

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
First Session — Fourteenth Legislature
32nd Day

Friday, March 24, 1961.

The House met at 2:30 o'clock p.m.

On the Orders of the Day:

WINTER WORKS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Premier Douglas: — As all hon. Members know the Municipal Winter Works Incentive Program which is a joint program between the Government of Canada and the provinces and the municipalities, is due to expire on the 30th of April. Representations have been made by some of the provinces and municipalities to the Government of Canada, asking that this program be extended. I have now received a telegram from the Hon. Michael Starr, the Federal Minister of Labour, indicating that the Federal Government is now prepared to agree in whatever provinces there is concurrence to extend the Municipal Winter Works Incentive Program to May 31st, and I am glad to inform the House that the Saskatchewan Government has agreed to concur, and this means that this program in Saskatchewan will be continued until the end of May.

Mr. McCarthy: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a question. Does that mean that the work must be completed by the 31st of May, or they must be approved by the 31st of May?

Premier Douglas: — It will mean that it will be work done within that period. The hon. Member will remember that it used to start the 1st of December, and we got it advanced to the 15th of October, so work done between the 15th of October and the 31st of May will all be shareable under the Winter Works Incentive Program.

Mr. McCarthy: — The point I wanted to clarify, Mr. Premier, was does that mean the work has to be completed? Is it the actual work or the application?

Premier Douglas: — It will cover only the work done within those stated dates.

March 24, 1961

Mr. Cameron: — Does that mean that municipalities are still able to put in applications and have it approved for a Winter Works Program?

Premier Douglas: — They will still be able to put in applications, but the shareable portion will only cover the work done up until the 31st of May.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Mr. J.W. Gardiner (Melville): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity of drawing to the attention of the hon. Members the group that have just entered the Speaker's Gallery. They are from the Lebret Indian School, and I would like to take this opportunity of extending a welcome to them on behalf of all of the Members of the Legislature. I hope that their visit here will be an interesting one, and an educational one, and I also know that many of the students at the school are from other constituencies in the province besides my own, and even from other provinces in the Dominion. So, I am quite certain that we are pleased to see representatives from the Indian School at Lebret here with us this afternoon.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Mr. Douglas T. McFarlane (Qu'Appelle-Wolseley): — Mr. Speaker, I too want to extend my welcome to the students here this afternoon. As the Member for Melville said, they probably come from various constituencies, and I know that all Members will agree that they come from a school situated in one of the most beautiful spots in Saskatchewan, the Qu'Appelle River Valley. Not only do we recognize the great scholastic achievements obtained by that school, but also the athletic achievements that have been set by members of that school. I join with the Member for Melville in wishing them all a very educational and enjoyable afternoon.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 59 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Act, 1960.

Hon. I.C. Nollet (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, in brief, in explanation of the

amendments to the Crop Insurance Act, there are no fundamental new principles involved. I'll endeavour to give them to the Members as quickly as I can. The first amendment would clarify the definition "actuarially sound." The Federal Government is insisting that any interest charged on loans made to the province in the event of liability be charged against the premium. This would clarify that the actuarial rate, insofar as the farmer is concerned, that the 15% would remain.

The next amendment is to permit a choice to the board and to the farmer between insuring all their land or part of their acreage.

I'll give the reasons for the third amendment. The Federal Government insists that since the landowner is a qualified person, the Federal Government is balking at allowing a landlord to insure on his own without the consent of the tenant. We have, therefore, amended this definition section to exclude the landlord from voting on the establishment of an area, by eliminating the word "landlord" and substituting the words "operator or tenant".

The fourth amendment — this too gives the board the leeway regarding the 25% requirement to establish an area and gives the board a choice, and the amendment is a simple amendment which would mean that the board could accept 25% of the qualified persons in the said area who are willing to enter into contracts with the board and/or that the acreage of the insurable crop to be insured under such contract is at least 25% of the aggregate insurance acreage in the area. There is some leeway given here.

