

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
8:00 o'clock, Thursday, March 7th, 1963

MADAM SPEAKER: The proposed motion of the Honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party an amendment to the amendment.

MR. PAULLEY: Madam Speaker, just before you called the evening recess, I had mentioned the fact that I had two questions that I would like to ask the Minister of Education. He had indicated that he was prepared to answer and you, Madam, in strict accordance with the rules of the precise moment of 5:30, and I hope this continues, that you are so precise, called the recess. I wonder, Madam, whether I may ask the second question of the Minister of Education at this time?

MADAM SPEAKER:

MR. PAULLEY: Well I'm asking the question

MR. McLEAN: I'll do my best

MR. PAULLEY: Fine. Thank you, Madam Speaker, (interjection). The question I would like to direct, Madam Speaker, to the Minister of Education, and of course these are in connection with the remarks that he made. I would like to have the answer of the minister -- would he kindly tell me the basis on which the minister computed the 300 percent increase in income tax, if education costs now paid at the local level were paid by income tax? (Interjection) There seems some hesitation, I wonder if the Minister --(interjection) -- would like me to repeat the question so that there is no misunderstanding.

MR. McLEAN: No. The computation is quite simple, Madam Speaker. Speaking of the amount of money that's paid by way of income tax by the income tax payers of the Province of Manitoba.

MR. PAULLEY: At what level?

MR. McLEAN: Well I don't know that it makes any difference what level you're talking about, and say to you that to pay the entire cost of the education in Manitoba would require three times the amount of income tax that is now paid by the citizens of Manitoba.

MR. PAULLEY: Supplementary question, if I may, Madam Speaker. My question to the minister dealt with the question of income tax. If education costs now paid at the local level were paid on an income tax basis, I wonder -- it may be that the minister has had somebody compute these figures for him in order to arrive at this 300 percent increase; it may be that he has a table on which his allegations were made or his computations were made, that might be available to myself. I'm quite interested in this, but I'm only -- my question is directed to the minister, Madam Speaker, in reference to the costs now born at the local level, not the full cost of education in the Province of Manitoba -- I am interested in how he arrives at the figure of 300 percent increase and I would like from my honourable friend the answer to this very simple question.

MR. McLEAN: Madam Speaker, I understand quite clearly the question and it's not a very difficult one to understand; and it's also not very difficult to say that it would take three times the amount of income tax that's paid by the income taxpayers of Manitoba at the present time. It would require three times that amount of money to pay all of the costs from education if they were all paid by means of an income tax levy, which was what I was talking about and in answer to the suggestion which had been made.

MR. CAMPBELL: Madam Speaker, might I ask a question of the Honourable Minister of Education? Would the Honourable the Minister of Education in his capacity as Minister of Education be kind enough to put the Honourable the Leader of the New Democratic Party straight on his arithmetic, that three times as much is not a 300 percent increase.

MR. PAULLEY: Madam Speaker, I was quoting the figures of my honourable friend, the Minister of Education. I frankly confess that I did not have the academic education of my honourable friend, but I was only following his lead.

MR. McLEAN: Madam Speaker, well if I said that, I'm sorry about the 300 percent. Three times is the -- three times.

MR. PAULLEY: three times and 300 percent. I used of course the bigger

MR. McLEAN: I'm sorry, if I spoiled your dinner I'm sorry.

MR. PAULLEY: No, as a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, I thoroughly enjoyed my supper

(Mr. Paulley cont'd) hour. I assure the Minister of Education, I enjoyed it far more than the incomplete answers that I have received from the Honourable the Minister of Education.

MADAM SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question?

MR. T. P. HILLHOUSE: Madam Speaker, before the question, I don't rise to take part in this debate, but simply to state our position as an official opposition to the amendment to the amendment. We are going to support the amendment to the amendment, but I want to make it abundantly clear that one of the main reasons why we are supporting it is due to Item No. 2, the easing of the burden of real property taxation at the local level. As to Item No. 1, a universal comprehensive health plan, if my honourable friend means the type of plan which is in effect in Saskatchewan, well we're not supporting that. We do support the principle of a comprehensive medical health plan which is acceptable to the medical profession and to the general public; one that would be voluntary in its scope. As to Item No. 3, it's quite true that the Province of Manitoba is contributing large sums of money towards students with the capabilities of higher education, but we submit that this is something which should be available to everybody.

