travelled to British Columbia earlier last week?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Yes.

MR. BAILEY: — A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the Premier in a position to provide this Assembly in some detail of the purpose of this trip?

MR. BLAKENEY: — The answer to that is, No. But in summary the purpose was to interview persons who may find themselves wishing to find employment.

MR. BAILEY: — Mr. Speaker, a second supplementary. I wonder, Mr. Premier, if you can assure this House and indeed this province that in view of the honesty to the first supplementary question that you can assure this House that our own civil servants who have given long years of devoted service will not be ignored for the possible promotion to these positions just because British Columbia has a horde of political dropouts at this time?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I think the answer to that is Yes. I think that we have shown, a great deal of wisdom in giving civil servants in this Government opportunities to pursue educational programs, to pursue other avenues for advancement. I am very hopeful that we would find among those who may wish to leave British Columbia people of the calibre of persons who wished to leave this province in 1964.

AN HON. MEMBER: — They have served the Federal Government for the last ten years.

MR. BLAKENEY: — They may not in the eyes of the Members opposite be competent but I point out that they now include the Deputy Minister of Finance at Ottawa. The president of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was with us in the government of 1964. I am sorry that Members opposite have so much difficulty talking when they are on their feet and so little difficulty talking when they are sitting down.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — I can think of many others. The Assistant Deputy Minister of the Department of the Solicitor General was with this Government in 1964. The immediate past Deputy Minister of Urban Affairs and many, many others. I won't list them all, but another is - The General Manager of the Canadian International Development Agency, and the past Deputy Minister of Finance of the Province of New Brunswick, another Liberal Government there. Another is the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services of the Province of New Brunswick. He is now in private practice. There are just too many to name all of them. But they were an exceedingly fine group of public servants, I don't know whether we have people of that quality in British Columbia who are looking to relocate as the people here looked to relocate after 1964, but if there are, if there are people of that quality we certainly want to get them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CONSIDER WITHDRAWAL OF BILLS 1 AND 2

MR. E. C. MALONE (Regina Lakeview): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day, I have a question I should like to direct to the Premier and if you will bear with me, Mr. Speaker, I should like to quote briefly from a newspaper story, I'll just be a moment. Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to a story that appeared in

the Bowbells Tribune, which is a small town in North Dakota, which I am sure you are aware of. The title of the story or the headline is, "Leasing of Potash heavy in Country," and it reads briefly:

Leasing for mineral rights of potash has been continuing steadily over the past year in Birks County and at least one state official thinks it will increase. Northwestern North Dakota has evidence of potash, according to Mr. Anderson, chief geologist.

The hot spot lies here . . . Since January five companies have taken out potash leases in ten Birks county townships.

End of my quote and I'll send you a copy of the report when I'm finished, Mr. Speaker. I am not suggesting, Mr. Premier, that this in itself would be enough for you to reconsider Bill 1 and Bill 2 but I am asking you, Mr. Premier, taking this and the development near Scobey, Montana, the possible diplomatic difficulties that could arise between Washington and Ottawa, and what I say, you may disagree, but what I say is the growing public feeling against the takeover of the potash industry, are you prepared, Mr. Premier, over the Christmas break of two weeks or whatever it is, to reconsider your position and come back on January 5th and give consideration as to whether or not Bill 1 and Bill 2 should be withdrawn?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, Hon. Members have asked this question in the same form now for something over a month and each time they have tried to anchor it on some supposed statement of fact. This one has to do with the leasing that has been going on for a year or so according to the news report itself in North Dakota. I think that is obviously a factor. No one, is suggesting that Saskatchewan is the only place in the world that has potash. But I think that none of these are factors which should cause someone to change his mind. I think that we are certainly always willing to consider Government policy. As the Minister of Finance has indicated it is always under review, but I do not wish to hold out to Hon. Members the prospect that there will be any change in our potash policy between now and January 5th.

MR. MALONE: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. The Premier is quite right when he says we have asked these questions before, but it seems to me that every day or every week there is a little more ammunition, that is, of various potash discoveries or Washington acting or whatever.

Now, in view of these things happening, Mr. Premier, you seem to feel that you still have enough ammunition on your side or enough strength on your side to still proceed with Bill 1 and Bill 2, but you haven't, to my knowledge, risen in the debate to date to tell us what this is, to tell us about the future markets, to tell us what your cost projections are, risk and so on. Would you undertake when we return in January to enter the debate on Bill 1 and Bill 2 and give us particulars of this?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, with every deference to the Hon. Member I think I know and we all know that that is a comment which might well be better made in debate. He is not really asking for information from the Government and that is what the question period is for. I suggest to him that we will have ample opportunity immediately after January 5th to debate Bill 1 and Bill 2 at length and he will then be able to put his arguments as to who should enter the debate and what information ought to be laid before the Assembly.

NUMBER OF LEVEL IV BEDS

MRS. E. G. EDWARDS (Saskatoon-Sutherland): — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address this question, I was going to say to the Minister of Health, Mr. Robbins, but it could be to the Minister of Health or the Minister of Social Service, Mr. Rolfes and I see the Minister of Social Services is here. In view of the severe shortage of chronic care and geriatric beds in Saskatoon and in view of the fact that the purchase of the Frank Eliason house, which is now the Frank Eliason Centre has not increased the number of beds, could the Minister in charge of special care homes say whether or not the Government would consider buying the Saskatoon sanatorium and turning it into a facility that would begin to meet the desperate need for geriatric and chronic care in Saskatoon?

HON. W. E. SMISHEK (Minister of Finance): — Mr. Speaker, I will reply to that question. With all deference to the Hon. Member there has been an increase in the number of Level IV beds in Saskatoon from 64 to I think, 152 in the last four years which is significantly more than there were in 1971.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SMISHEK: — That's right, that's right. I might inform the Hon. Member in case she is not aware that the Saskatoon San Building is now owned by the Government therefore there is no need for us purchasing it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MRS. EDWARDS: — Well, following the answer then by the Minister of Finance, if the number of beds has increased since 1964 for Level IV patients and the Minister of Finance has that figure, then I have two questions to put to him. How has the number of patients increased? I'm more interested in the number of patients and has there ever been a study to determine the number of people needing the facility, the care, because I think that's the number and the issue, the desperate need?

MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes, there has been a study made on the Level IV bed needs. When we took office in 1971, there were roughly 500 beds of Level IV nature, there are now 1,100 such beds in the province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SMISHEK: — I might also inform the Member that in addition to designated specific Level IV beds in various regional centres, we have made it possible for any Union Hospital to designate any number of their acute care beds as Level IV beds and the Government will pay the ongoing costs for Level IV beds as we are paying for Level IV beds. So the Union Hospitals are free to designate any number of beds for chronic care purposes and the Government will pay the cost. The onus is on the hospitals to designate them. We believe as a matter of policy that it is better for the chronically ill to stay in their community rather than be moved into regional centres.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MRS. EDWARDS: — Supplementary to the Minister of Finance and he's certainly given the province a wide picture as he sees it. I'm asking a question pertaining to Saskatoon and if he's saying that chronic care people and Level IV and Level III people would be better cared for in acute care hospitals, I guess we know the answer of what the Government's policy is. Right now, I wonder if the Minister of Finance and I'm sure he's aware there are over 80 people who are bonafide classified Level IV who have no place to go, that at any time in Saskatoon there are about 20 to 30 chronic care people in each of the acute care hospitals and that's very expensive health care and they have no place to be discharged to. So I'm speaking of the situation in Saskatoon.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, I really don't know what the question is. She says that I know there are 80 people. I don't know that there are 80 people and I ask by whom were they designated? There is an assessment committee on chronic care people and that information is not known to me. I might also inform the Hon. Member that a 57 bed facility in North Battleford is being renovated which I hope will relieve some of the pressures north of Saskatoon. It seems to me that we have done a fairly good job in provision of in-patient facilities for chronic care and among the things that we are trying to endeavor is a more effective home care program for the people and develop a gerontology program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

LETTERS OF PROTEST RE POTASH INDUSTRY

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I am referring to a question yesterday by the Hon. Member for Rosetown-Elrose (Mr. Bailey) who asked me whether my office was in fact receiving a goodly number of such letters or protests to the Government's proposed plan regarding the potash industry. I said I would take it as notice. I reply to him that there are a number of letters arriving. We have received only one from a municipal group, the RM of Mildren. We have received three from Chambers of Commerce and we have received two from other organizations, one a trade union and one another organization. We have received about 150 letters in all, I think. Not quite half of them from Saskatoon where there is, if I may say so, obviously a campaign going on. There is one other letter writing campaign going obviously in the

Rocanville area. There are an interesting number which bear the name Birkbeck, by the way, not one but several. But leaving that aside, the others seem to be coming generally from around the province.

In order to put that in some perspective, that is a very much lighter write-in campaign that let us say we had on the grasslands park matter or on dollar matching grants for external aid. To give it some relevance I would advise the Hon. Member of my mail intake today. We just had it counted today so it gives some base point. I admit that today is a high day because there are a bunch of Christmas cards among them. The total intake today is 155 letters, 140 with the 9:00 a.m. delivery and 15 with the 11:00 a.m., so that's 155 letters today. I would think that's about twice a usual day, 80 to 100 letters is sort of a normal day. As I say, we've had about 150 to 160 and all on potash. So I give you the story.

MR. R. H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I wonder in view of the fact the Premier has answered my question of yesterday. I would just like to ask a question in regard to this correspondence. You will note in the resolution which came from the RM of Mildren, that they were planning to introduce this as a resolution at the annual meeting of the SARM. Mr. Premier, my question is simply this, should this resolution receive the unanimous approval as it did with this RM Council at the provincial body of this organization, would the Premier then not agree that certainly then the Government would have to take a strong look at their position in regards to Bills 1 and 2 at that time?

MR. BLAKENEY: — I would agree with the Hon. Member if a resolution like that was accepted unanimously at the SARM annual convention, we would indeed review our position. I noted that the resolution referred to indicated that the municipalities would lose their right to taxes from the mines. That in a technical sense may be true, but in a practical sense they don't lose any money if the Crown corporations pay grants in lieu of taxes. I think most of them know that. It may well be that the RM of Mildren which doesn't have any potash mines within a goodly distance may have misconceived the situation.