The next amendment is a new section and it would permit, under certain circumstances, the setting up of limited experimental crop insurance areas. This year for example we don't have a sufficient sign-up percentage-wise and acreage-wise to establish an area. This would authorize the board to set up areas on an experimental basis regardless of whether 25% were signed up or 25% of the acreage is involved. Incidentally, I have been in touch with the Federal Minister of Agriculture in this regard, and he has agreed to this proposal and to the amendment which would permit us to set up some experimental crop insurance areas within the coming year.

Now, the next amendment is a new provision that would authorize the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations providing for the setting up of an arbitration board for the settlement of disputes in matters of claims. It would also give the Lieutenant Governor in Council authority to pass regulations respecting the employment by the board

March 24, 1961

of officers and other employees in specified positions and the conditions of their employment and remuneration. This was an oversight when the Act was brought in last year, and the Lieutenant Governor in Council must, of course, have this authority.

The next amendment repeals section 23 of the Act, that is subsection 2 of section 23. It is really not required and redundant.

The other amendments merely extend the dateline under which we were authorized to receive applications from the 31st of January to the 28th of February.

This in brief, Mr. Speaker, is the substance of the amendments being proposed to the House, and with this brief explanation, I would move second reading.

Mr. W. Ross Thatcher (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I had rather hoped that the Minister would make a little more general statement on this Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Act. While this Bill was being brought forward, I think hon. Members on both sides of the House would agree, that so far there has been not too much interest shown by farmers generally in the Act as it is now constituted. Now, there has been an administrative staff set up. Are we going to keep that staff on? How much are we prepared to spend in the coming year on this Crop Insurance Act if nobody is going to use it? Do I understand the Minister to say that the main purpose of these amendments is going to be to set up the odd area where we'll just experiment on some kind of a smaller basis? If that is the purpose, how much staff are we going to need? I would like the Minister to make a little more general statement as to the over all objectives, as far as crop insurance goes.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I think that I should have other questions from other speakers and then let the hon. Minister close the debate.

Mr. Ross A. McCarthy (Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, I was just going to say something along the lines of what the leader said. I was going to point out that there were one or two paragraphs where . . .

Mr. Douglas T. McFarlane (Qu'Appelle-Wolseley): — I would just like to mention briefly that this Crop Insurance Act, it is true, was brought down in the House last Session. We were led to believe that there had been a lot of requests for the Act, and due to circumstances and results that have taken place during the past year, it would indicate to us that possibly here in Saskatchewan there isn't the clamour for this type of legislation and this type of insurance as there is in other provinces.

Now, after viewing the results in Manitoba, and the attitude of some of the people in Manitoba in the past years in regard to P.F.A.A., I think that there is one condition that we may have to be on guard against, as far as the people of Saskatchewan are concerned. We know that in Saskatchewan under P.F.A.A. the farmers of the province are receiving twice as much from that type of legislation in the way of benefits than they have put into the P.F.A.A. fund, where in the province to the east of us the reverse has been true, they suggest they have paid twice as much into it as they have received from it. Now, if they are going to go ahead with crop insurance in that province, as has been indicated by statements in the press, coming from the Legislature in that province, I think that possibly we here in Saskatchewan, if this situation backs up as far as P.F.A.A. is concerned, then there will be difficulty in receiving benefits from that type of legislation, and I would like to have some statement made by the Minister in this province as to where the likely areas are going to be set up for test purposes, whether any indication that we have at the present time for requests in this province, are coming from the southern part of the province or the northern part of the province, or what area of the province it is going to come from in general. I believe that P.F.A.A. is generally accepted by all the farmers in Saskatchewan at the present time as being one of the best types of legislation that has been brought down in that respect. I know that farmers in the southern part of the province and farmers in the western part of the province, Mr. Speaker, are more or less concerned in case something happens in the future that may tend to cause the dismantling of P.F.A.A. as we know it at the present time.

It is true that the crop insurance may be able to look after individual farmers better than P.F.A.A. would, but I think it is something that we're going to have to watch out for, and watch carefully policies from within this

March 24, 1961

province and results of developments from actions outside this province. So I would suggest, on behalf of the farmers of Saskatchewan who are satisfied in principle with P.F.A.A. at the present time that we try and make sure that none of the benefits we have received from that type of legislation will be interfered with to our detriment by any impractical administration of crop insurance.