MADAM SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question?

MR. D. M. STANES: a few words on this debate.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James.

MR. STANES: Firstly, Madam Speaker, I would like to add my congratulations to you on your election to your high office. I do wish you a healthful and successful and long career in the exalted position. I would also like to add my congratulations to mover and seconder -- an excellent job well done. Well sir, if I may, I offer my congratulations and best wishes to the new Ministers and I wish them well. I'm sure they will add considerably, not only on the government side, but also to the work of this House and to the betterment of the people of our province. Also, I would like to add a word of welcome to the new members of this House who I also feel will add much to the work of this House in serving the people of Manitoba.

There are just two points that I would like to bring out in the remarks of my honourable friend the Leader of the NDP. Firstly, I don't think it will be any surprise to him to hear that I cannot support his motion for various reasons, many of which I'm sure he can express much better than I can. However, two points I would like to raise quite briefly, Madam Speaker, and that is I thought his point on election was well taken in its general terms. I realize that he was speaking specifically of one particular contest, but his general terms, I think, are very well taken. I recall just after the previous election we went around this House almost one by one making various personal comments on the election as we had just experienced. I feel that the machinery of elections is something of great importance in this democratic way of life and should constantly be improved upon. My reaction in listening to the honourable member the Leader of the NDP, that perhaps it might be an idea if, at the beginning of each legislature, the first sitting after an election, we might always convene the Standing Committee on Elections at that time when our experiences are fresh in mind; so we can, even to a small degree, improve the machinery of elections. I would like to see it. It's too late after that particular time; but just at that time, I think they are still cumbersome, wasteful, expensive and until we do improve them we cannot expect full support from the people. There are many other examples of better ways of running things in other jurisdictions of this country. I think we should have a constant look at those and try to improve our machinery for elections.

There's one other point I would like to touch on, Madam Speaker, if I may, and that is the remarks of the Honourable the Leader of the NDP, and I would just like to read those remarks and I agree wholeheartedly with them: "We are well aware that many employers are using narrow interpretation of our Labour Relations Act to control the rights of employees to organize into trade union." I don't know the source of his information. It may be correct in some particular occasion, but I do think in this particular field there is a great deal of misunderstanding and, Madam Speaker, if I may have your permission, I would like to cite a case that came to my attention only this morning, which started a few days ago in my own business, whereby there can be a great misunderstanding in this field of labour relations. If the Honourable the Leader of the NDP is trying to frame or build a labour relations upon the system at present in the province to our immediate right, I would like, if I may have your permission, Madam Speaker, to give you this example. A small job for which I am responsible for in

(Mr. Stanes cont'd) Saskatoon and which will entail about five or six people, under the foremanship of a man from Winnipeg with considerable experience in his field and a strong and ardent supporter of the labour union movement and well respected by the officials in this city. I was then informed by the Labour Relations Board in Regina, I think it was the end of last week, asking me to approve an application by a certain union who I do not know to represent these five or six men. This is the outside figure - - the whole job will last about five weeks. I got in touch with the union - - I thought it was rather stupid to go through this routine and the union agreed with me here in Winnipeg. I might add that the union here, the Bricklayers Union, has been most helpful, most co-operative. I have never had any union labour troubles at all and it's mostly due to their co-operation. I also got in touch with the job in Saskatoon. I found that none of the employees had been approached or had approached anybody and, as far as one can possibly tell, they were content. I passed this information through to Regina, to the Labour Relations Board, and this morning I got a curt reply saying: " I shall fold them up", and they're apparently going to charge me with preventing my men from becoming organized. I note the men themselves don't wish to be organized. As far as I know they are already represented; they're perfectly happy; I do not know the union. The union wished to know detailed information from my company and I know nothing about themselves. I'm sure that this isn't a case where -- in the best intentions of the world and I'm sure there are and I'm sure there are lots of other facts in here that I do not know about -- and the best intentions, I'm sure, are behind this whole movement. But the result can be, as in this case, a breakdown in labour relations and an upsetting of already pleasant and happy relationship. I feel that we should go into this labour relations field with great care to see that everybody involved, and particularly employees, are served and served on a long term basis.