MR. BAILEY: — One final supplement question, Mr. Speaker. I should just like to bring this to the attention of the Premier in hopes that it will relieve him perhaps. You mentioned several areas in which you are in fact getting letters, I want to assure the Premier that this letter that was dropped on my desk or a copy that went to you was the first that I knew about it. I in no way incited the RM of Mildren to write it, so this group of people were not pressured into writing this letter and I think the Premier should recognize that.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! I caution the Member that I failed to get the connection that that was a supplementary.

SEATBELTS

MR. J. G. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day, I wonder if I might, in reference to the material that's on our desks, ask a question of the Premier. Is the Government

considering the compulsory use of seatbelts and if so when can we expect the legislation?

MR. SPEAKER: — We've now had four questions and there is a lot of material left on Members' desks and if we get into the position where we are questioning material left on Members' desks, we may get into a very extended question period. If the House is willing to permit this further question I would be agreeable.

CONDOLENCES

HON. A. E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might, if we are through with the question period, with leave of the House, move a motion of condolence with respect to a deceased Member, Alex Connon. Mr. Speaker, it has been traditional in this House to pay tribute to deceased Members. Last week it was reported that Mr. Alex Connon had died on December 17 and I should like to add a few words of tribute to Mr. Connon.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Steuart:

That this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of a former Member of this Assembly, and expresses its grateful appreciation of the contributions he made to his community, his constituency, and to this Province:

Alexander Duff Connon, who died on December 17, 1975, was a Member of this Legislature from 1944 to 1948 for the constituency of The Battlefords. He was born in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1891 and came to Canada at the age of twelve. He was educated at public schools in Aberdeen, Scotland and Brandon, Manitoba, and also attended Business College in Brandon. For 41 years he was employed with the Canadian National Railways. He was a member of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen and was chairman of the local grievance committee for many years. After his retirement in 1952 he served as a Commissioner of the Workmen's Compensation Board until 1964. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge.

May I depart from the formal motion to add a few words about Alex Connon. As the formal motion indicates Alex was a long time member of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen and he served his union in many capacities, including local chairman, legislative representative and as a member of the Constitutional and General Rules Commission.

He was serving on the Workmen's Compensation Board when I knew him best. Alex had had a difficult life in some ways, as of course, most people did who grew up in working class families at that time. He had a long career in the railway and this engendered in him a concern for working people. Throughout his life he dedicated his skills and energies to improving the lot of working people. He did this through his trade union, he did it in the Legislature and he did it in his personal life.

I knew Alex reasonably well in his latter years. He was, even after his retirement in 1965, very bright, very alert of mind and very interested in the affairs of our province. He

continued to be interested in union matters, in political matters generally and to a lesser extent in the matters related to the political party of his choice. He was one of those fortunate people who was able to maintain their interest in the affairs of his community up to the time of his death.

Alex will be remembered with respect and affection by a good number of people. Many knew him in his working days with the CNR, many knew in the Legislature, many knew him when he was at the Workmen's Compensation Board.

I would like to convey my sympathy to Mrs. Connon and to other members of the family and to express my appreciation for Alex's life of service.

In recording its own deep sense of loss and bereavement, this Assembly expresses its most sincere sympathy with members of the bereaved family.

HON. E. KRAMER (The Battlefords): — Mr. Speaker, I spoke earlier, a few days earlier, immediately after the death of Alex Connon in the House concerning the passing of a former Member, my former Member of the Legislature for The Battlefords and a very good friend.

Alex Connon was one of those rare individuals who enjoyed life and had the happy faculty of helping other people who were near him to enjoy life as well. A very human person, a person who was interested in the things that would benefit the life of ordinary human beings in his community and in his country.

As the Premier has said he did have difficult times. He came from Aberdeen, Scotland and some people would say that's enough of a handicap to begin with. However, that was one of Alex's attributes, he loved to hear a joke and especially if it was on the Scots.

One of a family of 13 who came to Canada in the early 1900s and Alex found himself at 12 years of age, when most young people today are only starting school he was working on a farm. The education that was mentioned by the Premier, he received mainly in night school and taking time off from what were long working hours in order to better himself. And I can say this, if anyone wants to check back in the debates in this House and certainly to check his debates in other areas, the contributions he made to union conventions, to political conventions, to the civic affairs of the city of Regina, will find that here was a man who had mastered what was necessary in order to meet any opponent on any grounds whatsoever.

I want to say a few words for the record about his activities during the four years he was the Member for the Legislature for The Battlefords. In 1944, he immediately took part in what was the work of the House at that time to improve labor legislation and farm legislation. He was very proud of The Farm Security Act that was introduced at that time which guaranteed that no one could take the home farm away from a farmer due to reasons beyond his control, drought, prices and so on.

In The Battlefords we have some monuments that will be to the credit of Alex Connon, especially some of the early roads which had to be rebuilt at that time and have been rebuilt since. Old Fort Battleford, in 1944 was a shambles. It had been

neglected. It was only a place for kids to go and tear off boards and if there were any windows left to break them, and do all those things that are done with vacant buildings. Campbell Innis, a school inspector at that time, who was very interested in the history of The Battlefords, had during the years that he had worked in that area collected and stored artifacts and historic writings of the early pioneer era. He had tried for years to secure money from the government, the provincial governments of all stripes, to rebuild Fort Battleford. It was after 1944 when Joe Phelps, the Hon. Joe Phelps at that time, Minister of Natural Resources was the Minister in charge of historic sites as well, was approached by Alex Connon and Campbell Innis and the first grants were secured for the restoration of what is now one of the best museums and historic sites anywhere in Canada, certainly in western Canada. The funds were provided to assist the local committee of pioneers who were very active at that time to rebuild and remodel and refurbish The Old Fort into our great historic museum. Federal Government in the '50s came and saw and decided that it was worthy of national recognition and I think, fortunately, took it over. But I think the credit goes to those pioneers who had the imagination to put the first dollars and sweat into the rebuilding of that historic centre, which is now a real boon to the town of Battleford and northwestern Saskatchewan as a tourist centre. That was one. There are other areas where Alex Connon left his mark.

It is probably surprising to some people here to note that psychiatric nurses back in 1944 were called attendants, guards, or whatever. They had never been recognized as a group of people doing a very special job. Under legislation that was passed at that time, new provincial trade union acts allowed civil servants to form unions, these people got together and appealed to Alex Connon to put a bill before the House which would allow the psychiatric nurses, as they wanted to call themselves, to form an association. It was Alex Connon who piloted The Psychiatric Nurses Act through the House back in the middle '40s. I think it was 1946.

Many other things that we can say were pioneered in those short four years that he served and The Battlefords are grateful that he served us for that period of time. He was defeated, narrowly, but defeated in 1948, and again in 1950 and one thing that probably, I might not get unanimous agreement in this House on, is the fact that if it had not been for Alex Connon's encouragement and some inspiration, I probably would not have been persuaded to take the nomination when he left prior to the election in 1952. But I owe a great debt of gratitude for my years in this Legislature to the encouragement that Alexander Duff Connon gave to me, a great deal of education, a great deal of encouragement. He was my mentor during those years and I am grateful for it. He has left a wonderful wife and family, all of whom are my personal friends, and certainly I think it can be said that Saskatchewan and Canada is better because Alexander Duff Connon came from Aberdeen as a boy and chose to live in Saskatchewan, make his home, live his life and make his contribution here in many ways and in many fields.

I should like to say to Alex Connon's wife Grace and his family thank you very much for sharing him with us.

MR. D. G. STEUART (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I knew Alex Connon latterly sometime

after he had been an active Member in this House and I know one thing, he had a very lively sense of humor among other things. And I know he would forgive me if I said that we pay tribute to the many great things that he did and great accomplishments, and there were many, if I don't number among those his encouraging the present Member for North Battleford, although he may have considered it a great accomplishment himself.

As it has been pointed out Alex Connon did have a very lively sense of humor and a very lively interest in a great many things. He can truly be called a pioneer in this province. As I say, I knew him after he left North Battleford and knew of his work through my father-in-law who is a retired railroader, and happens to be of the NDP and Masonic persuasion himself. They were great friends and he talked a great deal about him the other night when he had heard of the unfortunate passing of Alex Connon - how they did work together building the Hudson Bay Railroad. Both were conductors, and he said at that time that whenever any of the union members had a grievance that the first one they went to and the one they always hoped to get on their side as a supporter was Alex Connon. So I am very privileged and very pleased to join with other Members in this Assembly paying a tribute to this pioneer. He served his party well, he served his union well, and he served this province well, and I join with all Members of this House in paying tribute to his memory and passing on to his family our regrets at his passing and our thanks to him and to them for the service that he rendered to all the people in Saskatchewan.

MR. R. L. COLLVER (Leader of the Progressive Conservatives): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to add the condolences and sympathy of the Progressive Conservative caucus to those already spoken. Although I did not know Mr. Connon at all, his record shows that he served his constituency and this province well, and from discussions with some of his friends and the people who knew him well, he was a man of great humor and great understanding.

May God grant him eternal peace and his loved ones the remembrance of the joy of his life.

MR. B. M. DYCK (Saskatoon Mayfair): — May I add a few words of condolences to those made by the Premier and the Leaders of the Opposition.

I didn't have the opportunity of knowing Mr. Connon for a long time. I heard about him for many years but I only had the opportunity of meeting him about two years ago. But I had the pleasure during those two years of visiting at his house a number of times and I had long conversations with him. Though he was old in years he certainly had a lot of young ideas. He was a real humanitarian and a real idealist in my view. I think that he certainly made a contribution to the New Democratic Party, and also to the unions that he served and to other functions that he served in The Battlefords.

I wish to express my sincere sympathy to the family of Mr. Connon.

HON. W. E. SMISHEK (Regina North East): — Mr. Speaker, let me say a word of regret and sorrow

in the passing of my dear friend Alex Connon.