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, apropos of what has just been said by the last speaker, I want to remind the House that this is precisely the position which the Government took when the crop insurance legislation was introduced last year. Some of the Members opposite at that time chided us with introducing this measure. They damned it with faint praise, and said that we didn't sound very enthusiastic about our own legislation.

We made our position abundantly clear at that time. We said first of all, from the standpoint of Saskatchewan, that P.F.A.A. offered, in our opinion, the best type of protection for the great bulk of the farmers. We thought that ultimately it ought to be put on an individual basis with the raise in the payments per acre, if necessary a raise of premiums. But we said that the P.F.A.A. for the great bulk of our people, would still be the best type of protection. Over the years the farmers of Saskatchewan have gotten out of the P.F.A.A. about \$2.50 for every dollar they put into it. It has been extremely beneficial. However, we pointed out that the Federal Government was not prepared to extend P.F.A.A., but instead they had introduced a crop insurance plan, by which they were prepared to enter into crop insurance in any province that would set up a crop insurance scheme. We did say that there might be people, and there might be areas in the province, who would prefer to enter into this type of crop insurance rather than P.F.A.A. I expressed the opinion myself, in the House, that as far as my constituency was concerned, I'm sure the great bulk of the farmers would certainly not likely come into this plan. I think that they would stay under P.F.A.A., because of the crop records there over a long period of years.

The legislation was introduced. We didn't damn it with faint praise. We simply said that we know that for a very large percentage of the farmers, P.F.A.A. will continue to be more attractive. We also said that we should make available to those farmers who want it, and those districts

who want it, the benefit of this federal legislation such as it is. There has been a good deal of interest in it. I think the Minister reported to the House previously that a large number of different individuals had written in and asked for information. If there are areas where they want to set up crop insurance plans, then the Government feels that in those areas they should have an opportunity to participate. We don't think that we should do a big selling job. I believe it is stipulated that where the rate exceeds 15%, the board will not take them. Anything over 15% will be uneconomic as far as the farmer is concerned. If there are areas where the farmers because of a good crop record, think that they can do better under this legislation than by staying under P.F.A.A., then we think they should be given the opportunity to do so.

As the Minister indicated there weren't enough applications this year to set up a crop insurance plan in any particular area, because there weren't 25% of the farmers in the municipality covering 25% of the area. We feel that if in those areas where there are a considerable number of farmers interested, such a plan were established, other farmers might come in. In time this might be of considerable benefit to farmers in some parts of the province, particularly those areas that have a fairly good record of precipitation over the years.

I share the views of the Member for Qu'Appelle-Wolseley, that we don't want to do anything that will in any way jeopardize P.F.A.A. But this is not within our power to prevent. My hon. friend knows that Manitoba farmers particularly, through the years, have felt that they were getting less out of the plan than they were putting into it, and they've always wanted to pull out of it. A good part of Manitoba, I think will eventually go into the crop insurance plan. I hope this doesn't mean that the Federal Government would discontinue P.F.A.A. I think all of who are interested in the welfare of agriculture in Saskatchewan ought to fight very hard to retain it. I don't think at the same time that we can deny to those farmers who may want to go into this plan, an opportunity to do so. They can't come in if the premium exceeds 15%, so this will restrict it. With reference to the areas that will be set up, I think this could better be discussed either when the Bill is in committee, or when the estimates on crop insurance are before the House.

Mr. Thatcher: — May I ask the Minister one more question, Mr. Speaker?

March 24, 1961

Could he tell the House the highest percentage of farmers who applied in any area. I understand that in no area did we get up as high as 25%, which was required. What was the highest percentage?

Mr. Speaker: — Order! If the hon. Minister wishes to address the House, I will warn the members that he is about to close the debate.

Hon. Mr. Nollet: — I just wanted to answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: — You may answer the question, when you address the House, but the debate will close if you wish to speak at this time.

