

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Toth: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce a petition coming from the community of Rocanville and surrounding area. And it reads as such:

To the Hon. Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan in legislature assembled, the petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly showeth:

That the emergency medical needs of the people in Rocanville community have been served well by the existing emergency unit, and that the emergency unit consists of qualified EMT, and that the nearest ambulance service is approximately 25 miles away from the vicinity. And that under the current rules the Rocanville emergency unit is fully equipped to assist emergency patients, yet not to transport patients even though they are more than qualified to do so. And that allowing the Rocanville emergency unit to transport patients will be a cost-saving measure, and that there is widespread support for this petition.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to ensure the medical needs of the Rocanville community are looked after by allowing the Rocanville emergency unit to respond to emergencies and transport patients to the nearest health care facility.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, there are many names on this petition, names of individuals from the community of Rocanville, Wapella, Welwyn, Moosomin, Esterhazy, Spy Hill, McAuley, Manitoba; Estevan, Yorkton, Moose Jaw, Tantalton, Inglis, Manitoba.

I so present.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Boyd: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Thursday next ask the government the following question. Regarding SaskPower, the minister responsible has stated that Mr. David Dombowsky: ". . . has literally to this time saved us tens of millions of dollars . . ." That's *Hansard* of March 11, 1994, page 816.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: -- Mr. Speaker, we would ask the minister the following questions:

Provide detailed information regarding the tens of million of dollars Mr. Dombowsky has saved the province of . . . the provincial government; provide full detail of the number of contracts Mr. Dombowsky has had with SaskPower since November 1, 1991; provide copies of each contract with Mr. Dombowsky since November 1, 1991 and all details therein including expenses, fees, length of contract, purpose of contract, and how each contract has benefited the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Goohsen: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Thursday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Saskatchewan Government Insurance and the first-time vehicle registrations on vehicles previously registered in other jurisdictions: (1) will vehicle dealers along the Saskatchewan border who cannot afford the required testing equipment be able to be provided with this service; (2) if the cost of testing -- hiring a driver, mileage and other expenses -- increases the cost of a vehicle by 400 to \$500 how will these dealers stay competitive while dealers on the other side of the border do not incur these additional expenses; (3) why hasn't SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) placed responsibility on those individuals or companies rebuilding vehicles which have been written off by insurance companies; (4) has SGI contacted our neighbouring provincial governments in regards to implementing a similar program?

I so submit.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Whitmore: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you today a gentleman behind the bar, a gentleman that has served as the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from 1960 to 1964, Mr. Allan Stevens. Mr. Stevens is from my community of Harris and is also a very dear family friend. And I wish to introduce to you, Mr. Allan Stevens.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knezacek: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, 27 grade 7, 8, and 9 students from Bredenbury School seated in the east gallery, and their teachers, Rob Wilson whom I've known for a long period of time, and Kelly Phillipchuk. Also assisting with the group is chaperon Michael Laycock and bus driver Anita Varga.

I will be meeting this group following their tour approximately at 2:20 for pictures, and we hope to have a lively discussion over some refreshments

in room 255 later on.

So have a safe trip home; have an enjoyable visit to Regina while you're here, and we'll see you after question period. Thank you very kindly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and the members of the legislature, a group of some 57 grade 7 and 8 students from Argyle School. They are being accompanied by Mr. Wayne Wilson, Ms. Joy Woodard, and Ms. Meryl Forster. And after question period, Mr. Speaker, I will be meeting with this group for pictures and refreshments.

Would you please join me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, I'd like also to join in welcoming Mr. Allan Stevens who represented the Rosetown constituency ably, but after that time was a colleague of mine and friend on the Rosetown School Division Board for many years. He has made a significant contribution to Saskatchewan society both through his contribution to the legislature and to school board business, and very much to the spirit of one of the strongest communities in Saskatchewan -- Harris. I welcome Al, and I ask others of you to join me again in welcoming him.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly someone that has caught my eye in the west gallery, Mr. George Bothwell, who has been a leader in providing library services in the community of Regina and is president of the Saskatchewan Library Board. And I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming him here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as you and other members of the Legislative Assembly, I hope will know by now, our government has been looking at many areas of labour reform. And one of those areas is job sharing.

Now in an attempt to get some firsthand experience in that field, today I job-shared with John Lynch, the sports director for CKCK radio in Regina. And in return John is today in the Speaker's gallery observing how my job is done. I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that while I got my experience today hands on as an on-air announcer, John is safely removed from the fray of the legislative floor, sitting in your Speaker's gallery.

And that's just as well, Mr. Speaker, because people who listen to CK62 regularly heard John yesterday staking his reputation on the fact that Jeff Fairholm was not going to the Toronto Argonauts. And I ask you, Mr. Speaker, do we really need a person like that in the

Premier's chair, even for a short period of time?

But, Mr. Speaker, John and I go back quite a long ways; in order to save him embarrassment, I won't say how long. And we share a love of sports and a deep appreciation for those who bring us enjoyment through that venue. And I was very pleased this morning to renew my acquaintanceship with the radio microphone being used for something other than politics and political warfare.

But I have to say, John, that while you've had a long and illustrious career, ranging, I might add, from service with the government in SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network Corporation) to covering such things as rough sports as football, hockey, and full-contact figure skating, they all pale in comparison to what goes on on this floor.

So, John, thank you for the chance to reacquaint myself with the gentler pursuits of the people of this province. And, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in welcoming John Lynch to our arena today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Farm Business Management Information Network

Mr. Carlson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we are all aware, this week has been declared Agriculture Week in Saskatchewan. We are also aware that agriculture has been changing rapidly throughout time because of new technology.

With this in mind today, I would like to announce the great success of the Farm Business Management Information Network. This system is a Canada-wide computer bulletin board database system. Saskatchewan in particular found the network extremely useful. In fact there were 1,199 users as of February 16, 1994. This is the largest amount of users on this system in Canada, which in total has 27,000 subscribers.

The Department of Agriculture and Food developed this concept and got it up and running. This is yet another vehicle to teach farmers about other areas they can diversify into. It is also an invaluable teaching tool and a precursor to the new information highway technology that may eventually sweep this country.

We are happy to see the Department of Agriculture and Food are taking their role in our Ag 2000 very seriously. They have gone to the extraordinary steps to make sure our producers are informed and have access to the best database possible. It is through this type of cooperation that will allow the producers of Saskatchewan to grow and meet the demands of the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Fine Arts Week at the University of Regina

Ms. Crofford: - Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member from Redberry said yesterday and the member from Melville today, this is a crowded week. Across the province it's Agriculture Week, and at the University of Regina it's Fine Arts Week. There are daily public events during the week, all following the theme: Celebration '94.

Over the years the University of Regina has gone through a number of identity changes. The member from Rosemont and the MP (Member of Parliament) from Regina-Qu'Appelle might recall a time when it was known as the most radically progressive campus in Canada. Lately the university has gained favourable attention because of its connection with high-tech companies, its public administration and co-op work programs. Quietly though during its existence, the University of Regina has developed and nourished a superior Fine Arts program, excellent instructor performers who develop superior students.

This week celebrates that fact with daily concerts, exhibitions, displays, films, and culminating with a dramatic production directed by staff and performed by students. I've attended before and I encourage members and the public to take some time to sample the wares of the Fine Arts school at the University of Regina. And I remind us that life is short, but art lasts a long time. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Favourable Report from Bond Rating Agency

Mr. Wormsbecker: -- Last week I reported some good financial news to the people of Saskatchewan. I reported that the initial response to Saskatchewan's budget by the bond rating agencies was uniformly favourable. Today I have more good news, more evidence that Saskatchewan is on the slow road to financial respectability. And a long road it has been, Mr. Speaker.

Moody's Investors Service of New York announced recently that Saskatchewan is maintaining its AAA credit rating for another year. Moody's said that efforts to decrease financial exposure from loan guarantees and the province's deficit reduction plan are paying off. These efforts have stabilized the financial position of the province. A credit upgrade next year is quite possible, Moody's says. The credit of course goes to the people of Saskatchewan.

The story this morning in Canada's national newspaper makes for an interesting comparison. It points out that the federal government has just had its foreign currency debt rating trimmed from a AAA to a AA. **The Globe and Mail's** reporter said, very gently I might add, that this move amounts to a mildly negative review of Paul Martin's first budget -- a very interesting comparison. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Judges' Salaries Recommendation

Mr. Toth: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think, Mr. Speaker, everyone in this Assembly is aware that last night was Oscar night, and today we're once again hopeful that the minister will announce a decision on judges' salaries.

My question is to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, will you today open the envelope and announce who the winner is? Have you come to a decision on this matter? Can you tell us what that decision will be?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: -- Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I will be making a ministerial statement following question period, and at that point the envelope will be opened and the entire Assembly and the province will know the result of our deliberations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: -- Mr. Speaker, and to the minister. Mr. Minister, has your government been conducting a public opinion poll on matters of judges' salaries during the past few days? If so, how much did this poll cost Saskatchewan taxpayers and what were the results?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: -- The government has conducted no such poll.

Mr. Toth: -- Mr. Speaker, again to the minister. Mr. Minister, this morning we spoke to a woman who received a call last night from a company called NorSask Consumer Survey. They asked her the following consumer survey questions: (1) are you aware of the proposed increase in judges' salaries; (2) are you in favour of a 20 per cent increase in judges' salaries; (3) should the government refuse to grant this increase in judges' salaries; and (4) if an election were held tomorrow, who would you vote for?

Mr. Minister, this sounds to me an awful lot like a survey your government might be conducting. How much taxpayers' money are you spending to make a decision you could have made weeks ago, and what has the survey told you?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: -- I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that the government has conducted no such poll, nor have I ever heard of the company that the member referred to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Questions on Matters before a Court

Mr. Toth: -- Mr. Speaker, a new series of questions to the same minister. Mr. Minister, on May 10, 1989, as a member of the opposition, you initiated a series of questions in question period regarding a matter which

was before the courts. After the minister gave a general reply, he said that he could not give a more specific answer because this matter was under investigation and before the courts. You said, and I quote from *Hansard*:

It is very interesting that this matter has been referred to the RCMP but it does not absolve this minister from the responsibility of answering those questions in this House.

Mr. Minister, do you still hold to that principle? Do you believe that investigations and court proceedings should not absolve the minister from the responsibility of answering questions in this House?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: -- Well I can tell the member that, as the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, the matters that I can comment on, in public or in this House, are constrained by certain requirements that are essential to the maintenance of an effective and credible justice system. That would include an inability to comment on investigations and an inability to comment on matters that are before the court.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: -- Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister. Mr. Minister, your party, while in opposition, had absolutely no qualms about asking whole series of questions while an issue was at trial. And you were right in the middle of it. It was the rule, not the exception.

Remember the member from Battlefords would stand in this Assembly and quote from the transcripts of court proceedings which were still ongoing. I refer you to *Hansard* . . .

The Speaker: -- Order. Order. I think the member's questions come very close to challenging the convention or practice that has been established in the House at . . . Order, order.

Order, order . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . order. Well if you want to take your question period time, that's fine with me.

An Hon. Member: -- It doesn't matter, you don't give it to us anyway.

The Speaker: -- I will ask the member from Wilkie to retract that statement and apologize to the Chair.

Mr. Britton: -- I retract that statement and I apologize to the Chair.

The Speaker: -- I'm simply asking the member from Moosomin to be very careful in the phrasing of his questions, in making certain that he's not challenging the practice and decisions that have been made, not only by this Speaker, by many other Speakers in this House. That's what I'm asking the member to do -- be

careful in asking the questions that he's asking at the present time.

Mr. Toth: -- Mr. Speaker, again just to bring the House up to date and the minister up to date on the question, I remind the minister of the comments of the member from The Battlefords, who would make when he stood in this House . . . and I would like you to refer to *Hansard* of May 31, '89.

The minister responsible of the day would at least attempt to answer the question. Mr. Minister, what has changed from 1989 to present? Why do you and your colleagues demand that ministers answer questions while the matter was before the courts and then today hide behind the very thing when you become the minister.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, of course it's not a question of hiding behind anything. And on the basis of what the member has referred to the House of statements or questions that I asked in 1989, I have no doubt that I said that because the member does not tell lies, so that I know I must have. And if I did, I was wrong. I was wrong.

The fact of the matter is that the justice system simply cannot operate if we are to start discussing evidence that is being given in a court case in this House. We simply can't do it. The system has to operate and operate with integrity. And if I said that in 1989, which I don't doubt, I was quite wrong.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: -- Mr. Speaker, again to the minister. Mr. Minister, we have seen via the papers that there has been sworn testimony which suggests that you were involved in matters leading up to the White Bear casino raid. Now, Mr. Minister, if you are not subpoenaed, will you commit to this Assembly to make a statement regarding that testimony after the trial?

Will you make the commitment to confirm or deny the statements that were made under oath by the individual in question?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: -- I'm not certain of all of the implications of the member's question but let me answer it in this way. When the trial is over, when the matter is finished, when it is no longer before the courts, then it's another matter. Then I have to answer for my actions. And I am prepared to do that within the rules, within the limits of my ability to do that. But I hide nothing, I've nothing to be ashamed of, and I'll deal with the matter as and when I can.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Help for Spring Seeding

Mr. McPherson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question is for the Minister of Agriculture. The Premier stood before the Saskatchewan Association of Rural

Municipalities convention recently and told delegates agriculture was showing signs of improvement. He talked about hope and optimism. Well I too would like to believe the situation of our farm families is improving. The farmers who have been calling us are worried. Even you, Mr. Minister, agreed. You admitted in *The Western Producer* that in your area of the province money is very short for spring seeding, as it is in many areas of the province.