I met Alex Connon when I was a young man taking a train one time from Saskatoon to Regina. It was a midnight train, that used to leave Saskatoon and arrive in Regina about 5:00 o'clock in the morning. I couldn't afford a sleeper so I had to sit up overnight. Alex Connon was the trainman on that trip, we sat and chatted for most of the trip. He recited to me the stories of his life experience as a worker and as a trade unionist. Just then I was beginning to become active in the trade union movement. Thereafter our paths crossed many times particularly when he was the workers' representative on the Saskatchewan Workmen's Compensation Board. I had the opportunity of presenting many a grievance case or appeal case on behalf of workers to the Workmen's Compensation Board. You could be assured of one thing, that Alex Connon would always give a very sympathetic hearing. He would also be stern if he thought that somebody was not playing the rules properly. You could be assured that he would follow up the worker's case to its ultimate conclusion and make sure that the injured worker got a fair deal. I'm sure that many a trade unionist in Saskatchewan will remember the things that Alex Connon tried to do in improving particularly the workers' compensation benefits.

Might I mention in closing, Mr. Speaker, when I became Minister of Health, it wasn't long that Alex Connon started writing me letters about the other experiences. By then he was beginning to get to be hard of hearing, and somehow he became a kind of an ombudsman for those who had grievances against the prices they paid for hearing aids. He would write me almost daily reciting the cases and the experiences. I merely mention this to indicate what kind of a person Alex Connon was, always trying to help people wherever they had a problem or a grievance and what he could do to help people in correcting the grievance that might have been committed against a person.

May I join with all the others in expressing my deepest sympathy to the family, relatives and friends of the late Alex Connon.

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Steuart:

That the Resolution just passed, together with the transcript of oral tributes to the memory of the deceased Member, be communicated to the bereaved family on behalf of this Assembly by Mr. Speaker.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 19 - INCLUDE HOMEMAKERS IN CANADA PENSION PLAN

MR. P. P. MOSTOWAY (Saskatoon Centre) moved, seconded by Mr. Feschuk (Prince Albert):

That this Assembly, recognizing the important contribution to the social fabric of Canada that is made by homemakers, urges the Federal Government to include such persons in the Canada Pension Plan.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to present this Resolution in

this House urging the Federal Government to include homemakers in the Canada Pension Plan. I say this because I know not one Member in this House will deny that the contribution of homemakers to the fabric of Canadian and Saskatchewan society is beyond measure. Mr. Speaker, I mean that literally because for far too long the implication on the part of far too many has been that because the vast majority of homemakers do not receive wages or salaries as such, they are not true contributors to society. Mr. Speaker, because in a legal sense the contributions of homemakers are not recognized at all times as in the well-known Rathwell case, and because steps are being taken to partially correct the wrongs as were evident in this particular case, I should like to suggest that the time is now ripe for the Federal Government to act insofar as the Canada Pension Plan is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, as the situation now stands, homemakers can receive benefits under the Canada Pension Plan, but, generally speaking, benefits accruing to them and their dependents are below what benefits would be if they were included in the plan as contributing members.

Then, Mr. Speaker, in this day and age of matrimonial break-ups many homemakers find themselves left completely in the cold when their former spouses remarry or, as is the case frequently, when their spouses decide to live with other partners.

Now I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that when a homemaker can indirectly contribute towards the fabric of her family, province and nation, for a goodly number of years and due to a break-up of that marriage, find herself without a penny from the plan, while her replacement as a partner, married or not, is eligible for full beneficiary rights after a short period of time, something is drastically wrong with our society.

Mr. Speaker, something is wrong with our society, and I suggest that this House, in unanimously agreeing to this Resolution, can do much to rectify this situation which denies rightfully but indirectly earned benefits to homemakers, and as some would suggest, promotes marriage break ups.

Mr. Speaker, I know of many homemakers' and women's movement groups that have in the past urged the Federal Government to rectify the situation. In this regard, I recently had occasion to speak to certain personnel involved in the Catholic Women's League in Saskatoon. They assured me that as individual members they wished to see the needed changes. Only last year a Mrs. June Menzies, vice-president of the National Advisory Council on the Status of Women suggested a plan whereby 50 per cent of the contributions of a spouse who works outside of the home should go towards the other spouse's pension. She also suggested that when both work outside the home, 50 per cent of the contributions of each should go toward the pension of the other spouse. In February of this year the Hon. Marc Lalonde called a meeting of provincial welfare ministers to grapple with this problem so it would certainly appear the inclusion of homemakers into the plan certainly has some priority with the Federal Government.

In September of this year the Saskatchewan Advisory Council on the Status of Women proposed providing a homemaker with a pension in her own right paid out of family earnings for those family units where the total income is \$14,800 a year or more.

This same council also went on to suggest that where family incomes are under this amount, perhaps the plan itself or the Treasury Board could supplement part or all of the contributions.

At any rate, Mr. Speaker, suffice it to say that very few citizens of Canada would argue with the Royal Commission on the Status of Women's Report of five years ago recommending participation in the Canada Pension Plan of the spouse who remains in the home.

I am certain the Government of Saskatchewan agrees with this recommendation and I am sure it will do all in its power to help see this recommendation is carried out. To the women and gentlemen of this House, I say the passing of this particular Resolution before us will better enable our Government to gather more force in pursuing this matter to its logical conclusion.

And, if this province, along with the other provinces, should be fortunate enough to be able to convince the Federal Government that the inclusion of homemakers in the Canada Pension Plan is vital, action could be taken. There would be numerous benefits, only two of which I will mention at this time.

In the first place, it would surely help in recognizing the input of homemakers in the social fabric of Canada. This in itself would lead to many benefits, not all of them financial. In this regard, I suggest it would lead to a psychological lift on the part of many homemakers. It would give many of them a better sense of security in a world of insecurity, and it would also allow some the independence which they may seek and certainly have a right to.

There would also be another direct benefit, one that cannot be overlooked in a consumer oriented society such as ours, and that is we would have a much larger percentage of our retired citizens with better purchasing power. From such a situation one can easily envisage happier retired people, happier businessmen, and a more satisfied society in general.

Mr. Speaker, I deliberately avoided making any pronouncements in regard to how and who should make contributions on behalf of homemakers. I say this because I believe the various groups, movements and organizations which would be affected, have not really come up with a unanimous proposal as to how this might come about. Some suggest the homemaker contribute and leave it at that. Others suggest the contribution be made from the family as a unit. Others suggest the state contribute either in part or in whole. As to which approach should be used, I am not sure.

But, I am sure of this, Mr. Speaker, and it is that this can best be worked out by the women of Saskatchewan and of Canada, working in conjunction with their various provincial and federal governments.

Mr. Speaker, I am also sure of one other thing, and that is that the time is now ripe to give homemakers the recognition, via the Canada Pension Plan, I know they richly deserve.

Therefore I move this Resolution, seconded by the Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Feschuk).

MRS. E. G. EDWARDS (Saskatoon - Sutherland): — Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member for Saskatoon Centre (Mr. Mostoway) has mentioned the Royal Commission on the Status of Women tabled its Report in the House of Commons five years ago. They have recently done a study, the book is entitled, "What's Been Done". The recommendation regarding pension plans reads as such that both the Canada and Quebec pension plans be amended so that the spouse who remains at home can participate in the plan, and that the feasibility be explored of one crediting to the spouse remaining at home a portion of the contributions of the employed spouse and those contributions made by the employer or the employed spouse on the employed spouse's behalf and secondly on an optional basis permitting the spouse at home to contribute as a self-employed worker.

There have been meetings as the Hon. Member for Saskatoon Centre has said with the federal and provincial authorities. To date there has not been any action and the plan has not been implemented. This is one of the high priority items on the Advisory Council of the Status of Women's list.

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women in Saskatchewan have also been working on this problem. In their report they say that they have studied the implications of the inclusion of the housewife or family home manager in the Canada Pension Plan and they have presented briefs to the Minister of Consumer Affairs in Saskatchewan, and the Minister of Social Services and the Minister of Finance in this province.

Quoting from their brief:

Believing in the premise that all Canadian citizens should be able to live in comfort and dignity upon retirement and recognizing that most people want to play a part in shaping their own destiny and convinced that concurrent with participation of the family home manager in the Canada Pension Plan there should be changes to improve its effectiveness.

The council submitted a number of resolutions to the provincial departments I mentioned.

As the Member for Saskatoon Centre has said I would agree. I am hopeful that all elected Members of this House are keenly aware, and I know many of you are aware first hand and are appreciative of the contributions made to the family and to the society by the home manager. Homemakers in the past have faced many hardships because of the lack of financial security a pension plan such as this would provide.

On behalf of the many women who would benefit from such legislation, I support the motion, realizing, of course, that there are many details that have to be worked out before such a plan could become a reality.

The Hon. Marc Lalonde has indicated that the Federal Government requires the co-operation of provincial governments before establishing a pension program for housewives. I would stress, that the provincial government has to co-operate with the Federal Government.

I would ask the Hon. Member for Saskatoon Centre to urge

his Government to co-operate with the Federal Government in the planning and implementing such a pension program for homemakers.

Before closing I should like to add an amendment and this relates back to a debate we had a few days ago regarding a piece of legislation which discriminates against women and I should like to add the following amendment.

That Resolution No. 19 be amended by adding thereto the following words:

That urges the Government of Saskatchewan to begin right here at home to recognize the valuable contribution of homemakers by amending The Automobile Accident Insurance Act to provide housewives with the same level of protection as others receive.

RULING

AMENDMENT OUT OF ORDER - RESOLUTION NO. 19

MR. SPEAKER: — In dealing with Resolution No. 19 to which an amendment has been offered, I find the amendment out of order. Let me quote from Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, Page 116, 131.

The Anticipation rule which forbids discussion of a matter standing on the Paper being forestalled is depending on the same principle as that which forbids the same question being twice raised in the same session. In applying the Anticipation rule preference is given to the discussions which led to the most effective result and this has established a descending scale of values for discussion, bills, motions, amendments etc., thus a bill must not be anticipated by discussion of a motion, amendment or subject raised on another motion. Any substantive motion standing on the paper blocks the discussion of the amendment etc.

I think it is not necessary to further recite the ruling. There is Resolution No. 21 standing on the Order Paper in the name of the Member for Regina South (Mr. Cameron). Therefore I rule the amendment out of order.