Mr. Danielson (Arm River): — Mr. Speaker, I was one of those Members that the Premier referred to who was damning it with faint praise, and I think there were quite a few on the other side. I believe even the Minister himself was in accord with these last views. I don't think the Minister changed his mind very much, and I haven't either, as far as that goes. I think the danger of this thing is that we will find as they have in Manitoba, and it was clear from the beginning, that the best farm districts, where they are most sure of getting a crop, and where the premium would be low, will be the districts that will take advantage of this thing. They will do so for the reason that they never get any benefits from the P.F.A.A. In a short time we are going to be placed in the position, Mr. Speaker, that all the good part of the province, as in Manitoba for instance, will be under the protection of the crop insurance, and the P.F.A.A. will be given to the very poorest crop districts, as in Manitoba. The same thing will happen in Saskatchewan.

I heard a man say last year, and he is a man that I think knows pretty well what he is talking about, that crop insurance would be alright for a man that doesn't need it. What he meant by this was that the person who is in a position where crop insurance can be carried without great expense, would be in a place where the rates were low and where the people were pretty well off — well fixed so they wouldn't have to operate on a small margin. Then he said this, "That for the man who really needed the insurance, the rates and expenses were going to be so high that he couldn't afford it." I think that will be true. It will need some subsidization by the Government, or probably both Governments, provincial and federal. Maybe we'll have it yet, but I thought

the Minister should have given us a sort of a summary of what has taken place so far. If I understand correctly, and I think I am right, we have set up a staff here last summer who are on full time salaries, and they are carrying on as though this is going to be a going concern.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! It would appear to me that the discussion should be kept toward the amendments that are proposed in this Bill. Any discussion regarding the finances of this program, if they do not pertain to this Bill, I think they should be discussed under the estimates of the crop insurance program. I think that is a better place for them.

Mr. Danielson: — Mr. Speaker, I fail to see how you can discuss any of these amendments and the application of these amendments without also having in view the expenses of carrying on this scheme. So far we have no insurance, but we have practically one year's expenses on our hands. There has been no business done, and that is why I think the Minister should clear up these things when he replies in this debate.

Mr. A.C. Cameron (Maple Creek): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to make one or two comments. I would take it, by the amendments in this Bill, that we are attempting to make it easier to set up an insurance area, than what the other Bill was last year, due to the fact that there wasn't sufficient farm interest to qualify under the regulations of the present Bill. I listened with a great deal of interest to the words of the Premier that we should if at all possible give these people the opportunity to set up an insurance area where they do not contribute to P.F.A.A.

I want to point this out to the Members of the Legislature, as I did last year, that this is a further step to creating the thin edge of the wedge that will eventually do away with P.F.A.A. in this province. I know that the whole south-west area of Saskatchewan could never qualify for crop insurance. While other areas of the province this year had good crops and some bumper crops, we had one of the lightest crops in the province, and a great bulk of that area received a bonus again this year. I know there are many farmers in Saskatchewan who are opposed to contributing to P.F.A.A. because they feel that in most instances it is

March 24, 1961

south-west Saskatchewan that is getting the benefit of it.

When we have this view gaining in Manitoba, it would look, from all indications that Manitoba within a year or two will have nothing to do with P.F.A.A. We're easing the regulations here in order to give the farmers of Saskatchewan in the more fortunate areas the opportunity to withdraw from participation in P.F.A.A. I ask you, then, how long do you think it will be before all of these people in the south-western area of Saskatchewan, in the sub-marginal area will be left sitting high and dry without an opportunity for crop insurance, and with the P.F.A.A. being pulled out from under them?

I think it is time that we stopped to consider that there are areas of this province that will be in desperate need of assistance under P.F.A.A. and that we should step very carefully before we widen the scope of this legislation which will result in the removal of this great legislation for the benefits of those people.

It is for that reason that I fear these amendments to set up a smaller area than was anticipated under the original Bill. I do so with a great deal of alarm, because I am certain that the ultimate outcome will be the loss of P.F.A.A. to all of those people of south-western Saskatchewan.