Mr. Minister, what is your government going to do to ensure that farm families will be able to seed their crops this spring? Make it clear what your plans are. Farmers in the south-west will be in the fields in a matter of a few weeks and they want to know what you're going to do.

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: -- Mr. Speaker, I don't think that either this government, myself, or the Premier, or anybody else has said that the farm problems are over. Certainly there is a turnaround in the farm community. There probably is more money for spring seeding overall in the province than there has been for a good number of years.

There are trouble spots and, as the member well quotes me as saying, there's trouble spots in my area where we've had two crop failures in a row and times there are very tough. And there's no doubt there are farmers all over this province who are still struggling with debt and still struggling. But what we were saying is that there is some turnaround in the farm economy, that cattle prices are up and hog prices are up and grain prices are up somewhat, and there's optimism on the future. We haven't said that the problems are all solved and that the farmers have no more problems.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's obvious that the Minister of Agriculture refuses to recognize the seriousness of the situation in the province. Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, instead of responding to the problem in Saskatchewan's ag industry, your government announced it is unlikely producers will receive an interim payment this month under 1993 GRIP (gross revenue insurance program). As a matter of fact, they may even have to pay that money back.

Mr. Minister, there's a projected surplus of \$320 million in the Saskatchewan GRIP fund. Do you care enough about people to return to farm families the program money that your government controls?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: -- Mr. Speaker, we will commit in this government to return farmers' money if it's possible within the agreement, when the agreement terminates, which will be in the end of '95. We are, as the member well knows, stuck in this GRIP program for one more year, and certainly projections of surplus still are possible. It's also possible that we'll end up in a deficit. But if there are surpluses in there, we commit to attempting within the framework of the agreement to return farmers' premiums to them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, that's exactly what we're asking. When are you going to get those premiums back to the people. They need that money for spring seeding. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, your government lacks farm policies. Even agriculture economists in other parts of Canada have examined your *Agriculture 2000* paper and say it's a nice academic exercise but lacks substance and real vision. Ag 2000 isn't going to help farmers put their crops in this spring, but the surplus GRIP money can.

Will you promise today to take the surplus GRIP money and distribute it to the farm families that you claim to care so much about, in order that they can seed their crops this spring?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: -- Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite would like to follow the old Tory policy of running to New York and borrowing a billion dollars and lending it out to farmers to put another crop in. That didn't work very well the last time. I think he should be talking to Mr. Goodale and what they're doing to us on Crow and other cost-sharing things that are impacting on our farmers in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By the way, Mr. Minister, I do talk to Mr. Goodale. The problem is with you, Mr. Minister. You're the Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan. It's up to you to come up with some ideas of your own.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of inputs for putting in a crop is high. There are fuel expenses, seed, fertilizer, machinery maintenance. Mr. Minister, while you are sitting on the \$320 million of surplus GRIP money, farm families are trying to scrape enough cash together to get the crop in.

Answer yes or no, are you going to help these farm families or have you given up on rural Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: -- Assuming that the member has spoken to the federal minister, I expect there'll be federal payments out for spring seeding.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: -- Mr. Speaker, again it's the magic calculator from the member opposite. There is no surplus in GRIP at this time. It's \$43 million or whatever, this projected surplus in the program. And as the old Tory program was, that you always had programs with deficit in and they don't know what could happen if a program should end up with a surplus.

What we're saying is if it does end up with a surplus, we will attempt to refund the farmers' premiums. That's the commitment that we're making. There's no surplus; there's no \$300 million laying around in

spare cash at this time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Provincial Parks Changes

Mr. Neudorf: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think we should recognize the fact that the Minister of Agriculture has been very consistent. I asked that same series of questions yesterday, and lo and behold, what we find is that the minister's actually answering the same way.

But, Mr. Minister, my calculations show that with \$300 million surplus in the Premier's bank account right now . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. The member from Rosthern simply can't ask his question with all the noise that's in the House. I'll ask members please to calm down and let the member ask his question.

Mr. Neudorf: -- Mr. Speaker, I was not asking a question to the Minister of Agriculture anyway, so we'll go to the appropriate source.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is directed to the Minister of Environment and Resource Management. Mr. Minister, last week you announced that your government, due to budget reasons, is considering limiting public access to some provincial parks and converting campgrounds and cottage country into wilderness protection areas.

Mr. Minister, could you tell this Assembly and the people of this province why you feel this is necessary and which provincial parks and cottage areas are under consideration for conversion into wilderness areas? Could you tell us, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, although I haven't had a chance to talk to the journalist who did the story, that there are some rather inaccurate reflections of the discussion in that article.

The fact is we were announcing the establishment of Clarence-Steepbank Wilderness Park. And in the discussion thereafter the question was, were we converting other parks to wilderness; and I said no, we're not. We discussed the rationalization of some parks within the province in the recreational area, but the theme of the address was the Act that we're bringing in on creating Clarence-Steepbank Park.

We are, as I said then and I will say now in the House, that we are committed in cooperation with other countries around the world to helping to establish that 12 or 13 per cent of the earth's surface in its natural state so that our biodiversity on which all life is based can be maintained. And our contribution to that is enhanced by establishment of the Clarence-Steepbank Park.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, let's go a little bit beyond that one particular announcement. You have said on many, many occasions that you are out to create more wilderness areas and recreation sites in Saskatchewan. Why then, Mr. Minister, is your government also considering selling off a large section of the Bronson forest recreation site, part of the northern provincial forest in north-west Saskatchewan? And you're doing that as part of the Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement, I believe. Some 58,000 acres, I am told, Mr. Minister.

It would seem to me that these two policies are inconsistent at best, Mr. Minister. Could you explain why you would sell off one wilderness site and at the same time attempt to create others?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, as I believe the member opposite would concur, we as a province have an obligation to our first nations in this country to meet obligations that have not been met to this date. They are obligations that were not met under the previous administration and they're obligations that we are presently committed to meet.

In the process of treaty land entitlements, the question of which land is available is a key question. Some of that land is clearly Crown land. And in special circumstances where it warrants, and where there is a strong request, the option of the first nations accessing other Crown lands, in this case the Bronson forest, is a consideration.

The Thunderchild Band that is engaged in the discussions around this, is going to meet all the conditions of the treaty land entitlement discussions. And we are committed to facilitating the discussions so that we may have a cooperative discussion between the first nation interested in the land and the community that is situated there, so that we can meet our obligations as a province and meet the needs of the community as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: -- Thank you for that information, Mr. Minister. I think we'll pick up on some of that information as we go along. But I must say to you, Mr. Minister, that I don't think that your policy with respect to recreation and wilderness lands is quite as well defined as you think it is.

On March 17 a Canadian Press story says that the government, and I quote:

. . . wants to ease its parks system into one that emphasizes wilderness protection over recreation.

Yet you are under negotiations right now, as you have just said, to sell large tracts of the Bronson forest and recreation site. Mr. Minister, section 4.07 of the land treaty agreement states that, and I quote again:

provincial parks, protected areas, recreation sites, historic sites and park land reserves . . .

. . . will only be sold in exceptional circumstances.

And you have just alluded to that in your previous answer. Mr. Minister, what possible, what possible special circumstances can there be to sell off protected land?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, I again need to correct the reference in the press article. Please accept the inaccuracy of that comment. It is not my quote and it is not accurate. There is no changing of recreational sites at the wilderness sites in Saskatchewan; these are completely separate objectives. We have a commitment to historic sites and recreational parks and campgrounds, and many other forms of park activity in Saskatchewan, including wilderness parks. Setting aside wilderness areas is part of an obligation and a joint commitment that we have with other nations around the world.

On the subject of treaty land entitlements, the former premier and the member from Estevan was recognized at the signing of the treaty land entitlements for his good work in moving that forward. We finalized that agreement, we have continued with the process of meeting those agreements, and within that circumstance there are opportunities where treaty land entitlements can be considered from Crown lands . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'd like to continue answering the question if I might.

The member opposite asked what special circumstance could exist. The Bronson forest area under consideration was a piece of land that was under consideration in the late '70s and that had been identified by the federal government as a potential area of settlement; and when that was raised with us at this time we concurred in it.

The Speaker: -- Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: -- I truly wonder if that constitutes special circumstances, Mr. Minister. And what I'm going to ask you now is for you to provide copies of the commitment that your government made to the Thunderchild Band in 1981. And I ask you to table that information immediately so that we know what you're talking about.

So a new question to you, Mr. Minister. Can you tell us what the Thunderchild Indian Band has in mind for the land in question? Is it to be harvested for logs? Is it to be drilled for natural gas? Would you provide us with that information as well, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, the process of treaty land entitlement is a process of offerings and negotiations and requests. And I think as the member opposite would know if he consulted with his seat mate, he would know that this is not a question of committing to someone something without the agreement of the interested parties.

I am concerned about the member opposite raising the concern, and I don't want to question his motives. But I am concerned that in a situation where we've set up an opportunity for first nations to discuss with others the acquisition of lands to meet treaty land entitlement that we all recognize we are committed to, that somehow the member opposite wants to make an unusual circumstance out of the fact that the table has been established for that discussion.

The members, the parties to that agreement, are free to discuss in the treaty land entitlement process the obligations . . . or the interests of other parties in the area must be addressed. And what we are attempting to do is to facilitate the discussion between the parties in the area and the first nations to see if an agreement can be reached whereby the first nations can have their interests met.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, like in almost all the occasions when we arise, it is not my concern about special circumstances that I am voicing here this afternoon, Mr. Minister; it is the concern of the local residents -- the local residents, Mr. Minister. And they are telling us that the reasons the Bronson forest was designated as a recreation site was so that it would become under the protection of the parks system. There are sensitive landscapes and many lakes in that area, Mr. Minister, as you well know.

They are so concerned about this issue, Mr. Minister, that they have called for a meeting tomorrow night in Paradise Hill, March 23, to discuss this problem. And, Mr. Minister, they are looking for answers and they are looking for reassurance that the Bronson forest recreation site will continue to enjoy the protection that it now enjoys.

And, Mr. Minister, will you make a commitment today that you will be at that meeting tomorrow night and that you will give those assurances to the folks in that area that they are asking for? Will you do that, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, I do not want to get emotional about this response, but I am telling you that it offends me that the member opposite asks the question about the commitment of first nations to the maintenance of the traditional lands of which they have been a part since . . . for 10,000 years; that somehow the protection of lands and forests and lakes and rivers is put at risk by them considering having it as part of their entitlements. I am offended at that

suggestion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, I have spoken with the person who sent out the invitation for the meeting. The suggestion that there has not been information to people who want to be told about what's going on here and who want to participate is inaccurate. Everyone who has requested information about this has received a full briefing on the matter.

When I asked the member who had made the invitation to the meeting whether there was anything lacking, he said no, we just wanted to inform a broader range of people. Now the broader range of people is I don't know whom exactly, but I can tell you that everyone in the area has an opportunity to meet with the department, they had an opportunity to meet with the Thunderchild Band, they've had an opportunity to sit at a table and discuss this matter.

And that is the kind of negotiation that I am supportive of. And I am not supportive of any intention to create division between first nations people and residents of that area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Judges' Salaries Recommendation

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: -- Mr. Speaker, I have a statement with respect to the salaries of Provincial Court judges.

As the members of this Assembly will know, issues relating to the salaries of Provincial Court judges have been a source of controversy for a number of years. In an attempt to address this long-standing problem, this Assembly in June of last year approved a process by which the salaries of Provincial Court judges would be determined by an independent commission, with the recommendations of the commission to be legally binding on both the judges and the government. The legislation received the support of the Assembly and of all parties in this Assembly.

Today, with the benefit of hindsight, it is obvious to all that this decision was a mistake. The independent commission appointed under this law awarded the judges a salary increase of 20 per cent, retroactive to April 1, 1993, with further increases of 2 per cent in both 1994 and 1995 -- a 24 per cent increase over three years. Such an increase would be excessive by anyone's standards in the best of times. Such an increase strikes all Saskatchewan people as particularly excessive in a time of restraint.

But here we are, faced with a law of this Assembly's own creation which legally binds the government to implement an unacceptable salary increase. I note that in this Chamber and in public statements outside it, both the Justice critic for the official opposition and the Leader of the Third Party have urged the government to abide by this law. The end result of that

advice would be a 24 per cent salary increase for Provincial Court judges.

My colleagues and I have struggled with this difficult question. In recent days, we appealed directly to the judges of the court to consider setting aside this binding award in the public interest and to agree to some lesser amount. They refused. Now the government must act.

Mr. Speaker, as a general principle, this legislature should be prepared to live with the consequences of laws which it has passed even when those consequences are difficult. It is a fundamental principle that governments and legislatures should live by their word, follow their own rules. However, when the application of those laws leads to an unconscionable result, governments and legislatures must have the courage to act in the public interest to undo it.

Unfortunately, this is such a case. Why is this award unconscionable and in violation of the public interest? For more than two years, this government has asked the people of Saskatchewan to make numerous financial sacrifices to help restore the financial integrity of our province. For many, these sacrifices have been difficult.