MR. E. F. A. MERCHANT (Regina Wascana): — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I may speak to the Resolution briefly. First let me say, I don't think there is any doubt, I say this to the Hon. Member for Saskatoon Centre, there is no doubt about the position this caucus takes. We join, indeed, I dare say the 95 per cent of all right thinking people in this country who would suggest that some recognition has to be made of the contribution of homemakers. But with all due respect to the Member, to suggest that it is as simple as passing this motion is indeed somewhat ludicrous. What the Member then did was he . . .

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order. I believe the Member for Regina Wascana was rising to comment on your ruling on the amendment. Am I in error there? Could be, I apologize, I am sorry.

MR. MERCHANT: — The Hon. Member for Saskatoon Centre referred us to cases like Rathwell and Murdock and various quotations, and indeed I suggest to you, Your Honour, what he was doing was, he was throwing every single solitary thing he knows about women's rights except his wife's name against the wall and hoping that some of the mud might stick, and that some impression might be made in the House.

We approve of this motion, you have heard from my colleagues. The question then becomes, what can be done about it? And how can we carry the rather simple motion forward into some meaningful piece of legislation?

The Hon. Member was kind enough to quote June Menzies, a former Liberal candidate in Winnipeg, indeed the Liberal Party has shown quite a bit of leadership in this area. The Liberal Party is very concerned about this area. At the national level the Liberal Party is clearly the only party that seems to care about women's rights and seems to care about doing something in a meaningful way, not just to talk about women's rights but to get something on the books and get some legislation through.

A problem comes in deciding how this motherhood motion would be put into a fact to include 50 per cent of the payment by the employer and 50 per cent of the payment by the employee but how to credit that to the spouse is a difficult thing. I am not saying that it is not something that couldn't be worked out. But it is one proposal, it is the proposal of June Menzies, that my friend opposite has cited and there are other proposals.

All that I say to you, Mr. Speaker, is that certainly we completely approve of this Motion.

The Hon. Member knows or should know that this is a matter which is discussed from time to time between the federal and provincial governments. It is not a simple matter to resolve. It is something that the Liberal Party at a federal level has been trying to resolve for a number of years.

Now, having said that we fully approve of the motion I suggest to Your Honour that there are things that could be done in this province. You heard an amendment, you ruled that amendment out of order. I have to say, too, Mr. Speaker, that in fairness in the amendment that I now move takes into account that discriminatory practice. The amendment that you ruled out of order is a practice by this Government of discriminating against housewives who are not employed outside of the home. Indeed, we saw that the Hon. Attorney General was downright embarrassed when he spoke to that matter in the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MERCHANT: — Now, Mr. Speaker, there are other discriminatory practices against women in general and against housewives and homemakers. I cited to you in speaking the other day to a matter about a discriminatory practice in the Department of Labour. Mr. Speaker, in that regard I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Wilkie (Miss Clifford):

That Resolution No. 19 be amended by adding thereto the following words:

And that this Assembly urge the Government of Saskatchewan to end all discriminatory practices and enactments against housewives and homemakers.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is in order and though it may cover other matters on the Order Paper it fits within the general ambit of this Resolution and I so move.

The debate continues concurrently on the motion and the amendment.

MR. B. ALLEN (Regina Rosemont): — Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words just before adjourning the debate on this Resolution. It seems to me that the Resolution of the Hon. Member for Saskatoon Centre was reasonable and it was introduced in a reasonable way. I think it does no credit to the Opposition when we are talking about something as serious as this question and on which we all agree is a problem to try and make, in my view, cheap political hay at the expense of women in this province and in this country. I think it is shameful, Mr. Speaker.

Now I am not going to get into a long tirade on this question, Mr. Speaker, because as Hon. Members know I am not moved to make long tirades at any time. But I would say that Hon. Members on the other side should know the Member for Wilkie (Miss Clifford) who I understand has moved to Kindersley in seconding this Resolution, should know that the Status of Women's Report that came down a number of years ago had this very recommendation in it. In my view and to my knowledge nothing, Mr. Speaker, has been done, nothing has been done by the government. Now in bringing in this Resolution we had no intention of criticizing in any unreasonable way the Federal Government, we are merely asking the Federal Government to take some positive action in this regard as the result of the report that they submitted to them a number of years ago.

The amendment, Mr. Speaker, I think, the Member is not in the House, I could probably use another word to describe it starting with bull and ending in something else. I won't do that because I am sure all Hon. Members wouldn't want me to be unparliamentary. But it seems to me to come in here and criticize the Provincial Government as being discriminatory is being ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. They are suggesting that in fact this Government, is being discriminatory. I have heard nothing in the Member's remarks in introducing that amendment that would in fact substantiate the claim that this Government is discriminatory. I would be interested in hearing the Hon. Member at some length on some other day, as I am sure he would be interested in hearing me at some length on some other day, so therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave to adjourn the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

RESOLUTION NO. 28 - AMENDMENT OF THE AGE OF MAJORITY ACT, 1972.

MR. G. H. PENNER (Saskatoon Eastview) moved, seconded by Mr. Cameron (Regina South):

That this Assembly urges the Government of Saskatchewan to amend Sections 46 and 47 of The Age of Majority Act,

1972 and any other legislation necessary to raise the legal drinking age to 19 years of age.

He said: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this Resolution which asks this Assembly to raise the drinking age to 19. I know that the topic is one that has been before the House previously and I know that it has had, on at least one occasion, rather impassioned debate and I hope that all Members will be prepared to do the same again.

I want to make two or three points clear before I begin, Mr. Speaker. First of all the Liberal caucus has agreed to take a look at this Resolution on an individual basis. I expect that there will be some Members of this caucus who will support the Resolution and who will vote for it; and I expect equally that there will be some Members who will vote against it and who will speak against it. I hope that the majority will support it.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that both the Members who sit to my left and the Members who sit opposite, would agree to treat the topic in the same way, and recognize that largely at least in my view we are talking about a matter that has more social implications and ramifications than any other.

Thirdly, I have placed this Resolution on the Order Paper now, Mr. Speaker, not so much with the idea that the matter would be debated now and concluded now and be voted on now; but so that all Members will have ample opportunity to consider the importance of the Resolution, to get as much feedback as they can with regard to the Resolution and eventually when it comes forward, hopefully to be able to support it. I don't want to, by saying that, in any way cut off debate or suggest that I am not interested in further debate. If it was the pleasure of the House to debate the matter this afternoon and hopefully, at least from my point of view, accept the Resolution this afternoon, nothing would please me more and nothing at this time of year would make me any happier. I want to make it perfectly clear, Mr. Speaker, having said that, that I don't want to limit debate on the issue.

There are many reasons why I have introduced this Resolution. I should like to highlight some of them at this time.

First of all since the legal drinking age was lowered, there has been a significant increase in the consumption of alcoholic beverages by young teenagers - particularly in the 14 and 15 age group. I think most of us will recognize that when the legal drinking age was 21, alcohol was available to 18 and 19 year olds. I think that most of us will also recognize that since the legal drinking age has been lowered there has been a 'filtering downward' type of phenomenon that has taken place and alcohol is much more available than used to be the case among very young teenagers.

Now, Members of the House may argue for hard statistics to support this statement. I recognize that there are not massive amounts of statistics on this point or on this argument that can be put forward. There is some evidence I think that is pertinent. A little better than a year ago two school jurisdictions in Moose Jaw took a survey among 2,445 students, which revealed that 55 per cent from the ages of 12 and up, claimed to have been involved in drinking alcohol. In addition to

studies like this one each of us can relate to local circumstances, where the incidence of alcohol use among very young teenagers is growing and we know that the incidence of alcohol abuse even at the elementary school age level is growing and that social functions attended by these young teenagers is increasingly becoming a problem.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, I should like to digress for a moment at this time and point out that I realize the issue is extremely complex. I think we all realize that the problem to which this Resolution addresses itself is tied into the entire social fabric of our community. I think we all realize, too, that raising the legal drinking age, in and of itself, is not the entire answer to a serious problem. Mass media educational programs, like the Aware program, must be continued. Enforcement may need to be stepped up. However, I maintain that despite the complexity of the overall problem, we need to confront it and begin to do something about it. I believe as well, that as legislators, we have a responsibility to show leadership, a responsibility, if you like to prick the social conscience, and in this instance, to change a law which has been shown to have more negative results than positive results.

I believe that it is the duty of the legislator to set an example which may, and I emphasize the word 'may', may produce better attitudes in the home and which may assist parents and young people in establishing responsible ground rules for the use of alcohol.

Now, I shall go on to a second reason why I brought this forward. In this connection, I want to draw the attention of Members of the House to an article which is found in the May-June, 1975 issue of The Saskatchewan Motorist. I should like to quote from it, Mr. Speaker, if I may. It says this:

A study conducted by researchers at the University of Western Ontario indicates that lowering the drinking age from 21 to 18 increases the number of alcohol related collisions not only among drivers aged 18 to 20, but also among 16 and 17 year olds. An examination of accident records in London, Ontario, revealed that when the drinking age was lowered to 18 in Ontario in 1971, alcohol-related collisions among 18-20 year-olds rose 174 per cent the first year after the change and 14 per cent the second year. Among 16 and 17-year-olds, alcohol related collisions went up 63 per cent the first year and 108 per cent the second year. The researchers concluded that the younger teenagers were now 'passing' for 18 to obtain alcoholic beverages as the older teens had previously passed for 21.

In another study, Mr. Speaker, this time in Michigan, the Automobile Club of that state published figures to show that in the first year of legal drinking for 18 to 20 year-olds, significant negative results were evident. In the first year that 18-20 year-olds could buy alcohol legally, the incident of traffic accidents by this age group rose 119 per cent. Drinking drivers in this age group accounted for a 54 per cent increase in fatal accidents. The 18-20 age group, according to the same study, accounted for a 104 per cent increase in injuries and a 135 per cent increase in property damage.

And now, Mr. Speaker, to further show how the statistics mount against the present drinking age, let us examine some additional facts. In Saskatchewan, the increase in drinking driving convictions during the time when the age was being lowered, between 1970 and 1973 was 214 per cent.

Impaired driving convictions in metropolitan Toronto for those in the 18-20 year-old category rose by 900 per cent after the Ontario law was changed and lowered the legal drinking age to 18.

An article in the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix of December 4, 1975 cites further statistics which I think are germane to this argument:

In Alberta traffic deaths among 16 to 19 year-olds went up nearly eight fold, to 23 from 3, in the three months after the legal drinking age was lowered to 18.