Madam Speaker put the question and after a voice vote declared the motion lost.

MR. PAULLEY: The yeas and nays please, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Call in the members. The question before the House is the sub-amendment proposed by the Honourable the Leader of the New Democratic Party to the proposed motion of the Honourable the Member for Turtle Mountain for An Address to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in answer to his Speech at the opening of the Session which reads as follows: "That the amendment be amended by inserting between the words "Manitoba" and "and" in the third line, the following: By failing to provide measures such as: (1) A universal comprehensive health plan; (2) The easing of the burden of real property taxation at the local level; (3) the making it financially possible for every Manitoban to acquire education to the highest levels he or she can attain."

A standing vote was taken, the result being as follows:

YEAS: Barkman, Campbell, Cherniack, Desjardins, Gray, Guttormson, Harris, Hillhouse, Hryhorczuk, Paulley, Peters, Shoemaker, Smerchanski, Vielfaure, Wright.

NAYS: Alexander, Baizley, Bjornson, Bilton, Carroll, Cowan, Evans, Groves, Hamilton, Harrison, Hutton, Jeannotte, Johnson (Gimli), Klym, Lyon, McDonald, McGregor, McKellar, McLean, Martin, Mills, Moeller, Morrison, Seaborn, Shewman, Smellie, Stanes, Strickland, Watt, Weir, Witney.

MR. CLERK: Yeas, 15; Nays, 31.

MADAM SPEAKER: I declare the motion lost. The proposed motion of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition in amendment thereto that this

MR. STRICKLAND: I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Virden, that the debate be adjourned. Seconder is Virden.

MADAM SPEAKER: I didn't hear you, I'm sorry.

MR. STRICKLAND: I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Virden, that the debate be adjourned.

Madam Speaker presented the motion and after a voice vote declared the motion carried.

MADAM SPEAKER: The proposed resolution standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GRAY: Madam Speaker, in view of the snow storm and the many speakers that we have heard today I shall be very brief. Oh, I haven't moved the resolution yet, I'm sorry. Have you got a copy there? I'm sorry, Madam, I didn't expect to speak today. I beg leave to move, seconded by the Honourable Member from Seven Oaks, that this House request the

(Mr. Gray cont'd) Government to petition the federal government for an increase for Old Age and Blind Pensioners in the Province from \$65.00 to \$75.00 per month.

Madam Speaker presented the motion.

MR. GRAY: Madam Speaker, as I said before, it is my intention to be very brief in introducing this resolution, promising to speak longer when closing the debate. I believe, Madam Chairman, that no apology is necessary for again bringing up the matter of the urgent importance of this resolution.

I admit also that some progress has been made by way of improving the situation of the Old Age Pensioners who have reached the so-called "Golden Age" period, but I also believe that this year the resolution will carry in view of the fact that during the recent election every party in the House, either directly or indirectly, admitted that the old age pensioners should have a better deal in order to relieve the hardship and suffering, by those who have been elected to speak for them in the recent elections.

It is true that we have other problems to deal with, all important, but the hardship and suffering must come first. Some members may say, "we have heard this song before", but let me remind the honourable members that the Bible has been read by most of us every week, every day, all the time, but it does no harm to keep on reading it as often as possible. Now the situation at the present time -- I do not know whether I have exact figures, but approximately, there are 60,000 old age pensioners in the province under the responsibility of the federal government. We also have about 6,000 between 65 and 70 under the jurisdiction of the federal and provincial responsibility under -- I said under the means test, which to me is a very, very hard way to understand why human beings should have to go through the so-called means test. Probably later in the debate I may recite many stories about how the people in the province in the early days have suffered by the so-called means test; by the periodic affidavits that they had to swear to that they haven't got an extra loaf of bread in the house; strict examinations were made by the inspectors, and so on. But the biggest tragedy of all is that 70 percent of the people, are single persons, which means that they have no family ties; and that they cannot have anyone look after them, supervise them; and they have to live, most of them, in single rooms.