(1415)

But everyone has been asked to share in the effort. How can ordinary families, who have sacrificed so much, be now asked to provide a 24 per cent salary increase to some of the highest-paid individuals in the province? In short, Mr. Speaker, there is the law and there is justice. Sometimes they are one; sometimes they can be two very different things.

Inexplicably, the independent commission appointed to review the salaries of Provincial Court judges failed to take into account the financial circumstances of the province and of the taxpayers, who ultimately bear the burden of any increase. Accordingly, I am announcing today that the government will not be implementing the recommendations of the independent commission.

Instead, I am today serving notice of the introduction of legislation which will provide the judges with a 2.5 per cent salary increase for 1993 and 1994. Further, I am announcing that we will move immediately to repeal the legislation which established and empowered the independent commission. The excessive size of the salary award in this case makes it clear that placing matters of this importance in the hands of an independent but unaccountable commission is undesirable.

Indeed it is our view that the use of binding arbitration for determining compensation in situations like these must be reconsidered. These independent bodies are not accountable in any way to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan for their decisions. Ultimately it is the government which is accountable.

These decisions do not come easy, Mr. Speaker. They are the result of long and hard soul-searching by every government member. As a result of this award we were faced with two conflicting principles -- the integrity of a law we passed, versus the integrity of our financial commitment to Saskatchewan taxpayers.

By these actions, Mr. Speaker, the government has shown that it will not abdicate its responsibility to all Saskatchewan families.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the announcement that the minister has just given . . . or the address he's just given to this Assembly certainly would indicate there must have been a series of surveys and long discussion that took place regarding this particular debate.

None the less, Mr. Speaker, one has to question the real integrity of this House and of the minister and of the government regarding legislation; regarding laws that are passed; the importance of laws; the importance to obey the laws that we pass in this Assembly.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that as the minister indicated in his address, the law that was passed said that the recommendations of the commission would be legally binding on both the judges and the government. It would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that there are many people across this province that are going to look at this decision, this announcement made this afternoon, and they're going to say, well what about the other laws? What about the laws regarding farmers in this province? Or what about the laws regarding co-op members, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that even though I can sympathize somewhat with the minister in the fact of the percentage of increase that the commission was going to allow the judges, we have seen over the past year or so, Mr. Speaker, substantial increases have gone to ministerial assistants in this Assembly and government in ministerial offices -- substantial increases -- something like 37 per cent in some cases, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're not standing here arguing about the increases to judges, but we must stand here and for the fact of what is really right legally and technically and ethically, right in this province -- the fact that if we're going to set laws we better be prepared to listen by the laws . . . to listen to those laws, and to adhere to those laws.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's only fair that the taxpayers, even though they would certainly disagree with the rate of increase that the commission would have allowed the judges, at the same time must look at the fact that, who do we really listen to? Who is really important? And as we've also suggested, and the minister I think indicated, there was full support in this

House when the legislation went forward. Well I'm not sure; we'd have to go back and look at the votes.

But I would think that maybe as we look at this, as the minister looks at retroactively changing his legislation, I would suggest that the minister and the government take a very serious look at how they set up boards and commissions down the road, and we again take a look at setting up all-party, totally independent committees and commissions that will address questions looking at not only the taxpayers and how they're affected, but how we as elected representatives and governments of the day are perceived by the people of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Minister, even though I can empathize with the minister, I suggest we must look at the other alternative and what kind of a position we take and how people review or see the justice-making system in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's very important today to just review the process that has transpired leading up to this situation.

Mr. Speaker, the government has a massive majority. Any legislation brought forward to this Assembly is going to be passed in this Assembly if the government so wishes it. And that's because of their massive majority, Mr. Speaker.

This particular process involved the government bringing forward legislation. With its massive majority, it wouldn't have mattered what anyone else did here, the process was agreed to, Mr. Speaker.

Not only did the government agree to this particular process, the judges agreed to the process. And regardless of the outcome of the independent commission, Mr. Speaker, the judges would have to have lived by the legislation because it was law and it was a process agreed to by all, Mr. Speaker.

Not only does this indicate to the independent commission that its work was valueless, it leads other independent commissions in the future to really feel undermined, that perhaps whatever it is they decide will not be valued . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I don't know if the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster has the floor or whether the Leader of the Third Party has the floor. But I think I recognized the Leader of the Third Party, and she may continue.

Ms. Haverstock: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess all that one should comment on, not only by the comments being thrown about in this particular Assembly but also by the thunderous applause given after the minister's statement . . . Perhaps that is the saddest of all, Mr. Minister: that we have come to the point in this Assembly where people applaud enthusiastically the breaking of the law.

And I can state unequivocally that we do not think, as a Liberal caucus, that a 24 per cent increase for any group in this province is fair, nor is it just. But I can say proudly, I can say very proudly . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm sure that all the ministers on the other side, Mr. Speaker, are very proud that they took a 90 per cent increase when they became ministers.

But, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I would like to ensure that people think about today is that it was this particular government that brought about this process. The people involved agreed to the process. And, Mr. Speaker, they have now chosen to turn aside, to turn a back to, to throw out all of the values that the people of Saskatchewan value, and those values are the value of a handshake, the value of someone's word, and particularly the law of our particular land. And I think they should all be ashamed of themselves today.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 41 -- An Act to amend The Registered Psychologists Act

Hon. Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Registered Psychologists Act now be introduced and read a first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 42 -- An Act to amend The Physical Therapists Act, 1984

Hon. Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Physical Therapists Act, 1984 be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 43 -- An Act respecting the Licensing and Operation of Medical Laboratories

Hon. Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill respecting the Licensing and Operation of Medical Laboratories be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 44 -- An Act respecting Chiropractors

Hon. Mr. Calvert: -- Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill respecting Chiropractors be now introduced and read a first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Presenting Petitions

The Speaker: -- Before orders of the day, I wish to

remind members that when presenting petitions that only the prayer and not the whole petition is to be read. I note today by the petition that was presented that the member from Moosomin not only read the prayer but the whole petition. And I think the experienced member knows full well that that is unacceptable in this House.

Mr. Neudorf: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order.

The Speaker: -- Would the member please state his point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Neudorf: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday during question period my colleague from Moosomin rose in this House to ask the Minister of Justice questions regarding sworn testimony which alleged that the minister had ensured no police intervention when the Bear Claw casino opened up.

Although the minister made comments that he could not answer this question because the issue was before the courts, the member from Moosomin had several supplementaries he wished to ask. I refer you, Mr. Speaker, to *Hansard* of March 21, 1994. And before he was allowed to finish his question, Mr. Speaker called order and then interrupted the member to disallow the question.

In Beauchesne's, 6th Edition, section 323, states clearly that "Questions of order are decided only when they arise and not in anticipation." Mr. Speaker, my point of order is simply that the Speaker cannot possibly anticipate the question which will be asked nor can the Speaker determine whether a matter is *sub judice*. Only the minister can make that determination.

Mr. Speaker, precedent has been set on numerous occasions in this Assembly which allows the member to put his questions forward on an issue which may be before the court. It has been traditionally up to the minister to answer or refuse to answer based on his understanding of the matter.

Mr. Speaker, in *Hansard* of May 30, 1989, the present Minister of Justice himself took advantage of this situation. As an opposition member at that time the Minister of Justice asked six questions about a matter which he full well knew was before the courts. When reminded of that situation by the minister, that member, the current Minister of Justice, said, and I quote:

It's very interesting that this matter has been referred to the RCMP, but it does not absolve this minister of the responsibility of answering questions in this House.

On the next page, the hon. member from The Battlefords used verbatim transcripts from a then-current court trial as the basis for a series of questions. From *Hansard* of May 31, 1989,

that member stated as a preamble to his question, and I quote:

And if you are suggesting that these are our allegations, I suggest you read the transcripts from the examination for discovery of a court case that's currently going on . . .

Mr. Speaker, in each instance the opposition member and the minister answering were both fully aware that the matter was before the courts. At no time was there an interruption or intervention from the Speaker during what was a very lengthy series of questions on that topic; questions which the minister answered.

Again, the point of order, Mr. Speaker, is that it is a responsibility of the minister . . . it is the responsibility of the minister to make the decision to answer or not to answer a particular question, not for the Speaker to become involved in debate.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

(1430)

Hon. Mr. Anguish: -- Mr. Speaker, I wish to, since I'm mentioned in the hon. member's point of order, I do want to clarify the situation for you before you make a ruling. I recall making that statement in this Assembly and the situation is quite different. The situation to which the hon. member refers is a civil action taking place in the city of Montreal. And at that time, Mr. Tsuru, a Japanese business man, was taking Mr. Guy Montpetit to court in a civil action to recover money that Guy Montpetit allegedly owed to Mr. Tsuru. And those questions were asked in the House in regard to information that was uncovered about Mr. Guy Montpetit in something that was not the subject of a court case in Saskatchewan.

But the key point here in terms of the references I made on the day that the member referred to in a previous legislature, had to do with the civil action. And in the case here it's quite different in that there's a criminal action under way in the courts. And I wanted the Hon. Speaker to be aware of that before you make any ruling.

The Speaker: -- I thank the hon. member for his point of order and the member from The Battlefords for that explanation. I will reserve my judgement and bring back a decision to the House at my earliest opportunity.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE BILLS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 01 -- An Act Respecting The Saskatoon Foundation

Clauses 1 to 20 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 02 -- An Act to amend An Act to incorporate Full Gospel Bible Institute

Clauses 1 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 01 -- An Act respecting The Saskatoon Foundation

Ms. Lorje: -- . . . that Bill No. 01, An Act respecting The Saskatoon Foundation, be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

Bill No. 02 -- An Act to amend An Act to incorporate Full Gospel Bible Institute

Mr. Boyd: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 02, An Act to amend An Act to incorporate the Full Gospel Bible Institute be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Resolution No. 36 -- Commendation of Farm Support Review Committee

Mr. Flavel: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the close of my remarks I will move the following motion:

That this Assembly commend the Farm Support Review Committee for completing its report on farm safety net options which the Government of Saskatchewan will use as the basis for negotiating with the federal government and other provinces for a national farm safety net program that better reflects the needs of the family farm.

Mr. Speaker, on January 12 of this year, the Farm Support Review Committee presented the report on safety net designs. This report is further to the interim report on guidelines and principles presented by the review committee in May of 1993.

The report contains broad program-design concepts. These concepts have been developed using principles identified in the report as a guideline. The programs will most certainly require more analysis and development of specific design features prior to them being implemented, or the final program being designed.

Mr. Speaker, the committee has provided these broad concepts as a guideline for further development and discussion in joint federal-provincial meetings to

develop a future safety net for agriculture.

The committee was made up of 31 members, 12 of which represented the farm organizations and 19 farm members at large. Mr. Speaker, the farm members at large represented on the board were the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the National Farmers Union, Flax Growers of Western Canada, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, the Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association, the Western Barley Growers Association, the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, the Saskatchewan Canola Growers Association, the Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association, the Saskatchewan Pulse Crop Development Board, the United Grain Growers, and the Forage Council of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the people were appointed at large and they came from every corner of the province. They were from Marcelin, Climax, Tisdale, Kelvington, Balcarres, Admiral, Conquest, and from Strasbourg.

As I said, the purpose of the committee was to develop guidelines of principles for the development of a long-term farm support program. But it was also to bring forward some of the program concepts to the Minister of Agriculture and Food. The guidelines provided by the committee were regarding such things as the level of support, the distribution of the support, the environmental implications, trade issues, payment and premium delivery mechanisms, the linkage of this to other programs and so on.

It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, when one reads the purpose of the committee as it set for itself. And that reads:

The purpose of farm support is to maintain the number of viable farms in order to strengthen rural communities by encouraging agriculture which is economically and environmentally sustainable.

The committee also set out 25 principles relating to economics, the community, trade, the funding of safety nets, the administration of safety nets, and environment. One can surely understand the immense task that they then took on to develop programs that keep all of these principles in line and the purpose in focus.

Of course there's no doubt where trade-offs of these principles were made but still they did a tremendous job, and I want to take this opportunity to thank the committee members for a job well done.

These people gave up much of their time away from their careers to help our government establish a program that will strengthen rural life in Saskatchewan. I might add, Mr. Speaker, that one of the principles established by the committee was that production insurance -- in other words, crop insurance -- would be maintained and be separate from other farm support programs.

Mr. Speaker, the three concepts that I'm going to outline work alongside production insurance. The concepts are the pool stabilization program, and that pool stabilization program provides individual protection from reduced income due to production losses and/or low prices. The stabilization pool operates at the industry level and pools the risk over all participants and all commodities.

(1445)

Individual participants trigger payments from the stabilization pool. The individual payment is the shortfall between a percentage of the five-year gross margin and the current year gross margin of the participant, not the industry. The gross margin is the net eligible sales minus eligible expenses. Some of those expenses could include labour and rent.

A minimum income trigger, in addition to the gross margin trigger, may be necessary to achieve stabilization effectiveness. Where total net income falls below a minimum threshold, payments could be triggered. The stabilization pool can go into deficit. The pool account deficits are guaranteed by the government and interest is charged back to the pool account.

The participants choose the level of protection they need for their farms, from 50 per cent to 100 per cent of the five-year average gross margin. In addition, there could be an option for participants to choose support based upon a three-year or a seven-year average gross margin. This allows participants to maintain stabilization coverage at a level and a cost that is appropriate to their needs.

Mr. Speaker, the stabilization pool is the industry fund that holds contributions from participants and from which payments are withdrawn when a participant triggers a pay-out. Surplus funds in the pool are invested to earn interest for the pool. And when the stabilization pool has insufficient funds to make a payment to participants, it can borrow funds from the government and go into deficit.