Additional statistics in the same article, Mr. Speaker, convey the following:

A 1970 survey of metropolitan Toronto schools found 46 per cent of students in grades seven to 13 admitted drinking.

I want to give that to you again, this is in 1970, 46 per cent of the kids in grades seven to 13 admitted involvement with alcohol. But after the drinking age was lowered to 18, 74 per cent of the kids admitted that they were involved in drinking.

In Newfoundland, the legal drinking age was lowered to 18 in 1972. After this change became law, not only did 95 per cent of students replying to a questionnaire admit to drinking, but 27 per cent said they drove while doing so.

If I could go back to Ontario again for a moment, Mr. Speaker, the number of impaired drivers aged 16 to 19, picked up in 1973 tripled the 1970 figure. And again I want Members of the House to realize that we are talking about the time frame from before the age was lowered to when the age was brought down to 18. The number of impaired drivers in the 16 to 19 age group tripled. These are statistics, taken from an Ontario study, Drinking-driving in the Province of Ontario, published in August 1974 show the following, and if Members opposite or Members in the Conservative caucus or Members in my own caucus have not seen this I think it is worth taking a few moments to look at it. The book is available in the Library and it will be going back later this afternoon. It says:

The percentage of drivers involved in accidents rose most sharply in the 16 to 19 age group - from just over four per cent of the alcohol related accidents in 1970 just over 4 per cent of the alcohol related accidents in 1970 to just under 10 per cent in 1973.

At the same time figures for other age groups quoted from the same study show a rise in the alcohol related accident rate as follows: Ages 20-24 up from 8.5 per cent to 10.8 per cent. Notice how small the increase is in these other age groups. 25-34 from 8.8 to 9.2, a very small percentage increase; 35-44 no change; 45-54 from 7.5 to 8.0, just a half per cent increase.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that these figures are rather significant. I hope Members of the House have noted them. Just to be sure that they have, I want to go through them again. The largest percentage increase of drivers in Ontario involved in alcohol related accidents above the age of 20 was only 2.3 per cent, yet among the 16-19 year old group the percentage changed during that time, the time that the age was lowered from 21 - 18 was an increase of 10 per cent or nearly three times that of any other age group.

A further Ontario study is reported in a 1975 book, "Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety". And again if Members are interested and I hope that Members would be interested, here it is, it has a lot of good material in it. It is a book which summarizes the Sixth International Conference of Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety and there is one chapter of the book, The Effect of Lowering and Legal Drinking Age in Ontario on Alcohol-Related Motor Vehicle Accidents, where it uses a statistical analysis to determine whether or not increase in alcohol related accidents among teenagers while the drinking age was lowered, is merely coincidence or not.

While I do not wish to bore the House, Mr. Speaker, by reading through the statistical analysis I have drawn to your attention the fact that it is there and if Members want to examine it in detail, they can. It is sufficient for my purpose, the purpose of putting evidence before the House to take one quotation from it and that is:

Most of the reported increases in 1971 in the proportion of 16 - 19 year old drinking drivers in accidents is the result of lowering the drinking age rather than the continuation of an earlier trend.

Let's take a look at the situation in Alberta again for a moment, Mr. Speaker. A report, and again I will make passing reference to it, titled the Edmonton Study, the Impact of a Drinking-Driving Campaign, published in 1973, makes the following point. Again I want to quote from it:

Another great cause for alarm is the accident involvement of our young people. Drivers in the 16 to 19 age group make up 19 per cent of all drivers but they account for 30 per cent of all accidents, 37 per cent of all fatal accidents. For many years researchers say most of us have put this down to a lack of driving experience. (While this may be partly true they go on) it is now becoming tragically clear that alcohol is very much involved.

Mr. Speaker, another reason for bringing this matter before the House in addition to the increased incidents of drinking among teenagers, and the frightening statistics regarding increases in alcohol related accidents among young teenagers, is to bring to the Members' attention, a resolution passed by Saskatoon City Council on July 2 of this year. That resolution asked the Provincial Government to raise the legal drinking age to 20. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House should understand that I put that resolution to Saskatoon City Council and that it was passed by a vote of 8 to 3. I think that vote is significant, it represents a substantial majority of locally elected people who in turn represent better than 10 per cent of the population of the province.

Now Members may well ask why it was, if I put that resolution to Saskatoon City Council with the age 20 in it, I would then bring it before this House and put in the age 19, and I notice that the Member for Saskatoon-Buena Vista (Mr. Rolfes) is nodding his head. It is a very simple matter, Mr. Speaker, because in speaking to Members of my own caucus, in speaking to some Members opposite and some Members in the caucus to my left, it became evident that the matter had a better chance of passing this House if the age that was brought in was the age of 19 than it had if the age was brought in at 20. Mr. Speaker, I feel so strongly about the need for this House to take the lead in this matter that I changed the age here hoping that in fact it did have a better chance, and that it would pass this House.

Some Members may argue, Mr. Speaker, that since the overall age of majority is 18 and since at that age young people may vote and are generally considered to be adults, that there should be no change in the drinking age. I urge Members if they feel that way to consider the argument carefully. I urge them to consider the tremendous impact that alcohol is having on our youth, to consider the medical and sociological evidence, to remember that young people have been encouraged to take a more relaxed, less responsible attitude toward alcohol, partly and I say only partly, but I think it is a significant part, because legislators have allowed a more relaxed set of laws with regard to the legal drinking age to accumulate on the statute books of this province and other provinces and other countries.

Let us not be taken in by the old argument about how certain European countries with very liberalized liquor laws seem to have no problem. Instead let us remember that countries like France and Italy and Germany have higher proportions of alcoholics to the general population than any other countries in the world. We need to keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, that since the legal drinking age has been lowered, there has been an increase in the number of teenage alcoholics, a fact which I do not believe to be a coincidence. Let us also remember the problem which has been created among senior high schools and senior high school students who can now leave classes at noon, have a beer in a pub at noon hour, then return to classes after lunch. This creates a serious problem for schools, a problem, Mr. Speaker, which has already been identified. I think Members will recall a letter which came from the principals of the Saskatoon Collegiates in April of 1975 and I think was circulated through the Hon. Member for Arm River (Mr. Faris) who I am sorry is not in the House today because, having read other debates, he feels pretty strongly about this issue. I think this letter was circulated to all Members of the House at that time. I want to refer you to it, because it makes some pretty significant points.

Because there are 18 year old students in our schools, we find that there is conflict between the provincial law and The School Act. For example, an 18-year old student may imbibe over the noon hour only to return to classes later. This student is permitted to drink legally on one hand and yet is acting in defiance of school law and regulations on the other.

Second the letter goes on to say this:

We find that the use of alcoholic beverages is increasing

in our society, yet the costs of off-setting the problems of alcoholism are increasing too. Surely we should not be guilty of making liquor more available to our young people and then trying to call a halt to the later problems that the use of alcohol causes. We fail to see the logic in the Government's thinking.

Thirdly:

Another deleterious effect of lowering the drinking age is that this results in younger and younger children getting their hand on alcohol when the legal age was lowered to 18, we found that minor of 14 were now obtaining liquor from the 18-year olds. In fact, drinking in elementary schools formerly unheard of is now a reasonably common occurrence. Increasing the legal age of drinking would make it more difficult for these very young vulnerable people to obtain liquor.

Mr. Speaker, after the resolution which I referred to earlier that I put to Saskatoon City Council, I had the opportunity to speak on a nation wide CBC radio program and the publicity given to the topic through the Saskatoon media and the CBC radio program produced an interesting response. I have had communication by letter and through conversation supporting the move, that is, the move to raise the drinking age back to 19 - from parents, from teachers, from bartenders, from people who operate licensed premises in hotels, from recreation leaders, from church people, from university students, from police officials, and from coroners.

I want to quote from one letter, Mr. Speaker, from a coroner in the city of Medicine Hat. He said in part:

I can recall when the drinking age in Alberta was lowered to 18. I must admit at the time I was quite in favor of it, because I felt it would stop some of the drinking in automobiles which was then very prevalent. Maybe it did do that but I agree with you that it has produced other problems, such as the juvenile drinker you mentioned in your interview. I am very interested in this problem being a coroner for the city of Medicine Hat, a position which I have held since 1949. In this time, I have seen the results of heavy drinking on many occasions in the fatal accidents that I have had to investigate.

He goes on to say this:

My personal observations are that it is a pity that they ever did change the drinking age but this is an attitude that I have developed in the past few years. As I said above, previously I was in favor of it, my thinking being at the time that if one was old enough to fight for one's country, one was probably old enough to take a drink. Unfortunately (he says) the two are not related.

Mr. Speaker, I know full well that raising the legal drinking age will not be a universally popular step. I realize too, that one talks of attitudinal changes one must rely on increased educational efforts and that there may be a need for stricter enforcement. There may also be a need for re-thinking such factors as the physical location of drinking establishments, making it mandatory that non-alcoholic beverages be served at more reasonable prices in licensed premises. We should be

looking at the hours when licensed premises can operate and continuing to help people become aware that alcohol is by far our greatest drug problem.

I realize too, Mr. Speaker, that the magnitude of doing all that may prevent us from doing anything. It is because of that I move this resolution.

MR. S. J. CAMERON (Regina South): — Mr. Speaker, I want in seconding the resolution of my colleague to speak not so much to the direct point that he raised as to the way in which the resolution might be handled in the House and indeed, the whole question of free votes within the House. I want to urge all Members and Members opposite to consider particularly, giving to Members of the Assembly a free vote on this question.

The strengths of this institution obviously are many, but indeed so are the weaknesses. The tradition of the House which requires such a high degree of party discipline, among Government Members in particular, but among Opposition Members as well, is we think becoming too firmly entrenched within the traditions of the House. We think we should be encouraging some relaxation in this tight discipline and fostering a greater degree of individuality and independence in Members.

We think that new Members have a particular responsibility in this respect and I say that because we have not come as yet to accept some of the traditions of the House as fixed for all time and incapable of change. We have not in a sense become necessarily resigned to some of the weaknesses that we observe in some of the traditions. I think we may more than the older Members be of a more critical mind with respect to some of the traditions of which I speak.