Another reason that has caused me to bring the question up again this year is that in spite of the fact that in the last election each political party declared its love and affection for the old age pensioners, but after listening to the speech made by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, any reference to this most important subject was sadly missing. I admit that there has been a great improvement in the general situation of the old age pensioners, but their plight is still tragic. As I stated before, particularly in the case of the single men or women who, I understand, make up the majority. Most of this group are forced to live in rented rooms; and the cheapest in many cases, unsanitary rooms. You can get them for a minimum of \$25.00 a month, which only leaves them \$40 to cover 90 meals a month, which amounts, approximately \$1.40 a day, providing there are just 30 days in the month.

After observing for some time, I found the following situation exists for the single man who has to go to a restaurant for his meals, as many landlords will not permit home-cooking. In the morning, and I had occasion to observe, he buys a bowl of porridge, which costs 15¢ and a cup of coffee for .10¢, making a total of .25¢. For lunch he has a bowl of soup, for which he must pay 15¢ or 20¢, and a cup of coffee and perhaps a glass of milk, which brings the cost of his lunch to 35¢. The cheapest meal that he can get in the evening in any restaurant in the city that would include meat or fish is 60¢, which means for meals alone he must spend \$1.20 a day, so quoting arithmetic he only has 20¢ a day left from the \$1.40. With this 20¢ he must pay for his laundry, purchase tobacco, tooth brush, tooth paste and other necessary incidentals. Is there any member of this House who could live on this amount?

The old age pensioners who are presently on the list, in many cases, were old pioneers who had immigrated to Canada in the past 50 or 60 years. Those whom we refer as "common labourers" worked for, or better still, slaved for wages from 10 to 17 and sometimes 20¢ an hour, and on this had to maintain a family. At that time there was no social welfare, hospitalization, medical or any other assistance, as they had to exist solely on their earnings, including paying school and other taxes. So how in the name of God could these people have saved anything for their old age as some have claimed in this House that they should have done. Because of this, parents were without much education and this through no fault of their own. From the

(Mr. Gray, cont'd) countries which most of them came there were no facilities to go to school, and neither did..... that time were very much interested to give them an education, so they were anxious to give their children at least an education to combat the economic struggle at that time. These labourers helped build this beautiful building that we are sitting in today; they helped build the railways; they have dug the sewers and built roads; and they have contributed much towards making our lives more comfortable today with all our modern facilities; but now in their old age they have been thrown out from the labour market with no savings; they have not retired with any company's pension. Is this not a horrible condition? How can we tolerate this and do not forget, Madam Speaker, that the span of life from spring to autumn is very brief. We maybe find ourselves in the same position.

Figures indicate that in our province there are about 5,000 deaths each year among the old age pensioners. They do not die from a result of pleasure. The Bible says, not on bread alone exists the world. They may get by for meals, but the extra \$10.00 a month that we now ask the federal government to consider, not to the expense of the province, except those who are under the responsibility of the province, would help them provide other urgent necessities and give them a little ray of light and hope in their remaining days. I wish to be understood that I do not attribute the high death rate because they are not getting sufficient, but nevertheless the facts are facts, why 10 percent of the total old age pension population are dying in a short period from the time they obtained the pension, under the conditions which the majority of them have to live now.

I quite often visit the old age pensioners in the institutions and there they perhaps do not require the \$10 a month so urgently as those who are not in the institutions, because I understand the social welfare is paying for their maintenance so much a day. But, on the other hand, we cannot find out exactly who has some other contributions, who has many, particularly at the age of 70 and over but they must forego those claims. In other words, the life of an individual is as important as the welfare of a nation. I visit many of the guests there -- I hate to call them inmates -- and what do I see? They spend much of their time looking through the window; their bowed heads, perhaps dreaming of the old days or their children who, in many cases, are away from them. They seldom get a letter, but it is not entirely the fault of the children as they have their own problems and they have their own life to live.