Participants pay contributions to the fund based on a percentage of sales, collected at the point of sale. Premiums are established by commodity, based on an actual assessment of the risk of that commodity. Collection at the point of sale results in premiums being paid throughout the year rather than being billed as one lump sum. This is similar to how premiums were collected for the western grain stabilization plan which producers indicate is preferable to how premiums are collected for the present gross revenue insurance program.

Premium rates would fall within the range of a premium band during the life of the contract. Producers are assured that premiums would not rise beyond the upper limit defined by the band nor decrease below the lower limit defined by the band.

An option that could be examined is to operate with no producer contributions and a correspondingly

lower level of support. This reduces the administration costs that would be needed to collect producer premiums. And the premiums would be tax deductible. On the other side of that also, Mr. Speaker, the payments would also be taxable when they were received.

The program would be voluntary and cover all commodities with the exception of supply and management commodities. A producer who enrolls has to participate for a period of years. This maintains the financial viability of the fund by ensuring producers participate both in the good times and in the bad times.

Producers with over \$50,000 off-farm income are not eligible to participate in this fund. The program is directed at bona fide farmers.

This program concept consists of an individualized account . . . or of an industry account, and would be actuarially sound over time.

The next one is the support income stabilization account. This program concept consists of an individual account which is sensitive to the desire of the individual to build an account for future stabilization purposes and to the particular sector circumstances which impact upon the individual's income situation.

An individual producer has an account which receives funds from two separate streams. The first stream is dependent upon the individual contributing levies. These contributions are matched by the government and contributed to the participant's individual account.

The second stream of funds flowing to the individual account are sensitive to the sector needs. Various sectors defined for the purpose of the program, for example, would be cattle, grain, hogs, or others. The commodities that are substitutable in terms of production would be grouped into each sector.

The government would then provide funding necessary to support each sector equivalent to the shortfall between aggregate cost of production, between that aggregate cost and the net eligible sales. Producers would not contribute to the sector funding.

Premiums would be placed in an agriculture stabilization fund and the agriculture stabilization fund would trigger payments to individual accounts based on the shortfall of the sector. For example, if the hog sector income falls below the support base, then a sector payment would flow to accounts of hog producers. Once funds are placed in the individual account, either through participant contributions or sector payments, the funds become the participant's property. The participant's account would be capped, and the two streams of the fund cease when the account reaches that cap. Mr. Speaker, the participant receives payments according to a payment formula which applies to the individual account.

Mr. Speaker, the third account is a farm income adjustment plan. The objective of the farm income adjustment plan is to provide a simple and direct method of support to the agricultural industry. The farm income adjustment plan is farm support based on the cost of production for a sector. The farm income adjustment plan pay-outs are calculated as the difference between cost of production and the market revenue. Mr. Speaker, all support is rolled into one program with an individual farmer being responsible. On this concept, the Crow benefit is recommended to be maintained.

Mr. Speaker, I think that all the concepts represent a different attempt to meet the program principles. I did want to say on the last farm income adjustment plan, Mr. Speaker, that it is totally funded, totally government funded on an ongoing basis, although it would be possible to have a producer premium feature built into the program.

A sector pay-out would be triggered if the current year gross sector revenue falls below a historic average, the sector cost of the production on an aggregate basis. The sector payment would be distributed to participants based on their historic market for commodities in that sector compared to the historic market revenue for all participants and adjusted by the participant land debt ratio.

Of course the final program concept will depend, for one thing, on the relative importance that is attached to each of the 25 principles identified by the committee.

Mr. Speaker, much more work will have to be done to weigh the program designs against the principles in order to choose the best program possible.

The job now is to fine tune the specific program features and to further analyse the affordability and costability of these programs. These will be among the next steps of the process leading to the establishment of a new generation of safety nets.

The committee and the government recognizes the importance of joint development of safety nets with other provinces and the federal government. The report brought forward will be a great framework for joint federal-provincial safety net development.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that this farm safety net be revisited, a new program brought in. The 1991 GRIP did not work. The GRIP programs as they are now are not recommended by farmers, are not accepted by farmers. A new farm safety net that will handle all farm-sector commodities in the province and in the Dominion of Canada has to be developed now.

The committee will make recommendations regarding improvements to the production insurance in a separate report.

Mr. Speaker, I want to again commend the people that made up the farm safety . . . or the Farm Support

Review Committee for a job well done and to thank them for their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Melville:

That this Assembly commend the Farm Support Review Committee for completing its report on farm safety net options which the Government of Saskatchewan will use as the basis for negotiating with the federal government and other provinces for a national whole-farm safety net program that better reflects the needs of the family farm.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A great pleasure that I can rise in the Assembly and speak to the motion that was moved by the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood commending the Farm Support Review Committee for their work, the due diligence that they spent on putting together an option for Saskatchewan to use in negotiating with the federal government and the other provinces and a national nation-wide farm safety net program.

The member from Last Mountain-Touchwood spent a fair bit of time about the details and some of the things that are in the report. I want to spend a few minutes talking about more of the process and more of why I believe a good, strong, uncomplicated program with stability is needed in the '90s and into the year 2000.

The Farm Support Review Committee, Mr. Speaker, held quite a few meetings throughout the province. They did, I think, a good job in listening to people in rural Saskatchewan to try and put together a good, strong base from where the government can start to negotiate.

That would only have been a small part of other work, Mr. Speaker. I know that they spent many hours putting together the information and the ideas that they heard after they had toured the province. And sometimes that's the most demanding and the most trying time is to reach consensus, especially with such a large committee, to be able to get a common ground from which to put a report together.

I think that by holding these meetings in rural Saskatchewan, that was what I think is the most important part of it. The economic flow and spin-off from agriculture in Saskatchewan and in western Canada and in Canada in general is quite enormous. So we must be prepared to look seriously at maintaining and enhancing the family operation of the farms that are out there because that is our economic base from which we can grow from, in Saskatchewan and western Canada and Canada.

I can remember as a child coming into Regina with my mother and father on numerous occasions, and the conversation as we got into the city of Regina, just on the outskirts, Regina, would always go something like this. My mother would say, gee, look at all of this

development and building that's going on. Where are they getting all the money from? And my dad would say, well that's simple; it's sort of coming out of rural Saskatchewan because that's the economic base of this province; that's the driver. The majority of the money that drives the province, drives the economy in western Canada, comes out of agriculture. And if I've heard that comment in that car, if I had a dollar for every time that conversation went around, I would be a fairly wealthy individual today, which I can assure you I'm not.

(1500)

As I had mentioned, we need a program that is as uncomplicated as possible, something that farmers can feel they can work with and is user-friendly. Something that is predictable. Something that we have now that is not predictable.

I happened to notice in **The Western Producer** on the last issue, I believe it was, where a farmer in Alberta when he got his GRIP payment, thought he was going to get \$10,000, a little over \$10,000. Well when the cheque came, Mr. Speaker, he got \$40. That's not a program that has stability in it or a program that you sort of know where you're coming from.

I think the new program that we're going to be designing with the federal government and the rest of the provinces has to meet the needs of the farmers so that there is stability. A stability of farm income so that families that live in rural Saskatchewan and are shopping in our communities, their kids are going to school, have a stability and an income that they feel comfortable there and there is no drain away from the smaller communities into the larger centres.

Mr. Speaker, growing up on a family farm in rural Saskatchewan in the '60s, in my particular case anyway -- I know my neighbour's was not a lot different -- the family, the whole family was involved. Everybody -- mother, father, children -- would work in seeding time and milking cows and harvest time. It was sort of a family operation.

People are telling me today, well you know farming used to be a way of life. It's not a way of life any more; it's a business. Well, Mr. Speaker, it was a way of life in the '60s and it was also a business. We made decisions based on economics, what your family operation was going to be into, if you're going to be into chickens, or hogs, or grain, or dairy. It was based on economics and it's also based on economics today.

But when we were growing up, everybody took part in the economic decision. Everybody participated in the work. Now I see in rural Saskatchewan and I see in my own family where because of economics, because I believe of shortfalls in support programs that we've had over the years, the whole family's out working. So that when work has to be done on the farm, it's just a mad dash on a long weekend, or after 5 o'clock or 6 o'clock, after the parents come from a day's work in the town.

And it's no longer sort of fun to be out there. You got to shuffle the children off to grandma or grandpa, or an aunt or an uncle, or a neighbour because you haven't got time to spend with them in the farm operation, because it's so important to get all this work done in such a short period of time, because people are holding down two and three jobs. Families are holding down two and three jobs besides trying to run a farm operation.

And I think when you see that happen . . . and I look at my neighbours and my friends that I grew up with. The family was stable, there was enough of an income, albeit we weren't immensely wealthy, but there was enough of an income that we didn't have to run out to get extra work to get extra income. We were able to work the farm as a unit.

I think now we are seeing accidents because of the farm pressure and the importance to get a whole bunch of work done in a very, very short period of time. We're seeing children that are growing up and not being involved in the farm operation, just simply based on the fact that there isn't the time to bring them along. And I think that's part of the farm fabric. That's part of the family farm, is to be able to work as a unit.

And I think the farm support programs in the past, along with . . . because of the lower grain prices and I believe wheat farm programs, have sort of forced people off the farm and it's eroded a family base. That's why I think that the next farm support program has to have some stability there so that families can make a decision on what sectors they want to go into and be able to concentrate on it, do it well, and not necessarily do it like I've stated in the past here, but do it in a haphazard manner where there's trying to get a lot of work done in a short order and there are accidents and a lot of economic hardship also, along with health problems and health concerns.

The committee, as I had said, I think did a tremendous job by taking all these factors into consideration and coming together and hammering out a recommendation that we think will serve Saskatchewan well.

And if it serves Saskatchewan well and the farm economy is strong, Saskatchewan's economy will also grow and it will contribute to the economy of western Canada and Canada in general. And we're only one small part of the agriculture sector in this country . . . one of the bigger parts, so therefore one of the most important parts.

So in closing I'd just like to again commend the Farm Support Review Committee for their work, for their due diligence. And I think we're going to have a farm support program; I believe we're going to have a support program in the future that's going to address the needs that I talked about in my remarks this afternoon.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it gives me pleasure to be able to participate in the debate this afternoon as brought forward by the hon. member opposite. And I have a few comments that I would like to make in contribution to this debate this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

And under private members' motions, resolution no. 36 is what we are debating this afternoon, and it states at the beginning, and I just want to read a little bit of the actual motion itself:

That this Assembly commend the Farm Support Review Committee for completing its report on farm safety net options . . .

And, Mr. Speaker, I have a copy of that report here as well and I want to note, Mr. Speaker, the numbers of individuals that have participated in this particular review and the recommendation that they subsequently made to the government, particularly to the Minister of Agriculture. And it's an impressive list of names, Mr. Speaker, that have contributed their time and their talents toward this particular review and the recommendations that they have come up with.

And so as I look over the 12 representatives of the farm organizations that were involved and the 19 farm members at large, Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to criticize really about the make-up of the individuals involved in this particular review.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have no problem in going along with the member's resolution in so far as we have just stated now. But having said that, Mr. Speaker, I must take some exception to what happens to these kinds of reports after they leave the hands of the committee and become property of the government, Mr. Speaker, because simply put, the failure to act and the failure on the government's part to come up with a concise, precise, long-term safety net for the farm families of this province is what concerns us as the official opposition.

So having said that, Mr. Speaker, while we support in large measure the work of the committee, we are going to take exception with what this government has done as a result of that report.

Mr. Speaker, there are issues in here, for example, that deal with the options that farmers have, the options that will be available to them. And that reminds me very much, Mr. Speaker, of the government's stand for example on the crop insurance program.

It has been conceded that one of the problems that we are facing as a farm community is the fact that there is no recourse that farmers have to access funds, for example, which are rightfully theirs. It's acknowledged that there will be most likely no pay-out under the GRIP program this spring. That means that there's going to be deficiency of cash. There's going to be a deficiency of cash and perhaps

even borrowing power for farmers to be able to put their seed into the ground and indeed become self-sustaining once more.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it need not be that way, because there are funds available. There are funds available that should accrue to the farmers themselves because they bought into an insurance program. And with \$300 million now in the account available to this government to pay back to the farmers, that would alleviate much of the concern that farmers have. But this is the problem that we're facing. It's an ad hoc type of an approach with no long-term plan in view.

And when we take a look at the reports that are handed out, for example, on what this government is now basing the future of the province, the future of agriculture in this province, and it's a scheme called **Agriculture 2000** -- A Strategic Direction for the Future of Saskatchewan's Agriculture Industry. And that's part of the problem that arises, Mr. Speaker, because on page 7 of that particular document it talks about vision. It talks about:

In the face of powerful international pressures and trends in agriculture, Saskatchewan's overall objective for its agricultural sector must be made clear.

That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the problem. The vision is not clear; the vision is clouded because we do not know in what direction we go because, Mr. Speaker, there's ample evidence -- ample evidence -- that this government says one thing then tends to go and do exactly the opposite of what they have said that they would want to do and what part of their strategy is.

So, Mr. Speaker, to put evidence before you in the case that I am making, we have but to look at how they have handled the GRIP program. And never mind the fact that the contracts were broken with 60,000 farmers of this province, the bottom line is that Saskatchewan farmers now are receiving less than any of their counterparts in other provinces. The funds are available -- I've just made that point to you, Mr. Speaker -- but because of the direction they're going, it just is something they are saying and the Premier is saying, these funds will not go back and revert to the government.