We wonder about the tradition of the House that requires Members, seemingly almost invariably, to divide along party lines even with respect to resolutions of this kind, resolutions which require neither government expenditure nor are in respect of any philosophical position. It would not be, to illustrate my point, an embarrassment to the government if we had a free vote in respect of this issue and we raised the drinking age back to 19. We have been urging a greater use in our work thus far in this Session of intersessional committees and standing committees of the House. We did that in respect of the potash legislation by urging it go to an intersessional committee or a standing committee of the House. We have done it too with respect to the snowmobile amendments that were introduced by the Government. We suggested that these matters be referred more often to intersessional committees of private Members particularly where additional study and public hearings would be of value. If these suggestions were followed we think the usefulness, the value and the individual contribution of the Members would be enhanced enormously. Indeed in the process we think the reputation of the Legislature itself would be enlarged.

Now in the same way and in an effort to accomplish the same ends, we want to urge upon the Government and particularly the House Leader that we allow this Resolution to come to a free vote and that we not vote in respect of this Resolution necessarily along party lines.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CAMERON: — In an effort to persuade the House Leader to permit that to happen, we say that we see no harm in this suggestion; no harm can befall the Government. And on the other hand, there is much merit in terms of the Members playing a more useful and meaningful role.

The Members, as all Members will know, particularly after an election period, are very often the subject of criticism by Members of the public. We, on this side of the House tend to be criticized because we are seen so often to be critical of government and negative in terms of our approach. As I said speaking one other time in this House with respect to that question, that that is a malady which is suffered inherently by Oppositions because of the nature or the way in which an opposition must necessarily operate. We have been trying, with some degree of success, to be more positive in our approach than perhaps has been the traditions and as I say with some degree of success, I think even in the six weeks we have been here. That is the kind of criticism that is directed toward us. The kind of criticism that is directed toward Members of the Government side, that is those Members outside the Cabinet, the backbenchers is that they are mere mindless numbers, to rise when called upon to support the Government in what it wants to do. I don't say that with any disrespect. I say to you merely that in the public mind that is often thought, that you, the backbenchers, are merely mindless Members, mindless numbers. I know that isn't so.

MR. ALLEN: — You know how those Liberals lie.

MR. CAMERON: — Well, if my friend didn't hear that in his own seat, he either didn't get around very much or wasn't listening very carefully. Because that is a very common complaint among people.

What I say to you is that we know that Opposition backbenchers contribute more meaningfully than the public realizes but much of your work isn't seen; it isn't apparent. What we should be doing in the House as a whole is beginning to make some of your positive work more apparent in the same way that we should be making some of our positive work more apparent. Because not only would it reflect better upon us individually at a time when we are, as politicians, under some attack but indeed it would enhance the reputation of this institution itself.

We think that the individual contributions of Government Members if they were free to vote as they would on resolutions of this kind, would as I say not only enhance their own reputations but enhance the reputation of the institution of Parliament itself.

I know, for example, the Member for Quill Lakes, the Member for Kinistino, and one or two other Members with whom I have had discussions about this very thing, will generally agree. In respect of private Members' resolutions of a serious and important kind, that do not effect philosophical questions, and don't call upon Government spending and don't reverse, in effect, some government position, we ought to be free to vote on them as our consciences and as our judgments and as our common sense would dictate.

Private Members' day, and I give this to you from the perspective of a new Member, is a useful day, no question of that. But, thus far it has been more in the nature of a forum for talk than for decision. That in itself is of some value but I think if we were given to making more decisions of a positive kind occasionally, Private Members' day would become more meaningful and more important. So I urge upon the House Leader and I urge upon the Government two things. (1) That you permit this Resolution to come to a vote, that we not adjourn it but vote on it, and (2) I urge the Government opposite to allow its non-Cabinet Members to cast a free vote, dictated as I said by what they individually think of this matter rather than that dictated by Government and party discipline.

I think Private Members' day would be so very much more meaningful, and the reputation of the institution among the public would rise, if we would do this more often. I can't think of a better resolution in respect of where to start than the one before us. I am happy to second the resolution of my colleague, I will cast a free vote on it. I urge the House Leader and the Government to consider freeing its Member so they too can cast a free vote.

MR. J. R. KOWALCHUK (Melville): — Mr. Speaker, just a couple of remarks in response to the Member for Regina South. I should like the Hon. Member to know that in this House, we as a Government, and we as the backbenchers here have had the free vote many times. In fact there is no control at any time on questions of this kind.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOWALCHUK: — I can think of a number, like the medical age of consent, and a number of others, that indeed the backbenchers on this side have had the free vote. I am very sorry to day that I have been here since 1967, and I don't recall any other times that the former Liberal government from 1967 to 1971, I don't recall any time that they have ever called on a free vote.

However, I think the idea is not a bad one. But I am sure we don't need any instructions from the Opposition Members as to how the Members on this side of the House should vote, we certainly are capable of thinking of "moral questions" and "moral issues" and dealing with them as we think best.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOWALCHUK: — I listened with a great deal of interest to the Member for Saskatoon Eastview express his remarks to the resolution dealing with the age of drinking. And, by the way, I wondered for a while after hearing the Member for Regina South as to whether we were discussing a resolution on the age of drinking, Resolution No. 28, or the rigidity of voting along party lines. I wasn't sure what we were debating. I did listen very carefully to the Member for Saskatoon Eastview express his remarks, about increasing the age from 18 to 19. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, this is a most crucial and may I say, agonizing question. The use and the abuse of alcohol, not just by the young but by many other people as well. We are indeed aware of those problems. This Government will in this Session take steps to deal with some of these problems, Mr. Speaker.

We are right now favored with a resolution which in itself I really don't think does very much. Personally, I don't believe that changes in legislation no matter how harsh, will bring the kind of results that most of us, and that means all of us in this House, are looking for. Mr. Speaker, it is the acceptance of a drug or alcohol by society in general, that is the cause of most of those problem areas. That is, acceptance of the use of alcohol or drug or whatever other habit forming product is in use, is predominant in our society, is accepted and practised by adults and shrugged off by the adult society then I am afraid that the raising of the age by one year, or even legislating much harsher laws will not really affect to any great degree different attitudes in use of alcohol and so on.

Society will have to look at this whole complex problem, every one of us, as a matter of urgent concern, in the interest of all of society, but all of society, not just the young people. The problems here, I agree with the Member for Saskatoon Eastview, are urgent and are real. Because I consider the subject of a matter of vital importance and particularly as it concerns young people, and because in general I think that The Age of Majority Act should be retained, and I think that this question should be talked about and should be taken back home and discussed with other people, and particularly because we should consult the young people and the older people, I therefore beg leave to adjourn the debate, Mr. Speaker.

Debate adjourned.

RESOLUTION NO. 31 - RAISE NET WORTH TO \$100,000 FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR FARMSTART ASSISTANCE.

MR. A. N. McMILLAN (Kindersley) moved, seconded by Mr. J. Wiebe (Morse):

That this Assembly urges the Government of Saskatchewan to recognize the increasing costs of farming and the constantly rising value of farm inputs and equipment and immediately raise to \$100,000 the maximum net worth farmers are allowed to have and still be eligible for Farmstart Assistance.

MR. A. N. McMILLAN (Kindersley): — Mr. Speaker, the Resolution No. 31 that is on the Order Paper is really self-evident, I think. It is a resolution which recognizes the fact that there have been some positive contributions made to rural Saskatchewan and to agriculture in Saskatchewan by the Farmstart Program in general. The program has met with considerable criticism from this side of the House on previous occasions. No doubt it will again in the future. This Resolution itself is an attempt to improve the present Government's Farmstart program.

Many young farmers and those people particularly who qualify for Farmstart Assistance or people who did qualify two years ago or would have qualified two or three years ago, today find themselves without any assistance from the Government of Saskatchewan as far as making their farm units more viable.

Basically, the problem that has arisen in the past two or three years has been the result of inflation. Farmstart programs stated that anyone who had net assets in excess of \$60,000

didn't qualify for Farmstart assistance. Two or three years ago this level may have been adequate. Today it is far from adequate. No one seems to be exactly sure what percentage of increase there has been in the cost of overall farming operations in Saskatchewan in the past two or three years, but I as a farmer, and those of the rest of you in this House who are in the agricultural business are well aware that the increase in costs has been considerable.

For a specific example, land in and around my home town of Plenty, Saskatchewan, that three years ago sold for \$175 and \$185 an acre, is now selling for \$400 an acre. A quarter section of land at home now sells for no less than \$64,000. The Farmstart program has been set up to provide assistance for small farmers, for young farmers just getting started, to help them expand their operations. Apparently, the Government opposite felt that a \$60,000 limit was where you would reach the break even point or you were over the crest and with \$60,000 worth of net assets under you, you should be able to handle your expansion and growth of your farming operation on your own. And apparently anyone who didn't have \$60,000 worth of assets could use the assistance from the Government. As well, if someone had \$40,000 worth of assistance the program just briefly worked that they were eligible for \$20,000 worth of assistance from Farmstart. I believe in 1974 the average Farmstart loan was in the neighborhood of \$21,000.

The situation has changed as I said, considerably in the last two or three years. The one big change has been the increase in the market value of land and this has driven net assets of young farmers up, as I said, drastically in the past two or three years. In my own area, it has practically doubled the net value of many small farmers who may have been willed or purchased a quarter section of land four or five years ago for a price of \$32,000. The market assessment of that land is now in the neighbourhood of \$60,000, thus they are no longer eligible for Farmstart assistance. The same situation applies with machinery as it does with land. All Members of this House are well aware of the increased costs of farm machinery. The capital costs that are involved in setting yourself up with farm machinery necessary to make your farming operation viable.

The same situation exists with farm buildings and improvements. Digging a well, casing a well, laying plastic pipe for water, the cost is astronomical now compared to what it was two or three years ago.

This Resolution asks this Provincial Government to recognize the fact that young farmers struggling to become viable have been left out in the cold through no fault of their own. This Government has the opportunity to very easily put them back, at least in this particular instance on an even footing with inflation simply by raising the limits of net assets that young farmers can have to \$100,000. You have the opportunity not only to help young farmers get started in Saskatchewan but to help them become viable. We say that in order to do this, you have to update your Farmstart legislation.