As I stated before, I admit that ever since I became a member of this House in 1921 our Party has been pleading the cause of the old age pensioners. Much improvement has been made, and when we look back when they were receiving only \$20 a month all of the old age pensioners in Manitoba and elsewhere, without the facilities and the help they're getting now; without social service of any kind; without anyone visiting them; without anyone concerned about them, and this is on record; you could imagine what the situation was at that time. But I do say that with the improvements, and while we are getting improvements, the cost of living is going up. You've got to have \$2.00 at least now to pay for an article which cost 20 years ago or 30 years ago, \$1.00, so I feel, Madam Chairman, that we are asking first of all for the probably 80 percent of the old age pensioners -- and the cost does not come out from the Treasury of this province; and secondly, even if it does, we do not suggest that the province should give them another \$10 a month but petition the Federal Government, and all the provinces will have to pay directly this half of the 6,000 old age pensioners who are now the responsibility of the federal and provincial governments. I appeal to you and I appeal to the members and, in view of this indirect promise they have made to improve conditions, I sincerely hope that the House will support this resolution and who knows, perhaps in the next month the federal leaders will have the same love and affection for them and agree to it. But let us at least here go on record of supporting it.

One more statement I wish to make -- that if you look over the journals in the last 20 years, 21, 22 years since I'm here, you will find that when I came into this House it was \$20 a month, and the fact that the members who were and are in this House then have softened their hearts and did support the increase from \$20 to \$65, surely to goodness if they found out at that time that this was necessary, it's just as much necessary and important today.

I have, Madam Chairman, other arguments to advance, but I'll leave it when I close the debate.

MR. JOHNSON: speak on this resolution, I do so with all respect to the

(Mr. Johnson, cont'd) Honourable Member from Inkster, I think all of us in this House tend to divert our attention when the honourable member speaks on this most important subject and, as he has recorded, he has brought this up since 1941. When I first came into the House, only three or four years ago, I think the honourable member had a motion up for \$65 and then the pension went up to \$65.00. If my honourable friend enjoys the remarkable health he does, I don't expect to be here long enough to ever catch up to him with respect to his demands or his desires for the senior citizens of this province with across-the-board allowance. I have, however, I think yearly, spoken on this particular resolution following the Honourable Member from Inkster, because he and I have a philosophical debate which will probably continue to the end of time. My Honourable Member from Inkster will never really settle down and learn what we mean by the "needs test" versus the "means test", and I like to remind him again because I know he feels in his heart that a great deal has been accomplished in the last few years. I think the despair between '41 and '51 was very real -- in '58 rather -- but I think following '58, when his resolution was finally adopted by this administration and action taken to supplement and provide further benefits for the senior citizens of Manitoba, that my honourable friend took heart and I have sincerely tried to reach him with this definition of the means test.

Now let us be perfectly clear, and I appreciate the fact that the Honourable Member from Inkster is asking for an increase in the Old Age Security from \$65 to \$75 which, of course, is a federal responsibility, and he's asking us to support this resolution in that light. The federal authorities consider Old Age Security, as we know, as a social dividend which is paid to everyone regardless of means at the age of 70. The Old Age Assistance and Blind Person Pensioners Act is a shared program of \$65 a month now paid partly by the Province and partly by the federal authorities, half and half, and there are approximately 7,000 people over 65 receiving old age assistance or Blind Persons Pensions. I bring this out to point out that the impact that this would have actually on the Province of Manitoba is on this difference -- these numbers of people in this age category.

However, the honourable member took me to my feet because I do want to point out to him and to the members of the House that under The Social Allowances Act any person over the age of 65, in need, can apply for extra cash assistance plus essential health needs as provided through the Medicare program and, in effect, and report to him, that rather than increase across-the-board allowances which don't necessarily meet the needs of the old people whom he's trying to help, we have found this program much more effective because we find people when they're in need they're really in need, and across-the-board allowances do not necessarily meet the particular need that may arise. I think that in the disbursement of welfare funds by the province, that the greatest benefits are achieved under the program as we have operating now. Seven other provinces in Canada have now adopted our concept in this program and approximately 7,000 people over the age of 65 are receiving more than this \$10, on an average, plus Medicare benefits, and I think one third of our old age -- senior citizens in Manitoba receive a waiver of hospital premium under the present Act.