Mr. A.H. McDonald (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, you will notice that most of the personnel that have taken part in this debate represent areas that have difficulty producing a crop under some adverse weather conditions. But, I happen to come from one of those areas of the province that is considered to be a low risk area, and our attitude, of course, is somewhat different. While we do appreciate, in that area of the province, the need for P.F.A.A. throughout a large portion of the Province of Saskatchewan, we also recognize that there should be some form of crop insurance or assistance in the good crop areas in those years when we are less fortunate than the average and not able to produce a crop.

I cannot blame the Provincial Government or the Minister of Agriculture for endeavouring to get some system of crop insurance going in Saskatchewan, but I do recognize that if enough areas of western Canada are withdrawn from P.F.A.A., then the Government of Canada, no matter who they may be, quite possibly are going to find themselves in the

position where the people of Canada will no longer allow them to spend the sums of money that are necessary to make P.F.A.A. payments across Canada in those years when there are large payments and nothing coming in. I have said before in this House, and I want to say it again, that crop insurance in Saskatchewan or any place else must be a federal responsibility, and the problem that is confronting this House, and the Minister of Agriculture today, is the fact that the type of crop insurance that has been offered to us is not nearly good enough. The people of this province, or the Province of Saskatchewan are not able to carry a large enough portion of the premium to make this crop insurance workable in Saskatchewan, or in my opinion, anywhere else. If we are going to have a satisfactory crop insurance program, in my opinion, it should be from coast to coast in Canada, and if you're going to have that type of a crop insurance program, it must be national program.

This offer that has been made to the provinces, in my opinion, is not workable. I don't see how you can put the good crop areas in Saskatchewan under crop insurance, and ever hope to maintain P.F.A.A. We have got to have a crop insurance program that is acceptable to all of Saskatchewan. This can never be done with the pittance that is being offered today, by our national government. If we are going to have a program that is going to meet the needs and the wishes of the farmers of Saskatchewan, then the contribution from Ottawa will have to be much larger. The share that is being left to the Government of the province of Saskatchewan and to the farmers is so great that I would predict that this crop insurance plan will never work in this province, no matter how small we may want to make the area.

What is needed from this Legislature, is a resolution to the House of Commons, that we in Saskatchewan are not satisfied with the crop insurance program that has been offered to us, and we cannot hope to implement a satisfactory crop insurance program unless our national government is prepared to put more money into this plan.

I am desperately afraid that what the Member for Maple Creek had mentioned to us is apt to happen; someday we may find ourselves in this province without P.F.A.A. and we as a province can never shoulder the load that has been carried under P.F.A.A. legislation.

Mr. Speaker: — The hon. Minister is about to close the debate.

March 24, 1961

Hon. I.C. Nollet (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, I can wholeheartedly agree with most everything that was said on the opposite side of the House. The hon. Members will be assured that we are as much concerned about losing P.F.A.A. as anyone else is. I was a bit dubious right from the beginning, if this wasn't a scheme of the Federal Government to try and get out from under P.F.A.A. responsibility which has been a recognized responsibility for the Federal Government ever since the 1930s and even going back farther beyond that to the time when the Federal Government had the responsibility for land administration and subsequent responsibility for the settlement of western Canada. It was on that basis that the Federal Government had assumed responsibility under P.F.A.A. and P.F.R.A. as well, in an endeavour to correct the mistakes made in the early days of settlement.

Now, we have farmers in the province who have indicated some interest, it is true, and in answer to the hon. Member's question, I don't think that we have an area that has gone over 10% response in the very small areas. The applications for the areas that we have in mind range from five to twenty-five people that have indicated some interest.