It is for that reason that I move this Resolution, seconded by the Member for Morse (Mr. Wiebe).

MR. J. WIEBE (Morse): — Mr. Speaker, in speaking briefly to the Resolution as presented. First of all let me get into some of the history of the Farmstart program. Members opposite who were in the Legislature a few years back will recall that the Members on this side of the House voted in favor of the implementation of the Farmstart program.

We voted in favor of the Farmstart program basically because what Farmstart did was amalgamate the majority of the programs which a Liberal Government had introduced and put them now into one package and called it the Farmstart program.

As I mentioned we had no opposition to this particular bill. At that time we had what we felt were constructive suggestions in which to improve the Farmstart legislation. One of the suggestions when the Bill was introduced was to raise the limit from \$60,000 to \$100,000. The need for that increase to \$100,000 is much more important now than it was at that time in light of the very high increase in costs which farmers now are encountering as has been adequately explained by the Member for Kindersley.

As well one of the improvements that we asked the Government to look into at that time was the way in which the Farmstart program was being handled. We disagreed with the fact that Farmstart was going to be handled by the Government itself, it was going to be handled again in turn by civil servants. We felt that this wasn't required as it was a duplication of services that were already being provided to the people of Saskatchewan by our credit unions and by our banks. Our suggestion at that time and my feeling is just as strong today is that instead of hiring extra people, extra offices, extra staff to service the Farmstart program, that we allow our chartered banks and our credit unions to do that very thing. The Government, in turn, could still provide the maximum of \$8,000 grant to qualifying farmers and could still provide the lower interest rate of six and one-half per cent by subsidizing to the banks and the credit unions the difference in the interest rate. This in turn would cost the taxpayers of this province less money, the taxpayers of this province then would not have to pay for the extremely high operation costs of this particular program.

I would sincerely hope that in the years ahead that the Government will eventually look upon our suggestions as being constructive and give the banks and credit unions in this province an opportunity to participate in the Farmstart program and to make their services available on such a program to the farmers throughout the Province of Saskatchewan.

I might go on, Mr. Speaker, to list some of the reasons why we feel that our banks and credit unions should be looking after this program instead of the Government, and one of them might be some of the comment which I received during the June 11th election campaign, when I had an opportunity to call on approximately 80 per cent of my constituents.

MR. ROMANOW: — Oh, Jack!

MR. WIEBE: — The Attorney General just quietly under his breath seems to doubt my word. Let me for the edification of the Attorney General say that my campaign in the Morse constituency

did not start on the day that the writ was issued but it started in October of 1974. The reason why that campaign started in October, Mr. Attorney General, was because the Morse constituency was considered as one of the safest NDP constituencies in the Province of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WIEBE: — Not only was there an NDP Member representing about one-third of the new constituency from the former Gravelbourg area but also half of the new Morse constituency was represented by the former Minister of Municipal Affairs, Mr. Everett Wood. They managed to leave a little bit of my old Morse constituency to go along with me and at the day that the writ was issued according to the 1971 election results the NDP candidate had an advantage of 735 votes. You go back to the 1967 election and you will find that the NDP candidate even at that time on the new boundaries had a majority, an edge of something like 250 votes. So, Mr. Speaker, I realized that in order to win the Morse constituency that the people of that constituency had to know and understand the activities of the Government in the past four years and the only way that they were going to know and understand that was to have the message brought to them personally. I attempted to do this and in a matter of about eight months, Mr. Attorney General, I contacted personally about 80 per cent of the people in the Morse constituency.

The results of that visitation, Mr. Speaker, speaks for itself in the fact that I am now sitting in this Legislative Assembly. While, as the Member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. MacDonald) says, landslide Wiebe, with a whopping majority of 15, I consider that a majority of 735 plus 15, which works out to a majority of 750 votes, Mr. Attorney General.

Now getting back to the Farmstart program . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — I'll bet it was a big . . .

MR. WIEBE: — Many of the constituents whom I called on to see who had taken advantage of the Farmstart program commented, "Yes, we like the program, it's a good program. It gave me an opportunity to get started in a small dairy or in a small hog operation." But the thing that they didn't like was the fact that once they had obtained the loan, once they were in operation someone from the Department of Agriculture was dropping in to see them every three to four months and they as well felt that it wasn't quite necessary that the Government of the day ask them about their personal business as well as the operations of their farm. They didn't feel that it was necessary that the Government knew how much they spent each month for groceries, how much they spent on vacations and so on, and these were the questions that were asked by the Government representatives who called in to see them. What they suggested and this is, in turn, a suggestion that we made, that by dealing with their bank or their credit union once they had obtained the loan as long as they kept up their payments they never heard hide nor hair from their banker. The banker didn't bother them. The banker didn't know or want to know from month to month what they were doing with their other assets. I think, Mr. Speaker, that this is extremely vital, why in the world should a government be inquiring into what the farmers are doing every three or four months of

the year. Again, another good reason why the Government should be allowing our present institutions throughout the province to take part in a program which we consider a good program, if some of the suggestions which we constructively give to you at this time and which we constructively gave to you three years ago, were implemented.

Let me go on, Mr. Speaker. Now after patting the Government on the back, let me offer a little bit of criticism of some of the ways in which they have handled the Farmstart program. I go back to another constituent of mine who unfortunately was one of the first applicants under the new Farmstart program. The Government in its rush to prove the value of the Farmstart program either admittedly or indirectly encouraged this particular farmer to go into a program which was too far over his head and much too large a program to go into. It was what was considered one of the first loans to establish a hog operation in the Province of Saskatchewan. That took place three years ago and to date there has not yet been a hog put into that hog barn. Now I don't want to blame the Government for this and I don't want to blame the individual but this particular farmer and his son now find themselves in extreme difficulty. The total cost of the project now is running in the neighborhood of \$220,000. I am presently working with the Minister of Agriculture hoping to be able to salvage something out of this program not only for the Provincial Government but also for the farmer and son involved. The criticism that I have is that the offer to relieve the Government and the farmer of their obligation is such that it has left this particular farmer with nothing but the shirt on his back.

To go back a little bit in history, the farmer had a job, it was a good job. He had three quarters of land he did some mixed farming, a few cattle, a few hogs and some grain. He decided to take advantage of the Farmstart program so he and his son together applied. Again, whether it was because of the Government or whether they did it unknowingly, he was encouraged to go into a barn much too large in view of the experience which he had or for his capabilities of repaying that particular loan. He now finds that by settling he is not only going to lose the barn which he built but he is also going to lose the three quarters of land, also his machinery and equipment and he is going to be left only with the house trailer which he had and the shirt on his back. He had to quit his job in order to qualify under a Farmstart loan. This has left him in the position now because of his age that he is not able to get his old job back again. So, here again, Mr. Speaker, had private business been involved, had the credit union or the local bank been involved in this particular application, the individuals would not now find themselves in this embarrassing situation nor would the Farmstart program find themselves in that position.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WIEBE: — I may have sounded a bit vague in my comments regarding this situation and I say, Mr. Speaker, that I did that purposely. I don't believe that it is proper at this time to make known the persons' names who are involved in this. My only reason for doing this is to point out some of the pitfalls that can befall a program that is considered top heavy from the Civil Service end and also when one involves new civil servants who have not had the proper training when implementing a program

as new as this one.

If some of the Members doubt the authenticity, if that is the proper word, of what I am saying I invite them to come over and have a talk with me and we will go over and have a talk with the Minister of Agriculture about it and he will verify anything that I am saying.

I am hoping, Mr. Speaker, that prior to spring seeding that the difficulties which Farmstart and this particular farmer are now encountering will be resolved to the benefit of both the Government and the farmer himself.

Now going on with some of the visitations which I have made during that very excellent campaign, let me just briefly say that I endorse the Resolution as presented by the Member for Kindersley. I ask that the Government and the Members opposite seriously look at the suggestions which we have made. I don't think that we are asking anything unreasonable nor are we asking anything that Government Members cannot support when we ask that that limit of net worth be raised to \$100,000. I don't believe that we are being too generous. I think that by raising this limit you are going to encourage more young people to take advantage of the program and diversify their farm operations. There is no doubt, as has been in the past, that with farming you cannot put your eggs in one basket, you cannot be strictly a grain farmer, you cannot be strictly a hog producer, nor can you be strictly a cattleman. I feel that you must have diversification, to take advantage of the highs and the lows that may occur in each and every segment of the agricultural industry. For this reason, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to support and second this Resolution.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. L. M. LARSON (Pelly): — Mr. Speaker, I am quite interested in rising to take part in debate on this Resolution. I suppose I can forgive the Member for Kindersley (Mr. McMillan) for so seemingly innocently introducing it. After all he is brand-new, after all he doesn't really remember or know the action and the attitude of his colleagues when Farmstart and the Land Bank legislation were being introduced. Because of his ignorance of the facts as they existed at that time he could quite easily and quite handily be cajoled into innocently bringing in this kind of a resolution.

MR. MOSTOWAY: — Manipulated.

MR. LARSON: — The Member for Morse of course never ceases to amaze us. He said he was a bit disjointed, I would call him totally disjointed. What his campaign in Morse had to do with raising the net worth of Farmstart is not relevant. But, of course, as usual the Liberal Party is trying to repent I suppose for some of its sins, repent because of the attitudes they took toward Farmstart and the Land Bank, and are now trying to get on probably a new ground floor to gain a little bit of glory. The jaundiced and the slanted and prejudiced view that the Member for Morse expressed is certainly indicative of the dilemma they find themselves in.

AN HON. MEMBER: — I thought you were talking about the Member for Thunder

Creek (Mr. Thatcher).

MR. LARSON: — Well, the Member for Thunder Creek hasn't spoken in this debate. I had hoped he would because I would have enjoyed listening to his prejudiced views as well.

MR. ROMANOW: — Colin is too smart to get into this debate.

MR. LARSON: — That's right. Again, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals of course totally miss the purpose of the Farmstart program. They have missed it completely and totally and now they are trying to get in on the ground floor and to gain a little bit of political advantage by doing this. It won't work. You know, if it was that simple as having the credit unions, the banks and the finance companies finance this kind of a thing, it would have been very easy, it would have been no problem. We have the Farm Improvement Loan, we have the Farm Credit Corporation, we have banks, we have credit unions, we have private finance. And, of course, Members if they were really sincere and honest in what they are saying they should say, well, why do we need Farmstart.