I am quite aware of the problems and the concern that our honourable friend has to the health needs and the housing and the hospitalization needs of our senior citizens. I think he can take tremendous heart from the acute and extended treatment hospital program that has made such a difference to our senior citizens. I think we can take great heart in knowing that Manitoba produced more hostels, residences for our senior citizens in the past year with voluntary municipal groups than any province in Canada. I share with him some of this concern because I remember when the old people, when I was a boy, received \$10 or \$12 a month. I remember when people from Winnipeg arrived at one of the two senior citizens homes in Manitoba who took people and, as a physician, saw them arrive uncared for, unkempt and only identified as to nationality. I saw this in fact; I saw it in practice; and was one of the reasons I became concerned enough to enter public life, but I do feel that The Social Allowances Act as being administered in this province gives the greatest possibilities and greatest chance to help the needier people and the people who really need help in our senior citizens category than any increase in across-the-board allowances. Not that I would debate with the federal authorities who saw fit and had the resources to increase the across-the-board allowance and pay a greater dividend to the senior citizens of our Dominion, but I do say that in those programs in which the

(Mr. Johnson cont'd) province participates, I think our role can be more properly played and more effectively played under the program we have in operation today, because in assessing the needs of the old persons, as we've often said, we can actually find this person, possibly in inadequate housing, and the social worker can recommend an elderly person's housing unit or residential hostel accommodation she may know of to transfer that patient where he should go.

I think that the comprehensive health services that are increasing yearly and being made available and primarily directed to the people in this older age category to our senior citizens in Manitoba, has given all Manitobans a great deal of comfort, and as I have been around the province extensively in the last few years, I have not come across too many who are in the category of the description as given by the Honourable Member for Inkster. I think that North Americans, and Manitobans in particular, enjoy the average life span with the ever-increasing and the more efficient resources to keep them healthy and continuing, in many cases, to make the contribution to our province.

I would point out to the Honourable Member from Inkster that two-thirds of the senior citizens over the age of 65 in care institutions, nursing homes, boarding homes and home care, below the hospital plan as it were in the Province of Manitoba today, receive substantial provincial assistance under The Social Allowances Act, and medical care is provided.

I think the Honourable Member for Inkster will recall the days when the Municipal Secretary-Treasurers placed patients out of hospital into nursing homes in this city and there was not always medical care available to these people. These days are gone. We're now in 1963 and I think that the government is fully cognizant of the many problems facing the senior citizens and I think the greatest benefits, if I may say, will really come from a continuation and enhancement of our present program to underline the needs of the aged; to lick their problems of housing, hostel accommodation, nursing home, boarding home accommodation in the Province of Manitoba, than to dissipate our funds in ever-increasing-across-the-board allowances, which I have so often said do not necessarily meet need. However, I bow to the federal authorities who, in their wisdom, increase the national dividend to this most worthy group of citizens. With those few remarks, Mr. Chairman, I will sit down, but I do hope that the Honourable Member from Inkster and I will continue the needs versus means test for many years to come.

MRS. CAROLYNE MORRISON: (Pembina) adjourn this debate. Seconded by Winnipeg Centre.

Madam Speaker presented the motion and after a voice vote declared the motion carried.

MADAM SPEAKER: The proposed resolution standing in the name of the Honourable Member from Inkster.

MR. GRAY: which the department is a little bit slow in submitting it and I wish the matter to stand.

MADAM SPEAKER: Proposed resolution standing in the name of the Honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party.

MR. PAULLEY: Madam Speaker, I hope to raise the interesting subject that is standing in my name at tomorrow's sitting and I beg your indulgence and that of the House to allow it to stand. --(Interjection)-- Oh you can get it tonight if you really need it.

HON. GURNEY EVANS (Minister of Industry & Commerce) (Fort Rouge): That brings us to the end of the Order Paper, Madam Speaker, and consequently I move, seconded by the Honourable the Attorney-General, that the House do now adjourn.

Madam Speaker presented the motion and after a voice vote declared the motion carried and the House adjourned until 2:30 Friday afternoon.