Now, I agree with everything that has been said. The Government here has taken the position, and I still think that we ought to continue to take the position of letting the farmers tell us whether crop insurance is practical from their point of view. You and I might think it is not practical, and I must agree with the hon. Member from Moosomin that the farmers haven't got the money to put up the premiums, even 20% of the premiums. The Provincial Government hasn't the financial resources to carry the heavy liabilities involved; that is we've been asked to carry all the losses. This certainly would be an indication that the Federal Government, by this device, endeavoured to throw the whole load on the province. I've explained to the House before that if the entire province was declared a crop insurance area, the Federal Government over the years would be saving many hundreds of millions of dollars, to what they are now under P.F.A.A., but there are areas in Saskatchewan where crop conditions and crop production are more favourable and more stable. We've had some complaints from these areas too, much the same as the complaints in Manitoba, from people who say we have contributed our 1% into P.F.A.A. over the years, and we've never received any benefits from it. Now, even with the defects that are existing in this plan, with corrections, there is just the possibility, that an

insurance alternative plan may develop that would be acceptable to some of the farmers in the better crop areas of Saskatchewan. This is a possibility, but I think that we must let the farmers give us the answer.

We rather think that this year wasn't a fair try. Then, the hon. Member from Arm River says, "You've had people working on this; you've spent money on this," and that is true. We've had to get actuarial data, long-term records, and work out insurance rates for practically the entire province. This took a terrific amount of work. Indeed, it isn't complete yet. We announced the program, as you know, sometime in December and really the farmers haven't had a good chance to appraise it. Even though they showed a great deal of interest by the some 40,000 people who were represented in the petitions that came in to us. Now, we didn't get petitions from 40,000 people, or an indication from 40,000 people that they actually wanted crop insurance, but we got petitions from enough areas, over 100 municipalities that involved around 40,000 farmers. Out of this total when it came right down to putting up the money for the premium, we received about 450 applications.

Now, there are several reasons for this, I think. First, the farmers do want some more information; they are sceptical; this is a pretty quick decision for them to make. The other thing, of course, is that it came on rather suddenly, and they haven't had sufficient time to arrange finances. It is a matter of money, they just didn't have the money to put into the premiums, even if they were interested in it. So, we rather think that before we can write it off, that we ought to give them a better chance to decide.

Now, if we are allowed, as we will be under this legislation to set up some of these smaller areas, although they don't involve many farmers, five, eight, ten, twenty-five to a shipping point, there are some two-hundred applications that we have retained for this purpose, and we would like then to go back in these areas, and say to these people, "Okay if you want insurance this year, try it out and we'll give it to you." Now, this will give us information and it will give the farmers in such areas a chance to see how their neighbors come out, and it will give us information that otherwise could be very costly if we, for example, had sufficient areas set up this year by an overwhelming support to incur one or two million dollars worth of liability. This would be course be a bit on the risky side. Now, we'd be able

March 24, 1961

to do this with a very small liability involved, maybe twenty to twenty-six thousand dollars in premiums and three-hundred thousand dollars liability if a complete failure in all these areas occurred. It wouldn't be costly. To be sure, we'd have to keep some office staff here, but we wouldn't need much field staff, that is for certain, other than people who want to gather more statistical information and gain more experience in research. I think we ought to do this, and when we again go to these same areas and if there is no interest in it, well then I think that we can very frankly say to the Federal Government that the people of Saskatchewan are not interested in this kind of crop insurance.

We've already advised the Federal Government, Mr. Speaker, that we're not satisfied with it, and I've so informed this House. In fact, I suggested to Mr. Harkness that we swap positions, I said, we'd be glad to pay the 20% of the premiums, and that the Federal Government take the liability. He endeavoured to sell me on the existing proposition, on the basis that this was a wonderful deal. Well, we know it isn't a wonderful deal, and we don't need to worry about the farmers in the medium and high risk areas. They can figure with a pencil just as well as you and I. They will not buy this in preference to P.F.A.A. even though the prospects of increased benefits are there, the premiums, comparatively speaking are too high. They have got to put up too much money for what they might get back, and they stick with P.F.A.A. This is proven by the records everywhere that crop insurance has been tried. It has been tried extensively as you all know in the United States, and there the national government, as was mentioned by the Premier takes full responsibility for the liabilities. It hasn't spread too much. Now, I think we should give it a try.