MR. ROMANOW: — They are private enterprisers.

MR. LARSON: — They are private enterprisers, is right. They believe in that. The point that they completely miss and they completely ignore, and they completely refuse to tell the people about Farmstart I think, is that these applicants can't qualify when they go to these other sources. They go to the Farm Improvement Loan, and oh, you have got to have somebody that's nearly a millionaire to back you; or you have got to have a whole bunch of clear titles or they won't look at you. The same with the Farm Credit Corporation and all the rest of them. Farmstart, Mr. Speaker, was designed to help a special group of farmers who could not get financial assistance anywhere else.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LARSON: — This is what the Members opposite refuse to concede, they ignore this, they try to confuse and they try to distort and now they are trying repentantly to get in on some of the ground floor. It has been a good program, Mr. Speaker, and I don't wonder that they are jealous of it. It is really a major part of this Government's effort to strengthen rural communities of Saskatchewan. Agriculture is the major basis of our economy and therefore the Government acted and did something to strengthen that portion of our vital economy. Under the Liberals we had the decline of the smaller centres, we saw the decline of farm numbers, we saw the adaptation of large farming practices and we saw it go totally unchecked. Under this system production per acre was held constant or even dropped while the number of acres per farm has increased consistently which is, of course, entirely within the philosophy of the Liberal Party. Our rural communities needed a broader, more intensive production base to perpetuate their viability. Farmstart is a part of this Government's efforts to provide that base. Loans and grants are made available to farmers to facilitate their adoption of

intensive production practices through the addition or expansion of livestock operations. These long-term loans at reasonable interest rates and yes, Mr. Member for Thunder Creek, subsidized. I make no apology for that. This has filled a gap that certainly was left wide open by other credit sources. Through the years of eligibility criteria the assistance has been aimed at those who are least able to finance the expansion needed. It has proven extremely successful and an extremely popular program in spite of what my friend for Morse is trying to say.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LARSON: — Certainly we have some people and some farmers that are in trouble, but these farmers wouldn't have had a chance if it wasn't for Farmstart. They would have been total casualties.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LARSON: — They would have been left broke as they were under the long, lean Liberal years. They would have been gone, either to British Columbia, Ontario, Alberta or somewhere outside the province. Since the program began operation in the fall of 1973, only two short years, 2,500 applications to build up intensive production have been approved.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LARSON: — A capital commitment of some \$66,774,000 has been invested in the farming sector. Farmstart has and will continue to have a very major impact on the agricultural production face of Saskatchewan and thereby the viability of the province's rural communities.

AN HON. MEMBER: — In spite of the Liberals.

MR. LARSON: — In spite of the Liberals, right.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. LARSON: — Now the Liberals are saying we should increase net worth to \$100,000. I should like to ask the Hon. Member for Kindersley (Mr. McMillan) just where he arrived at that magic figure of \$100,000?

MR. ROMANOW: — Just like this, Leonard!

MR. LARSON: — Yes, just like that. Someone probably said you know this is the kind of a figure that might embarrass the Government most so I think we'll just use it. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the \$100,000 figure may not be any more relevant today than \$60,000 was. I suggest that the department and the Farmstart people are certainly in position to, with some real intelligence, know what that figure ought to be. I am not prepared to support \$100,000. I think probably \$60,000 leaves something to be desired. But my chief concern is that we get young men that do want to get established and who are spurned by the other commercial lending institutions get their start through Farmstart.

If they stake \$60,000 or \$100,000 or \$150,000, I'm prepared to support it. At this moment I don't think that the \$100,000 is the magic figure.

I want to do some research into it and I'm going to be looking into it and I will be checking and therefore I beg leave, Mr. Speaker, to adjourn the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

**RESOLUTION NO. 33 - TO STUDY THE FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIP TO
CHANGE TRADITIONAL TAXING PATTERNS.**

MRS. E. G. EDWARDS (Saskatoon-Sutherland) moved, seconded by Mr. Penner (Saskatoon Eastview):

That this Assembly urges the Government of Saskatchewan to appoint a Commission to study the financial relationship between the Provincial Government and municipalities in this province with the view to changing traditional taxing patterns and allowing municipalities to enter into definite tax-sharing agreements with the Provincial Government.

She said: Mr. Speaker, speaking to Resolution No. 33, in these days we are concerned about inflation and some say it is the number one problem in Canada, and perhaps in Saskatchewan. One of the problems that residents of our urban municipalities might put as the number one problem, ahead of inflation, is the ever-increasing property taxes, increasing to a point where many feel they are unbearable and they are hitting hardest on the low income and those on limited incomes. This problem is particularly acute in our larger urban centres where the communities are expanding so rapidly that the demand and cost for new services and more services are far outstripping the ability of local governments to meet spiralling capital and operating costs. When I speak of services I mean services such a sewer and water, bus services, roads, new schools, education programs, community health programs, recreation programs, police and fire protection, snow removal, and many others.

Mr. Speaker, it is well known, particularly by all in this Assembly, that the local government is a creature of the provincial government, receiving their powers as set out in The Urban Municipalities Act.

Local governments have only one way of receiving revenues and that's through the property tax. I realize that in the past and at the present time to supplement the property tax that local governments levy, they have received from their senior governments, the provincial government, grants of varying amounts from time to time, not based on any particular formula but a variety of formulas, grants to schools, police grants, recreation grants and others. And these grants have helped to ease the burden of property taxes to our citizens. However, Mr. Speaker, I believe this method of municipal financing, a method of property taxes supplemented by provincial grants, is a method that is quickly becoming outdated and outmoded.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MRS. EDWARDS: — Local governments in our urban municipalities are responsible governments duly elected by the people in their communities. I believe that local governments are responsible and mature enough to now enter into a new financial arrangement and relationship with their senior partner, the provincial government. I believe that urban municipalities should receive revenues to supplement the property tax, not based on the old system of property taxes supplemented with grants which come at the whim and pleasure of the provincial government. I think they should receive funds based on a formula that would recognize their maturity and responsibility, a formula that would assure them of a legitimate share in provincial revenues. In this way as the fortunes of the province would increase the fortunes of local municipal governments would also increase.

The Government of Saskatchewan and this Assembly, if it would pass this Resolution, have the opportunity to take the lead in discussions and to start a new trend in the relationship with the local governments.

There have been many conferences on municipal finance and I have had the opportunity of attending a few as an alderman in our city. The problem of municipal financing is a major concern of all the mayors and elected councillors in Saskatchewan. It is a concern of SUMA, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association. They all recognize the need for a legitimate and a fair share of provincial revenues. But while I say that, at the same time, they recognize that while they wish to share in provincial revenues they must protect their right of local autonomy in policy and decision making.

My Resolution suggests that a commission be set up to study the financial relationship between the provincial government and the municipalities in this province, with a view to changing traditional taxing patterns and allowing municipalities to enter into definite tax sharing agreements with the provincial government. Such a commission should be made up of qualified people, a chairman, perhaps a retired judge, who would be prepared to act in that capacity (and these are only suggestions); two members chosen by SUMA; two members chosen by the SARM, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. One member who might be added such as the legal counsel to SUMA or the city solicitor from Saskatoon or Regina; two members taken from the provincial government; and two members at large, perhaps one chartered accountant and another. I hear somebody suggesting a mother and a homemaker and I certainly won't disagree with that!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MRS. EDWARDS: — Mr. Speaker, of all the conferences that have been held and all the commissions that this Assembly has set up from time to time, I regard this one as one of the most important that could be set up because the financing of local government and provincial government are of a vital concern and the relationship of the two levels of government in this area of finance has a great deal of bearing on the lives of citizens in this province. I would urge this Assembly to support this Resolution.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. G. MacMURCHY (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, I note with interest the Resolution put forward by the Member for Saskatoon - Sutherland and I notice particularly with interest the remarks that she put forth with respect to this Resolution. She related to a large extent the accomplishments of this Government in supporting urban and municipal governments with respect to their problems with property tax. It is not so long ago, Mr. Speaker, and I have dealt with municipal government for some time - probably as long as the Member for Indian Head-Wolseley (Mr. MacDonald) that municipal government made representations saying that the solution to their problems, or one of the solutions, would be some assistance with taxes for education, that the property tax for education was a real burden on their shoulders and they needed some room to manoeuvre. Our Government responded to that by introducing the property improvement grants which makes up 17 per cent of the costs of education in this province. They said then, we need some assistance with transportation. We came forward with grants for transportation. Then it was policing and we came forward with grants for police. Then it was for capital funding and we came forward with the community capital fund, and then . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MacMURCHY: — . . . and then last but by no means least they said to us the solution would be to provide unconditional operating grants. And who was it, I ask the Members of this House, that introduced unconditional operating grants? It was this Government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MacMURCHY: — And now, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Saskatoon, two Members for Saskatoon put forward another solution. I am aware, Mr. Speaker, that my former colleague, the former Minister of Municipal Affairs, (Mr. Wood) did attend a tri-level conference where this subject was discussed. There is to be a follow-up of this subject on a national level. I attended a meeting in Newfoundland in September of Municipal Affairs Ministers where the item came forward and the Hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs from Newfoundland is to represent all municipal ministers on a committee looking at a follow-up to this issue.

What bothers me, Mr. Speaker, is that the Member attended, as she said, such a conference, knows that it is to be followed up, yet she suggests that we should remove ourselves from dealing with this issue on a national basis as a province and not only that, she suggested we should set up a commission.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MacMURCHY: — She suggests we should set up a commission. Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that's an area to be considered and to be considered very thoroughly and in light of that I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

EXTENDED SEASONS GREETINGS

HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to beg leave that the House do now stand adjourned. But before I do so I'm sure that I express the sentiments of everybody in the House when I wish everyone, including you, Sir, and all the Members, Conservatives, Liberals, fellow New Democrats, workers and pages, even the Press Gallery, a very Happy New Year and a Merry Christmas, and I beg that this House do now stand adjourned.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — I'm pleased to see that no one wants to debate that issue.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:15 o'clock p.m.