And the minister gets up and makes a nice speech, but says well the commodity prices are up so therefore the pay-outs are down, and it's a market insurance, and we don't know exactly how things are going to develop and therefore we can't anticipate the future, and there may be nothing left in the fund, so how can we make out payments.

So this type of rationale, Mr. Speaker, is good for debate in this legislature but it does nothing for the farmers out there who are trying to cope, that are sincerely trying to cope.

And then we take a look at the farming sector. When we take a look at how rural Saskatchewan has been dealt devastating blow after devastating blow over the

last couple of years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's amazing that rural Saskatchewan is in the shape that it still is in despite the best efforts, it seems, of the members opposite to bring them down to their knees.

And we can take a look at municipal sharing, the revenue sharing. The municipal revenue sharing is a good example of extra burdens and extra stress being put upon rural Saskatchewan in particular. We can take a look -- and I say this, Mr. Speaker, in the context that while in appearances the government may be trying to put their best foot forward, may be trying to help rural Saskatchewan, very often the policies that they adopt are counter-productive -- they will do exactly the opposite what they were intended to do.

You take, for example, the . . . (inaudible) . . . that this government put forward as far as the FeedGAP was concerned. What did they do? The first announcement they made when this minister became Minister of Agriculture was to do away with the FeedGAP program. Then when there was a uproar in the province they said, well perhaps on second thought, maybe we should not do away with the FeedGAP program. So they replaced it with the red meat interim stabilization program.

And I can't for the life of me understand why the cowboys of the province got full restoration and yet the hog producers only got two-thirds. And that rationale is something that I would want the Minister of Agriculture to address in estimates when we have that opportunity to ask those questions.

(1515)

But here's an example. Now immediately . . . and the rationale being of course that Alberta had their Crow offset program so therefore to be competitive we needed that in Saskatchewan. But at the first opportunity, what does the Minister of Agriculture do? He says, now at the end of September there will be no more red meat interim stabilization program. That is dust as well.

And that follows, Mr. Deputy Speaker, exactly on the heels where the Minister of Agriculture says agriculture is number one; it's top priority; we must do everything that we can do to maintain it.

And this other document that I was just showing you here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is their vision for the year 2000, **Agriculture 2000**, where we're supposed to have . . . diversification is the key word. Diversification is the direction which this government wants to go.

But yet in the very same breath they will do away with the FeedGAP program, they will do away with the red meat interim stabilization program, they will raise the energy prices, which is a very, very significant portion of intensive livestock producers' cost of production. They raise them willy-nilly, along with SGI and SaskTel, and you can name whatever you want to name -- the utilities have all increased. In other

words, the cost of doing business in Saskatchewan has been raised significantly, again counter-productive to their alleged objective, which is to diversify and to increase the economic viability of the agricultural sector of Saskatchewan.

And that is what I find, and many farmers are telling me they find, so distressing about the direction in which this government is going.

You take a look at the rural service centres. How significant were those rural service centres and the expertise of the agrologists in those service centres in disseminating information to farmers. Farmers who were looking and taking seriously the government's commitment to diversification and saying, all right, how do I get into the hog business; how do I get into the beef business; what are the pros and cons; give me some ideas, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That information is not readily available to those members now, to those members of the farming community. Another counter-productive step taken by this government.

We could go on and we could talk about the livestock cash advance. You see, Mr. Minister, that is the direction that they are going. Now am I standing here in my place today recognizing some of the fiscal realities of this province, advocating that the government go holus-bolus into programs that are going to cost the taxpayers a lot of money.

I think we have to rationalize that entire situation on the fact that we've got to get bangs for our bucks. If we're going to go into industries and if we're going to diversify, the support must be there. Not necessarily only economic support, Mr. Deputy Speaker; that's not what I'm advocating. But we are in a changing world. We are in the world here where Saskatchewan has the leading edge when it comes into biotechnology.

We take a look at the University of Saskatchewan, the potential that is there. What has this government done, what has this Minister of Agriculture done to diversify? Has he gone to Ottawa, has he asked the NRC (National Research Council), for example, give us a bit of your action? Has he asked any of the federal agencies to come into Saskatchewan, look at our regional advantage that we have? We've got a university, leading in medical and biotechnology, as I was saying; we've got the open spaces; we have the facilities. Let's get some of those things into the province of Saskatchewan.

Has the minister even done any advocating on our part? I suspect not. Because there are producer groups out there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that have approached me and said, can you help us get this federal agency in, because the provincial Minister of Agriculture does not seem to want to move on this. And so there's an opportunity there that we could be taking, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What about contract marketing? What about contract marketing? What are we doing in that respect? Because if you're going to get bigger business, if you

could get more farmers doing bigger things . . . The techniques of farming are changing on a daily basis and the old technique of adjusting your beef herd, depending on your crop, are no longer with us. I think that is a reality of the changing times. And we want a government that is willing and able to do that, not only on the short term, but we have to take a look at the long term as well.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other thing that I think that we have to spend a little bit of time on, and that is the so-called crop insurance program -- production insurance. When we take a look, and when I listen to the farmers that approach me and they say: what has this government got in store for us; GRIP is totally unreliable now; we've got production insurance; we're told we have production insurance; what is that? It's like buying the chassis of a Cadillac and paying for that and then having to pay for all the options -- do you want a motor?

We say we're going to have crop insurance. We say that there's going to be spot loss hail, for example. Well spot loss hail is something that a lot of farmers have approached us on on a continual basis and it's a recognized fact that we need that.

But what does this government decide to do? Immediately double indemnity? Oh no, no. If you have spot loss hail with crop insurance and you get hailed out in that section, that's all going to be subtracted because the rest of your crop is going to still support you within whatever that minimum income is supposed to be. There's no point in it. But you're paying extra. It's an option, Mr. Speaker.

And this whole plan is built on options that are going to cost farmers extra, with very little opportunity to get anything back. That whole farm insurance, it's the same thing, where you roll all your crops into a basket as the saying goes, which makes that program into a basket case as far as many farmers are concerned.

Because they can pay their premiums . . . Oh yes, the premiums may be a little bit lower, the Minister of Agriculture will say. But what opportunity does a farmer have for pay-out relative to the cost of insuring it? Or the specialty crop, the specialty crop insurance, again as an option, and again farmer facing additional costs in order to acquire that insurance.

Mr. Speaker, quite frankly I think the farmers of this province are viewing the plans of this government somewhat like you no doubt are viewing my speech right now, in that it seems to be going from this point to this point to that point -- as somebody said, a point here and a point there, that's the definition, and a lot of bull in between.

But the point that I'm trying to make is that this is the concept that farmers have. The farmers that I talk to do not have confidence in this government. The farmers that I talk to say, how can I get out? I want nothing to do with this. That is what the farmers are telling me.

What we have to impress upon this government is that

they must put action to the words. And you can have all these flowery reports that I've alluded to in here, the best intentions, and the individuals who were involved in these had the best intentions and they gave of their time and their energies and their abilities to come up with these reports. But unless it's put into action, it is all futile, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to move an amendment to this motion, and the member from Kindersley will be seconding this amendment. And it states thus:

That all of the words following "Assembly" be deleted and the following substituted:

demand the provincial government to immediately address concerns of Saskatchewan agriculture producers and to stop the implementation of decisions harmful to the agricultural industry such as the government's restructuring of GRIP; slashes to municipal revenue sharing; cancellation of FeedGAP; closure of rural service centres; massive hikes to breeder fees and Crown pasture rental fees; cancellation of livestock cash advance program and others;

and instead, consider implementation of a program for the 21st century dealing with biotechnology, commodities, and contract marketing; use of the information highway to develop a workable, practical, long-term solution to problems plaguing Saskatchewan's agriculture industry, because the Farm Support Review Committee report fails to address immediate problems faced by Saskatchewan agriculture producers, as well as those in the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I so move this amendment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: -- I find the amendment in order. So at this point the debate will continue concurrent on the amendment and on the main motion.

Mr. Boyd: -- Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the amendment is an excellent amendment to a motion that I think the government members should be embarrassed to bring forward into the legislature of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

They bring forward a motion, Mr. Speaker, that deals with agriculture, a subject that I would say, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of the members opposite don't have a great deal of credibility to even be discussing in light of the types of things that they have done towards agriculture in the course of the last two years, Mr. Speaker.

What they have done is nothing but a cruel joke on the farmers of Saskatchewan since they have taken office, Mr. Speaker, in the sanctimonious way that only the

members of the back bench of this government can come forward and bring forward motions dealing with agriculture. I say that they should be ashamed of themselves for talking about agriculture in the way they do.

If we just think back for a few years ago, Mr. Speaker, on the campaign trail prior to the election in '91, members of the government were running around this province all over the place. And you can point them out. There's a whole bunch of them sitting there, Mr. Speaker, that I can think of that ran around the province -- there's one standing and waving his hand -- suggesting that they were going to go down to Ottawa and they were going to get more money for agriculture and they were going to do everything possible for agriculture.

And the member from Biggar knows . . . I remember being at a meeting where he was at and said that we're going to go down there and we're going to grab more money out of the hands of that federal government and we're going to bring it back and share it with all you farmers -- that's what he was going to do -- and we're going to bring in a farm program that deals with all of the problems associated with agriculture in Saskatchewan.

And where is it? Where is it? Haven't done one thing, not one iota since you've taken office, except hurt agriculture. Haven't done a single thing that's addressed any of the concerns with respect to agriculture at all.

Had a program called GRIP '91. There was some problems with it; everybody understands that. But at least, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at least, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the farmers of Saskatchewan believed it was bankable. They believed it was bankable, and it was bankable.

I recall, Mr. Speaker, going to the bank in the spring of 1990 and when the discussions were taking place with respect to the farm program, and you walked in there and the bank said, I want to see what your figures are going to be for the GRIP program upcoming. And farmers laid it down right in front of them.

I remember in my situation it was something like \$150 an acre, \$160 an acres, and they accepted it and said yes. Well I was just back at that same bank a couple of days ago, Mr. Speaker, and they look at this program, the '93 GRIP program, the changes that you guys made, and he said, this is nothing but a cruel joke on the farmers of Saskatchewan.

They wouldn't lend 5 cents on the program today, not a nickel they would lend against the program that the Minister of Environment today -- the minister of Agriculture of that day -- brought in, Mr. Speaker. They wouldn't lend a sou against your program, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I mean it was interesting, as we all recall members all over the House were going to go down and squeeze a bunch a money out of the federal government. So they

loaded up all their friends on a plane right here in Regina, I think it was. I think . . . was the member from . . . were you there with them, the member from Biggar? Didn't get to go on that holiday.

But anyway they flew off, flew off down to Ottawa; chartered a big plane -- Kinistino went, that's right. Went down to Ottawa; chartered a plane. Roy was at the head of the parade and the member from Rosetown-Elrose was sitting right behind him, and away they went. Going to go down to Ottawa and come back with a big load of cash in the back.

(1530)

And what did they come back with? They came back with a big, fat bill for the freight that day, Mr. Speaker. Come back with zero. Not a thing. And I remember being at the meeting at the Agridome, and the Premier stood up, and that was when he was going to lead the charge. And he was, in only the form that the Premier of this province can give, he gave this rousing speech about how he was going to go down there and grab all the money out of the hands of the federal government and bring it back and sprinkle it all over the land, sort of thing.

And what did he get? Nothing. And since that day, Mr. Speaker, there hasn't been 5 cents given to the farmers of Saskatchewan by this government and there never will be, Mr. Speaker.

What have they done for agriculture? Let's look at it. Change the GRIP program. Took a bunch of money out of farmers' hands. We now understand at the end of this year it's probably going to be something in the range of \$320 million. And I'm glad today it appears at least that the Minister of Agriculture suggests that he is going to try and find out some way to give it back to farmers. Well I should say so.

The farmers of Saskatchewan right now are going into spring seeding in the course of another month or so, six weeks. They haven't got money to put the crop in the ground, and this government's sitting with \$320 million of farmers' premiums in their back pocket and won't distribute 1 cent of it because they know darn well that the farmers of Saskatchewan want it right now and they can't give it right now.

What else did they do? They've increased FeedGAP . . . or I mean they took away FeedGAP. They've increased fees in every single area of agriculture. You people are so caught up in the '50s and '60s of agriculture policy, you don't know where you're going.

Politics of the National Farmers Union and other left-wing farm groups. That's who you people listen to. The only ones you listen to are the likes of the National Farmers Union -- the most backwards farm lobby group in the history of Canada, that's what I say they are, Mr. Speaker. The most backwards farm group in the history of Canada. One good thing about them though, one good thing about them though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand they won't be around

much longer. That's the one good thing about them, Mr. Speaker. They're flat broke, can't even run their own organization, Mr. Speaker.

They won't last; I predict they won't last another year. They're down to 4,000 members, something in that range -- 4,000 members. This big, broad, nationwide political farm group -- 4,000 members. What a joke. What a joke -- 4,000 members, broke, don't have any money to carry on the operations of their current mandate, Mr. Speaker.

They've been against, Mr. Speaker, every single, every single initiative to improve agriculture in Saskatchewan, or in the nation for that matter. Every single initiative to try and bring Saskatchewan agriculture into the 21st century they've been against. Hang your hat on the Crow, stuff like that, Mr. Speaker -- outmoded, outdated information of the years gone by, Mr. Speaker.