I want to repeat, and I think probably now is as good a time to say it as any, that the crop insurance method is so involved, and it is such a difficult instrument to achieve the one objective of stabilizing farm income, that I am of the opinion, Mr. Speaker, and this has always been my opinion, that before you can have any kind of a savings plan, and this is all this can be called. — a savings plan — therefore we must first of all give the farmer enough price-wise for his products to enable him to pay substantial deductions to put into a reserve fund to take care of years and circumstances where his income will be cut down because of factors beyond his control, even to the extent of physical impairment. This is the kind of protection that a farmer is entitled to, but first

of all he must receive sufficient price for his commodity to enable him to provide the required contribution. Farm income hadn't ought to be subsidized in this manner, and if there is any need to subsidize adequate farm prices, well then let the national government subsidize the whole deal. It is these present kind of plans that lead the general public to the belief that agriculture is always getting a handout, and that the federal authorities are always willing to give them a handout. As a matter of fact, all that the farmers have been getting is a little in bits and pieces and small portions. I would like to see farmers get their just share of the national income price-wise, and then, Mr. Speaker, we could successfully implement sound types of income savings plans to take care of bad years.

In the meantime, we're dealing, Mr. Speaker, with a hard-headed free enterprise Government at Ottawa. I can't push them beyond the limit of their imagination, and maybe the best way is to let the farmers of Saskatchewan tell them whether or not they think this is an acceptable plan or not. I must say this in deference to the present Minister of Agriculture; he has indicated to us that he felt that we were being asked to carry too much liability, and perhaps as a result of the experience gained in these reduced schemes, we may be able to go to him and say, "Look we want you to assume greater responsibility. There may be a possibility that where farmers want an alternative to P.F.A.A. that we can work out a plan that might be acceptable to them. It is all part of the process. At least the national government has accepted some responsibility in this field, and true to the old free-enterprise Tory line, I could say Liberal line as well, it wouldn't make a darn bit of difference. If the Liberals were in power at Ottawa, I would have the same problems. I had the same problems with Mr. Gardiner. The only answer I could get from him was "This is a complete provincial responsibility" . . .

Mr. Thatcher: — He gave you the P.F.A.A.

Hon. Mr. Nollet: — . . . and this is how evades this responsibility.

Mr. Thatcher: — You like it.

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Hon. Mr. Nollet: — P.F.A.A. was an alternative to relief, and it was accepted as I mentioned, by the Federal Government . . .

March 24, 1961

Mr. Thatcher: — You're mighty glad to have it now.

Hon. Mr. Nollet: — . . . because over the years, regardless of what Government was in power they administered lands. They were the ones that opened up the submarginal areas to the homesteaders, and because of that, we are glad that they recognize and accept some continuing responsibilities for adjustments in the farm economy here, but now we're talking about crop insurance, and we're talking about farm income insurance, Mr. Speaker.

I've had real difficulty to sell these ideas — at least something emerges. It is a small thing but maybe if we keep working at it, it might grow. At least the principle has been accepted by the Federal Government that they have some responsibility in this area. Maybe something will come out of it, and I'm not one that is going to criticize and condemn immediately. I want to give this a good try and let the farmers give us the answer. That is the kind of support I would like to get Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Thatcher: — Mr. Speaker, just one question. If I understood the Minister correctly, did he say that the amendments to the Act are going to cost \$10,000 or \$12,000, or the administration of the whole Act will only cost \$10,000 or \$12,000?

Hon. Mr. Nollet: — The liabilities involved may only reach around \$12,000 depending on the number of experimental areas finally established this year.

Mr. Thatcher: — As far as the Act is concerned as a whole, you said there wouldn't be much administration. It is going to be about \$150,000, is it not?

Hon. Mr. Nollet: — All of the applications now on hand, the total coverage would be \$303,000. That would be the total liabilities. The total premiums would be around \$24,000.

Mr. Thatcher: — According to your estimates, you are planning \$150,000 for crop insurance for the coming year, and administration \$99,000. Now does that still stand, or are you changing that with these amendments?

The question being put, it was agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:31 o'clock p.m.