I also remember years and years ago when the minister of Agriculture used to stand in his place -- Gordon MacMurchy, of that day; maybe some of you remember him. He used to stand in his place and say, the farmers of Saskatchewan, we don't need tandem grain trucks in this province. The farmers of Saskatchewan, you can get along with a little old one-ton or two-ton; you don't need to have that big stuff; I know what's good for you; the farmers of Saskatchewan understand that the minister of Agriculture knows that.

Well I ask you, whose business was it of his to suggest to Saskatchewan and farmers how they should run their operations? Whose business was it of his to enter into that kind of discussion? He knew nothing about modernizing agriculture. And the people opposite understand that, Mr. Speaker, but they still are caught up in them same old outmoded, dated, policies of the Gordon MacMurchys of the world.

Mr. Speaker, you destroyed the GRIP program -- a program that needed some changes, no doubt, Mr. Speaker, but needed some changes for the benefit of agriculture, not for the benefit of the Minister of Finance's treasury. Three hundred and twenty million bucks sitting in a bank account waiting for something -- I don't know what, Mr. Speaker. We would hope only that these people come forward with their promise and pay out that money, pay out that money that should be within the farmers hands, Mr. Speaker.

The member from Rosetown-Elrose, everyone remembers him -- probably the most despised minister of Agriculture in the history of the province of Saskatchewan. And it's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, it's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, the reason why the Premier had to remove him. He was universally against the people of Saskatchewan. The farmers of Saskatchewan understood that, Mr. Speaker. Everyone will remember forever, I think, the famous quote that came out of the minister of Agriculture, the member from Rosetown-Elrose, when he made the changes to the GRIP program and said, well don't worry about it. When the committee said to him there's going to be

some problems, legal problems, he said: don't worry about that; we'll get around it.

Everyone, every farmer in Saskatchewan, should have that memory in the back of their minds I think forever, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because that's what he said to the farmers of Saskatchewan. We'll get around it; don't worry about it. These little legal niceties about contracts and stuff like that, we know how to deal with those kind of problems, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We'll bring forward legislation that doesn't allow farmers to take us to court. That's the way you deal with it. Just bring in legislation and stamp out the rights of the farmers of Saskatchewan. Doesn't matter. Doesn't matter what they think. We can do it; we're the government.

And so that's exactly what they did, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly what they did. They brought forward legislation. But what happened? They got hauled off into court, Mr. Speaker, and they're still in court over that very issue, Mr. Speaker.

And I would say that very likely it will go to the Supreme Court of Canada, very likely will go to the Supreme Court of Canada because we're talking about 320 to \$350 million worth, Mr. Speaker, and that's not chump change. The farmers of Saskatchewan are deserving of that money, Mr. Speaker, and I think that the Supreme Court of Canada will rule that way eventually. Eventually they'll rule that way, Mr. Speaker.

I think there's precedent for that because of the farmers in Manitoba taking the Government of Manitoba together over the changes in the lentil coverage that was done after the appointed date of changes in the contract. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that will be the precedent that brings this government to its knees on this question as well. It will be the precedent that is necessary to put it forward to the Supreme Court.

And the Government of Saskatchewan will lose, I suspect, Mr. Speaker, and I predict, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And \$350 million will have to be pulled out of that bank account somewhere. And I don't know what you guys are going to do then. How are you going to pay it out? How are you people going to pay out that kind of compensation to the farmers of Saskatchewan after the Supreme Court of Canada rules that you have to?

Mr. Speaker, we've seen changes in a number of areas, and I would suggest that almost every single one of the changes that this government has brought forward has damaged agriculture in one way or another. The crop insurance program is in a shambles, Mr. Speaker. We see lower coverage and higher premiums -- all as a result of the things the Minister of Agriculture has done to change the '91 GRIP program -- higher premiums to the point where it's breaking farmers out there and they're withdrawing from the program, or would like to withdraw from the program as quickly as possible.

But the legislation was such that they couldn't get out of the program, Mr. Speaker. They now are caught in a program where they've got higher premiums coming and lower coverage, and they say, no way out, Mr. Speaker. No way out from a program that has done nothing but rob them of the premiums that they have put into the program, Mr. Speaker.

We see no livestock policy except a move to move in on the horned cattle fund. The National Farmers Union and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool wanting representatives on the board. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine that -- wanting representation on the board? They have no right. They have no right to representation on that board -- never have and never will have. Never have and never will have, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool is a marketer of cattle and shouldn't be represented on that board, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the National Farmers Union wanting representatives on that board as well -- 4,000 members nationwide. I wonder how many of those 4,000 in Saskatchewan are there. Are there 2,000 of them in Saskatchewan? I doubt it, Mr. Speaker.

The farmers of Saskatchewan are desperate, desperate for help from a government and the government unwilling to provide them with anything other than the vague notion of some kind of targeted assistance program that will try and save the way of agriculture, save the family farm, the Ma and Pa Kettle type operations that you people like to talk about all of the time. A couple of chickens and a cow and a little house out back on the prairie some way. Some lifestyle you want to preserve -- some lifestyle you people want to preserve. An old barn and a worn-out old piece of machinery, and that's what you call the backbone of agriculture. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

Agriculture's moving into the 21st century and you should move along with it, Mr. Member. When will you people join us in the 21st century of agriculture? An exciting time can be had in agriculture today, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's all kinds of things happening around this province. Farmers are awakening to the opportunities that are out there, and not as any result of anything you people are doing though.

They're awakening to things like biotechnology, zero tillage, information technology, and marketing opportunities. Marketing opportunities, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to touch on that for a little while. Marketing opportunities -- maybe you never heard of marketing, but we'll touch on that a little bit.

The Wheat Board for ever, is their cry. The Wheat Board for ever. They're the be-all and end-all when it comes to agriculture, and don't let anybody tell you any different, Mr. Speaker. Deny farmers any flexibility. Deny farmers any flexibility, it doesn't matter, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't matter at all. Deny them any opportunity.

The farmers in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker -- here's

how it works. You go out and produce a crop, through all of the sweat and blood and tears and all that sort of thing, and capital that it takes to grow a crop in Saskatchewan. You grow the crop to the best of your ability -- the long hours that go into seeding and summer-fallowing and spraying and harvesting of that crop, shovelling the grain into the truck -- and then you take her off to the elevator, dump her into the pit, and then hope, hope that the Canadian Wheat Board does its job and sells it to the countries around the world. And hope that they do it at a level of price that's profitable for you.

Well I would say to you, Mr. Members over there, that there's lots of farmers in Saskatchewan that now are awakening to the opportunities of marketing their own products. They're awakening to that. And your outdated, outmoded methods of dealing with marketing of grain are becoming under a lot of question -- under a lot of question, Mr. Members. That's the way it works. Trust them that they're going to do it. No vote, don't even think about having a vote, you people don't know what you're doing out there. That's what you say to the farmers of Saskatchewan -- don't give them any chance to decide on their own.

But what's happening out there with canola marketing and specialty crop marketing and a whole bunch of things like that? Barley marketing, oat marketing, flax marketing, the farmers are awakening now, Mr. Speaker, to the opportunities that are out there. They now are beginning to learn to market their own products, and they like it. They like it. And they like that kind of stuff, Mr. Speaker. They don't want to spend their labour and their capital and everything else for the opportunity to grow grain and then just turn over the marketing to anybody and everybody.

I would think, Mr. Speaker, that these people opposite should be allowing farmers choice; allow them another marketing opportunity. Allow them the opportunity to sell their grain as they see fit. That's what I advocate, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think the farmers of Saskatchewan have matured to the point where they feel they can market their own products and they don't need the help of people like the members opposite who suggest that the Canadian Wheat Board is the only alternative to them that's out there.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals aren't entirely without sin when it comes to this issue as well. I recall during the federal election the current Minister of Agriculture, Ralph Goodale, going around the province on every stump that he could climb up on and suggesting that there'd be a vote on barley marketing. And where is that? Not a vote, no chance, is what he's saying today. He doesn't want a vote on barley marketing because he knows very well that the farmers of western Canada will support an opportunity for alternative marketing of products right now.

And I wonder, I wonder, Mr. Speaker, who is in favour, who is in favour of opening up the opportunities for farmers to market their own

products. It's groups like the United Grain Growers who are in favour of the dual marketing system, another alternative to marketing grain into the continental barley market. The Western Canadian Wheat Growers are in favour of it, the Alberta Barley Growers, the Alberta government, Alberta Grain Commission -- all farm groups, almost all farm groups . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well let's get to it then.

We can discuss who's in favour of it and who isn't in favour of it. I mentioned that the farmers of Saskatchewan want a vote. Who doesn't want a vote? Who doesn't want a vote on an opportunity to open up the barley marketing question?

The members over there say that there are people out there that don't want a vote, and I don't believe that's the view of farmers. All farm groups want a vote on barley marketing.

(1545)

Canadian Wheat Board Producer Advisory Committee suggests they want a vote on barley marketing. In the most recent issue of **Grainews**, and I quote, The Canadian Wheat Board Producer Advisory Committee says:

At its December meeting, the committee passed the following resolutions:

That the federal government conduct a plebiscite on all western Canadian grain producers prior to taking any action which might change the way in which barley is currently marketed.

So the Canadian Wheat Board Producer Advisory Committee is in favour of it. Who else is in favour of it? Leroy Larsen from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool is in favour of a vote. Did you know that, Mr. Member from Kinistino? And I quote:

As president of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool I respect the farmers' right to be heard on important issues. Our organization defends the producers' right to have a democratic say in the choosing of a marketing system for their barley.

That's what Leroy Larsen says. He's in favour of a vote on barley marketing. Who else is in favour of it? The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool members are in favour of it.

Survey results confirmed that almost all of our members favour a plebiscite to decide the issue. More than three-quarters say that they 'strongly' agree that a plebiscite was needed.

iWestern Producer r, October 21, 1993. So they're in favour of a vote on barley marketing, Mr. Speaker.

Who else is in favour of it? You probably don't even know, but the Government of Saskatchewan is in favour of a vote.

In Saskatchewan, the provincial government released a survey indicating 88 per cent of farmers polled want a vote on the matter.

Vern Greenshields, Saskatoon **Star-Phoenix**, April 21, 1993.

The Saskatchewan government is in favour of a vote. And not only that, the Minister of Agriculture, the current Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan today says:

"The federal government should find out what farmers want before making a final decision on the rules for selling barley to the United States," provincial Agriculture Minister Darrell Cunningham said Wednesday.

Regina **Leader-Post**, April 8, 1993.

So all over the province of Saskatchewan and all over western Canada the farmers are agreeing and the governments are agreeing and the farm lobby groups are agreeing. The only one that's against a vote, that I'm aware of, the only two people that are, is the National Farmers Union and the federal Liberal government. They're the only two people now that are against a producer vote on barley marketing, in direct contrast to what the federal Minister of Agriculture said during the 1993 federal election.

An Hon. Member: -- Shame on him.

Mr. Boyd: -- Shame on him. And the member from Saskatoon Greystone says, shame on him. And I agree. Shame on him. I'm glad that the Liberal leader, the current member from Saskatoon Greystone, says shame on Ralph Goodale for not allowing a producer vote.

And I would ask her, I would ask her, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that she convey that same message to Ralph Goodale and stand in this House and say it, and say it to the farmers of Saskatchewan, that she's ashamed of the way Ralph Goodale is treating the farmers of Saskatchewan and western Canada with respect to a vote on marketing of barley into the continental barley market.

I'm glad she said that. I wasn't aware that she was in favour of a vote. I thought it was only the . . . I thought it was the Liberals provincially and Liberals federally, but apparently it's only the federal Liberals. And I'm sure the federal minister would be interested in hearing your comments on that, Madam Member.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that the amendment that's been put forward by the member from Rosthern is a good amendment. It deals with the kinds of issues that we should be dealing with in agriculture today and not some safety net program that is supposed to be the be-all and end-all and all it is is a basis for discussion.

They go around the province of Saskatchewan, hold meetings all over the place. Nobody turns up at them because their agricultural policy is discredited and

every farmer out there in Saskatchewan understands that -- probably wasn't 150 people total at the meetings they held around the province. And now they come forward and say this is the basis for discussion on agriculture policy in Saskatchewan. And it doesn't amount to anything, Mr. Speaker, and the farmers of Saskatchewan understand that.

And I believe that the amendment is a good amendment, Mr. Speaker, and I'll be voting in favour of it. Thank you.

Mr. Johnson: -- Mr. Speaker, the amendment as put forward by the member from Rosthern covers a whole, wide spectrum of agricultural issues. A number of those issues are problems today because of the former Conservative government and how they implemented those particular programs and things of that nature. And the member from Kindersley, in seconding the amendment, Mr. Speaker, indicated that a former member in this legislature, Gordon MacMurchy, did a number of things that were not acceptable.

But if you take a look at what he did put forward . . . and one of the things that he did to a very large degree, was a plan and a program called the beef stabilization program. Now this program achieved a number of things and I would like to point out to the members opposite exactly what it did.

Number one, it stabilized that segment of the cattle industry, of the beef industry, that all of the rest of the beef industry is based on -- and that's the breeding and production of calves. And it did something else, Mr. Speaker, that most of the programs of the previous Conservative government and the same members that came up with this amendment didn't do, in that it stabilized the production of calves and beef based on actual production. No way of slipping a 350 pound calf in for the same benefits as a 650 pound calf, if you were taking it to market.

So the program was very effective. And in fact if it was in place today, I say that most of the other short-term, quick bang-for-the-buck programs that the Conservatives implemented during the '80s wouldn't have been necessary. Because, Mr. Speaker, what the Conservative government previously did, based on the beef stabilization program, is they monkeyed around with it and shifted the money away from the calf end of it into the feeder end of it and destroyed the program in its totality.

Now I understand why it went down as the member opposite indicated. And I understand why at this present time the members opposite are chiding back, because I hit a very sore spot. They simply destroyed a program that was very effective and stabilizing production of the agricultural area.

Mr. Speaker, the individual from Kindersley in this House took the time to run down one of the organizations that had a member on the review committee to design some safety net designs. And I say that that's very mean-hearted of him and strange

that he would spend the time running down the National Farmers Union, as one of the members on it, and do it after the member that moved the amendment said that the committee was actually did a very good job and that you should commend the members on the committee.

And here in the next speaker standing up, he picked out one of the members and run it down. I say, Mr. Speaker, that's very inconsistent of the members opposite in moving forth an amendment to a resolution to attempt to stand on both sides of an issue of that nature.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite in their discussion indicated that the program, the GRIP program, was a bankable program, and that today it's no longer bankable. I would think that if you would take and go into either Alberta or Manitoba where you're looking at people that are going to be in this program with payments in Manitoba, at least for an extra two years, that the bankability of that program, of the '91 program has deteriorated substantially in those provinces as well. Because now it is collecting back money to offset the payments that were made previously.

The concept that was put forward in saying . . . the incredibility is saying that you should take \$320 million that's in a program and pay it back, irregardless of the rules and the design of the program which the members opposite, when they were in government on this side of the House, agreed with the federal government at the time and set up a program.

It tells me, Mr. Speaker, the reason why this province has a debt. If you can access money, spend it. It didn't matter whether you knew how you were going to pay it back. If somebody would lend it to you, go and get it and spend it. If there is money some place that is to be used for a program but you want it some place else before it's used in that program, take it out and spend it.

That's not a very effective way of managing and putting forth a budget and coming out of a long-term thing. And if that was what the members opposite did on their own operations, I can tell the members opposite that they would be losing their farms and not be functioning. So why would they do that as a government and as a structure for the community? I can't understand why you would do that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that I'm going to be voting against the amendment and supporting the resolution -- resolution no. 36. Because, Mr. Speaker, the resolution as it was originally placed on the blues, and what we are speaking here today, directs its attention to giving recognition to a group of people who put forward effort and time, with some to their own expense, and they deserve that recognition individually and as a group, rather than trying to politicize this particular motion and move it into a discussion of the whole farm economy.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your time, and I will be

supporting the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to enter the debate this afternoon and support the amendment put forward by my colleague, the member from Rosthern. Because the amendment, if members would take the time to look at it, deals with what is now and what will be reality in the near future.

And what we're debating here today, as my colleague has pointed out, is the fact that the government has no conception of what reality is in agriculture in Saskatchewan today. One only has to look at the moves that have been made by this government since 1991 to realize that the situation which they seemed to empathize with prior to the election in October of '91, but in fact since that date have done absolutely nothing except worsen the situation in rural Saskatchewan.

And really the only thing that has changed, not because this government has done anything, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the fact that certain commodity prices have gone up; that certain marketing availabilities have happened to Saskatchewan and western Canadian producers and there isn't one single small item that this government can claim any degree of responsibility for in seeing that picture turn around.

Now they would like people in the province of Saskatchewan, and particularly rural farm families, to believe that they do have something in mind, and so we've had this grandiose Ag 2000 plan floated out in front of us, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I can tell you that when you go to the coffee shops in rural Saskatchewan, you go around my riding -- and I've been all over this province, Mr. Speaker -- that thing is an absolute joke. It is an absolute joke because it doesn't deal with anything dealing with the bread and butter issues that farm families deal with today.

(1600)

My colleague pointed out today in the legislature that spring seeding will be imminent in parts of this province, and there are people honestly wondering where the money will come from for the necessary input. This isn't a laughing matter, Mr. Speaker, this is absolute reality. If you didn't have the good fortune last year to grow canola, or to grow some no. 1 hard red spring that's going to be up there in the high protein end, or if you didn't have a bunch of durum wheat probably carried over from the year before, then you are in serious trouble.

Mr. Speaker, if you go around this province and talk to the machinery dealers who tell you that they are selling machinery, and you ask them the average age of the person buying the equipment, they'll tell you that most of those people are over the age of 55. These are

people that are not carrying land debt. These are people, quite frankly, that are looking at the tax side and looking how they manage their taxation picture rather than actually building in rural Saskatchewan.

That's the dilemma in front of us, Mr. Speaker. And that's why I find this motion brought forward by the government today just one more in a long line of hypocritical motions dealing with agriculture.

We've had the spectacle of this review committee travelling around the province, supposedly bringing back recommendations that this government is going to implement when we have the very fact of this government being the only one of all the provincial governments in Canada saying that they don't like a national GRIP plan. Why don't they like it? Because they campaigned against it in 1990 and 1991. That's the only reason. Because they campaigned again.

And we had the spectacle of the now Premier, the member from Riversdale, travelling around to the various farm rallies -- I remember it well, Mr. Speaker -- making those pronouncements about how he had the answers for the agricultural situation.

Mr. Speaker, no one today in Saskatchewan believes there's a pot of money at the end of the rainbow. Everyone realizes there are difficult times, that there are difficult decisions, and that farm and rural families want to play a part in solving those decisions.

But the simple fact is, Mr. Speaker, they have no confidence in a government that willingly breaks contracts, that does not abide by the law of the land, that simply -- and we had another example of it today in this Legislative Assembly -- if the political heat is too much you simply bring in a law and you break the existing one.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is the bunch that then bring forward a motion in this Legislative Assembly that says that we should congratulate this review process that they've instigated.

Well the body of evidence, Mr. Speaker, suggests that once again it will simply be another case of smoke and mirrors; that there is no substance. Because this hidebound bunch here, this bunch of ideologues that sit across from us simply don't have the capacity, Mr. Speaker, to get on with reality, to do what people are demanding out there.

People are saying, government simply help us even out the playing field; help us design marketing strategies; let us be part of a national program that is fair and reasonable; and simply don't worry about your unrealistic promises that you made prior to the 1991 election which you are now trying to find ways to not keep. And that's the reality, Mr. Speaker.

The expectation level was raised so high and that expectation level was unrealistic. And now we find this New Democratic government doing everything they can to find ways to blame someone else and simply let rural Saskatchewan slide. And it's evident out there.

And the motion talks about . . . the amendment brought by my colleagues talks about all of the things that have changed in rural Saskatchewan in the last two and a half years. Changes that are nothing but harmful; they are hurtful. And the solutions, Mr. Speaker, the solutions are directly tied to some of the things also brought forward by the member from Rosthern as solutions.

And if this government would listen to some of the groups out there, listen to the people, allow the votes to take place, in fact get in the forefront of reform not only in this Assembly but reform in the agricultural industry, then there would be some credibility attached to motions like we saw here today. Then there would be some credibility to this committee that they trotted around the province. Then there would be some credibility and some hope for the future by Saskatchewan farm families and those people in our communities that live alongside and work with them. And as it is, Mr. Speaker, that hope is dwindling out there.

The only thing that is left is the individual initiative of some very, very tough and dedicated people. The only thing that gives a person hope today, as we go into the 1994 spring seeding program, is that individuals have figured out ways that they can do things better and survive. And they will survive as long as this government gets off their back.

As long as we don't see another round of utility rate increases; we don't see another round of cuts that pile more education taxes on our farm land. As long as we don't see more offloading onto our municipal governments by this provincial NDP (New Democratic Party) government, then those people will survive because they are tough and they are resilient and they have been through some of the most difficult economic times in our history.

And the last thing they need is this bunch bringing in a new set of regulations and legislation that really, at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, they may break anyway if it doesn't fit their political calendar, as they have broken so many agreements in this Legislative Assembly. The rule of law doesn't mean anything around here any more, Mr. Speaker. You simply run a poll, and if the poll says that you bring in a piece of legislation and break it, then you do it. That seems to be what we heard today.

And I can't believe that the rural members of the government, the rural members of the government would put up with that kind of thing, because they know that a handshake is a bond in rural Saskatchewan. They know that when agreements are made and signed that people live by them.

There's all kinds of rental agreements out there, calf share agreements, seed sharing -- all sorts of things that are done in each and every rural community, and they're done on a handshake, Mr. Speaker. They're done on the person's word and his credibility. And when they see legislation and agreements, laws of the

land in this Legislative Assembly just simply cast aside to fulfil the political agenda of a particular party, they don't like that.

So you have the spectacle, Mr. Speaker, of the government in court, and they will be in court again and again and again because of this attitude. And rural people don't like that, Mr. Speaker. They simply don't abide it. They look for something more in the democratic process than the men and women that they send to this Legislative Assembly to stand on their behalf. And if I had seen one of the government members today stand, and stand on those principles, then maybe this motion would mean something.

But the simple facts are that they have never, not once, gotten out of their back-bench seats and stood for that type of principle, Mr. Speaker. And as the years go on, and this government gets deeper and deeper into the hole, and the problems in rural Saskatchewan are not solved, then the political price that these people will pay at the end of the day will be more I think than some of them can bear. Because that is a reality, Mr. Speaker. You and I both know, after many elections in this place, that people expect the rule of law to mean something.

When we see the spectacle now of the government perhaps having, perhaps -- and I will give them the benefit of the doubt because the minister says it's not all there -- but having hundreds of millions of dollars, a good portion of which comes from the back pockets of Saskatchewan farm families, piled up in their GRIP account, piled up. And at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, a lot of that money won't end up in the pockets of Saskatchewan farm families. It perhaps will end up in the pockets of this NDP administration and the Liberal government in Ottawa. And, Mr. Speaker, it was never, never intended that that would be the case.

And if rural members of that government can justify those kind of actions when their neighbours cannot find the money to sow a crop, when their neighbours are still losing land to foreclosure, when their neighbours are putting their children on school buses at a quarter after seven in the morning because the educational structures are falling apart out there -- when they can put those six-year-old kids on buses at a quarter after seven in the morning and justify it and sit there, after they have picked their money out of the pockets of farm families -- then they, Mr. Speaker, have got a lot of explaining to do to the people that elected them to this Assembly.

And those are facts, and that is reality out there today. And you can go find it in every last rural community in this province, because it's there. The hurt is there and it isn't going away easily. Not this year, next year, or the year after. And that means the planning and the process has to be in place. That means that there has to be a systematic addressing of the problem.

And today in this debate, the only systematic addressing of that problem that I have seen come forward, Mr. Speaker, is in the amendment proposed

by my colleague from Rosthern. Because I certainly didn't hear it from any of the government members. It was simply more of the same, and more of the same, as a recipe for disaster. It's more people leaving this province, it's more people leaving the land, and it is more people simply having to fend for themselves. And, Mr. Speaker, they'll fend for themselves as long as the government gets off their back. And unfortunately, that isn't the case.

In light of that, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be very proper, very proper, that we start addressing the solution, one piece at a time. And what I think what should happen today here, on private members' day, is that we go to one small area that affects agriculture in a big way, affects farm families in a big way, affects rural Saskatchewan in a big way, because it is an inherent cost that simply won't go away. It simply is there each and every day when you get up in the morning. And that's the whole area of utility rates, utility rate costs. And what do we do about them? And how do we factor them in to making our lives on the farm and in rural Saskatchewan better? How do we address our bottom line?

And I think it would be most appropriate, Mr. Speaker, if at this time we got on with debating, and I would move, Mr. Speaker:

That we move directly to Bill No. 1, An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act (Legislative Utilities Review Committee).

And that's seconded by the member from Morse.

And that we deal with the issues surrounding rural Saskatchewan, making a living out there, and we put in place an all-party committee in this House that would review those utility rates and make sure that people in rural Saskatchewan aren't being gouged by our Crown corporations and that they know what the costs of producing are going to be.

And that as members if we did that, Mr. Speaker, we could then say to our constituents, we were doing something productive in this House, that we were setting in place things that back-benchers and opposition members were intended to do, and that is control the cost associated with making a living in this province.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

The division bells rang from 4:15 p.m. until 4:24 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Swenson	Britton
Neudorf	D'Autremont
Martens	Goohsen
Boyd	Haverstock
Toth	Bergman

	Nays
Thompson	Trew
Lingenfelter	Draper
Shillington	Serby
Anguish	Whitmore
Koskie	Sonntag
Teichrob	Flavel
Johnson	Roy
Goulet	Cline
Kowalsky	Scott
Penner	Crofford
Hagel	Wormsbecker
Bradley	Stanger
Lorje	Knezacek
Lautermilch	Harper
Calvert	Keeping
Renaud	Jess
Murray	Carlson
Hamilton	Langford t

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Mr. Roy: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great pleasure to enter into . . .

The Speaker: -- I'm not certain that anybody else heard the member, what the member said. I certainly didn't. And now we have two members standing. Why is the member from Kelsey-Tisdale on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Renaud: -- With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Renaud: -- Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery is a friend of mine, Mr. Larry Frisky of Arborfield. Larry's involved in the Dehy industry in that community. He's also on the division board of the Tisdale School Division. Larry's son Marlon was the person that was injured in a hockey game recently in Arborfield, and he informs me today that Marlon is doing fine. I would like all the members in the House to join with me in welcoming Larry to the legislature this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Resolution No. 36 -- Commendation of Farm Support Review Committee

Mr. Roy: -- Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it gives me a great pleasure to enter into this debate on the motion put forward by my colleague, the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood, on the issue of agriculture, and in particular the future development of farm safety net programs in Saskatchewan.

I think it's important here, Mr. Speaker, to give the members opposite, in particular the members of the third party, a little bit of a history in the development of agriculture, in particular in the context of the constitution.

Mr. Speaker, if one picks up the Canadian constitution, one of the main provisions of the section that deals with agriculture, and one -- it jumps out right away at the reader -- is the fact that agriculture has always been recognized in this country as a national issue. It's a national responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, our forefathers, when they were putting this constitution together and developing, recognized that agriculture is going to play . . . would play a very important role in the development of this country. And that it would also be integral to the development of our society and to the country that we had good, high quality farm products at a reasonable price. And they recognized that in order to achieve those particular goals we needed to have a national farm policy. And that is in the Canadian constitution.

Now it also states, Mr. Speaker, that the federal government, in the development of agricultural programs, will always enter into discussions with the provinces to see what the provinces are able to contribute to these particular programs.

Now I want to take you, I want to fast forward you to about 1986-87. That's about the time, Mr. Speaker, that the federal government initiated the first discussions on revenue insurance programs for this country. And Saskatchewan, as an important player in the agricultural industry in this country -- I might add one of the biggest players in the agricultural sector in Canada -- was forefront in the discussions on the development and the design of farm safety net programs.

As these discussions were ongoing, there was a number of hardships that hit the agricultural sector in Saskatchewan and other parts of Canada. What was the response from the federal government? Ad hoc assistance. A band-aid solution to major systematic problems in the agricultural industry. That was the solution.

(1630)

Prior to 1991 -- or 1990, I should say -- the federal government picked up almost 100 per cent of the costs in crop insurance and in the western grain stabilization program. Note that -- the federal government, because they realized it was always a national issue. And Saskatchewan, with 50 per cent of the arable land in Canada and with less than one-fifth of the population in this country, and bearing in mind that the small tax base that Saskatchewan had, the federal government historically had always recognized those factors.

But unfortunately there was some events that were going to change the history of Canada. And those events were an election, provincial election, coming up in October of 1991. And the members opposite know while those discussions were going on that there was time lines -- there was an election coming -- and that they had to make some very quick decisions on a farm revenue insurance program.

And, Mr. Speaker, they caved in. They caved in because the federal government had given them ad hoc solutions in the '80s. And because of that the federal government asked the members opposite: listen, now you are going to pick up nearly 35 per cent of the cost of future safety net programs. I tell you, that is shameful. No government should have ever accepted such a deal. But, Mr. Speaker, they did.

And we, of course, in October 1991 came to power. And we immediately started to look into this safety net program, and we soon realized that Ottawa had abdicated their responsibilities, their national, historical, constitutional responsibilities toward agriculture.

And the members opposite went along with that because, Mr. Speaker, they had been bought off with Ottawa money.

Mr. Speaker, we moved to open up the safety net programs and look at them and moved swiftly to make them, number one, actuarially sound. And what that means, Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite don't understand, is that you cannot, Mr. Speaker, keep running huge deficits in a farm safety net program. In particular with the magnitude of agriculture and the problems inherent in the GRIP, the original GRIP program, were so huge financially that it would have buried, Mr. Speaker, this province; it would have buried Saskatchewan producers, and we could not accept that. We could not accept that, so we renegotiated and we opened up and we redesigned the GRIP program.

Now, Mr. Speaker, producers have been telling us, well we still believe, we still believe that there is a need for some type of revenue insurance program for the 1990s. We're accepting that responsibility. We're hearing the producers out there and we're reacting to that. And thus, Mr. Speaker, we have the report from the farm safety review committee which was handed to us on January 12 recommending some of the components, some of the particular aspects and the design of future farm safety net programs. And I know the members opposite will say, well obviously the committee -- and I think I heard one of the members say -- that the representation on the committee was questionable.

Well I'll tell you what the producers said -- told us -- Mr. Speaker. They said, after the review of the former GRIP program, they told us, we want a grass roots consultative process. We want farmers; we want grass roots people on that committee, and that's what the opposition members said. They stood up in that place and said, you got to have farmers making the recommendations.

We've listened to them and we've delivered; that's who was on this particular committee. It was farmers speaking out and listening to the concerns of farmers and farm families across this province. They bring back a report. I wish the members would start to maybe comment on the report instead of trying to criticize the committee. Maybe they should read it;

might be a very enlightening exercise for them.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have heard and we have listened to the farmers in this province. And we have delivered by setting up a process, a process in which we take farmers and we put them on a committee and say, go out, consult with the farmers, farm organizations, communities; take a look at the future direction of agriculture, the future direction of farm safety net programs, and make recommendations. And that's what they've done. And that is going to be the framework in which the Saskatchewan government's position is going to be on the future of farm safety net programs.

I think it's the right process and I think the members again should take the time to consider that report and certainly make comments on the recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, in the comments made by some of the members opposite, we heard some of the members comment about Ag 2000. And I want to tell you that Ag 2000 speaks to the future. It speaks to the principles and the values of Saskatchewan people, of Saskatchewan communities, of Saskatchewan farm families. That's what it speaks to, Mr. Speaker. And it also speaks to the values and the principles of cooperation, caring, and sharing.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think that has been included in the Farm Support Review Committee's recommendations. They have taken into consideration the direction of agriculture in the future, and they've realized that the family farm unit is the most productive, the most viable, and that we need to look at mechanisms and farm support programs that will enable these farm families to be viable and certainly be very efficient and successful in the 1990s.

Mr. Speaker, I want to comment briefly. I know we've heard about . . . I want to . . . that was some of the historical aspects that I believe have to be taken into consideration when you consider farm policy and the direction of farm safety net programs, and that is that the federal government has to realize its responsibilities.

And here we come to the future where we have a Liberal government in Ottawa now that is charged with the responsibility of delivering. What we're asking from the federal government now, today, is for them to take back some of their historical constitutional responsibilities.

And I'm not sure if they're willing to do that. Judging by the cut-backs to the western grain transportation subsidy, judging by the mannerisms and the responses from the minister, I think that this new federal government is the same as the former Tory government that was there previously. And that is, it's going to continue on the very same type of policy and direction.

An Hon. Member: -- You mean we're into the same chicken again?

Mr. Roy: -- Same chicken, Mr. Speaker.

I tell you I want to put as much, and I want to put it as bluntly as I can -- that the federal government has to take back these particular responsibilities. When you see every day the financial pressures that this province has been placed under, and when you see the kind of decisions this government has implemented to try to spread the sacrifice around to everybody, and when you realize, as I pointed out, how important agriculture is to the future development of Canada and to the future development of this province, I think it is imperative that the Leader of Third Party here sends a message loud and clear that, Mr. Agriculture Minister, federal Agriculture minister, no more cut-backs to the western grain transportation subsidy. Mr. Agriculture Minister, you promised during the election that there would be no more interest on cash advances.

I want her to deliver that message and I want her to deliver it loudly. And I want a response for Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan farmers, so that we can again start to work on a more national, cooperative, collaborative approach to agriculture and the design of future farm safety net programs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: -- In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank the House for giving me the opportunity. And I want to say that I wholeheartedly support this motion by the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: -- Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to stand and support this private members' motion.

One of the members of the Farm Support Review Committee is a member from my constituency, Helena Pike. Helena has lived on the family farm for over 40 years. She was a teacher in Waseca for 30 years and she understands rural Saskatchewan. It was members like Helena that worked hours to write the report on the farm safety net. I thank them for their efforts.

Also, a thank you to the entire agricultural community and the staff of the Department of Agriculture and Food in the development of Ag 2000 -- A Strategic Direction for the Future of Saskatchewan's Agriculture and Food Industry.

(1645)

People haven't been speaking this afternoon on some of the principles that are included in this, so I thought that I would cover seven of the principles so that people that are listening and will be reading *Hansard* and are watching would know some of the principles that are included in this report.

Number one, the maintenance of the family farm. It is an important principle. It is the family farm that has

been the backbone of rural Saskatchewan, and this will continue to be so.

Communities controlling their own future. We know that producers want to have input in decisions that affect their future, and they are right.

The third principle, cooperation, decision making in the community. Decisions that are made collectively are usually the best decisions, and people out there are moving in this direction.

Number four, forming partnerships among farmers, communities, industry, and government. Being on the employment and economy caucus committee, I realize how important it is that all Saskatchewan people work together to attain economic advantage to farmers, business people, and communities alike.

The fifth principle embodied in this report . . . Now so far these are the kind of things that people are asking for out there. Talk to anyone. These are progressive, futuristic steps and goals. Number five, adjustment of the agriculture and food sector to changing trends in world food demand.

Our farmers realize the need to diversify. And last year, 12 per cent of our land was diversified into all types of crops -- crops like peas and lentils, borage, sunflower seeds, and the list goes on. These are innovative people that realize what the future holds; farmers operating independently over time with decisions relating to resource allocations, made regardless of government support programs. Individual farmers want to be able to make their decisions related to their operations, not related to ill-conceived farm programs.

The seventh principle, primary production of plant and animal products in response to market demand. Very crucial. Ways must be found to shape and influence the forces of change that will help farmers and help the industry make productive, long-term adjustments.

I will be supporting this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: -- Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the private members' motion introduced by my colleague from Last Mountain-Touchwood. I will be voting against the amendment and voting in favour of the motion in support of the Farm Support Review Committee, which reads:

That this Assembly commend the Farm Support Review Committee for completing its report on farm safety net options which the Government of Saskatchewan will use as the basis for negotiating with the federal government and other provinces for a national whole farm safety net program that better reflects the needs of the family farm.

I must say, it is one again a pleasure to go out in rural Saskatchewan and talk with our farmers. It is a pleasure as there is once again optimism out there amongst our farmers. When I have listened to them over the last two or three years, one of their main concerns was the lack of spot loss hail insurance. I'm very pleased to see that the private insurance companies' Tory friends are no longer in office either provincially or federally.

So we as farmers were able to have some very important protection once again. Spot loss is important as it deals with the very real losses that otherwise would provide no income unless there was an overall yield loss. Spot loss is just one point creating optimism.

The increase in the number of crops that are now protected under crop insurance makes it more attractive for farmers to react by varying their crop rotations even more. And that is just what the farmers are doing, to the advantage of Saskatchewan people as a whole.

World prices for grain are on the increase and livestock incomes have been much better than in years gone by. In recent years governments in other countries supported their farmers with their national treasuries. Unfortunately Ottawa continued to offload its national responsibilities onto the producers and provincial taxpayers. It is impossible to bear the whole cost provincially. No state in the U.S. (United States) attempts to. It seems that Ottawa only shows interest in such support programs at election time.

We as a government have introduced an outline for discussion entitled Forging Partnerships in Agriculture. We are and have been consulting with farmers, communities, business, labour, and cooperatives to secure our future through a self-reliant, sustainable agriculture industry. This is being led by our Farm Support Review Committee.

My government is giving wholehearted support to the value added industries to support further processing in our borders.

Serious consideration is being given to methods to prepare young men and women to become the successful farmers of the future. Virtually everyone in Saskatchewan has direct or indirect family and financial ties to family farms. Nearly every member in this Assembly can reach back to a farm background. Personally, both sets of my grandparents were homesteaders in this province in the early part of the century. My father and mother farmed, and I am a farmer. My two sons are both trying to establish themselves as farmers.

In their particular case, they are the 10th generation of my family to farm in this country. I am pleased to say that our government is working towards creating an atmosphere where their generation could also have a full and rewarding life as farmers in this great province and great country of ours.

Farming is changing and has changed over the years and will continue to change in the years to come. Our government is doing its part to make it possible for a top quality lifestyle to be a part of a prospective future in the young farmers of this province.

In this year's budget we are providing 320 million in support to farm families and the agricultural industry; 20 million to increase value added projects for agricultural products provided by the agri-food equity fund; 1.4 million to enhance markets for the Saskatchewan beef industry.

Budget '94 brought down the beef industry development fund, a 1.35 million pool of money that will assist with projects relating to product research, technology transfer, and development or promotion of new markets. The agriculture industry of course will have input on how and when this money is spent.

This fund fits neatly into our road-map for the revitalization of the agricultural industry, the Ag 2000 strategy. Our agricultural strategy, Ag 2000, emphasizes stability and growth in Saskatchewan's most important industry. The strategy must accommodate the entry of young farmers into the agricultural sector.

A number of programs are currently under investigation that would facilitate this -- such as the community-based land trust. History has shown the need for such a program as the capitalization of farm land has always been a heavy burden.

Younger farmers are often high risk farmers because of their low equity position. Therefore adequate credit terms and innovative financing must be available for those farmers who demonstrate financial liability. We do in fact need a more effective farm safety net program. That program must be based on federal-provincial commitment. This program must target those most in need, be geared towards recognizing cost of production, and above all be designed to provide farm families with long-term income security.

I am pleased to be part of a government that has the needs of our farmers as a top priority. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support the motion by the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: -- Mr. Speaker, I move we adjourn debate on this motion.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:55 p.m.