

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Second Session — Seventeenth Legislature
41st Day

Friday, April 21, 1972

The Assembly met at 10:00 a.m.

On the Orders of the Day.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

HON. J.R. MESSER (Tisdale-Kelsey): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce to you and through you to Members of this Assembly a group of students from Porcupine Plain. Porcupine Plain is about 250 miles from here. It is the centre of my constituency, Tisdale-Kelsey. I know that these students have left their school early this morning in order to get here. I know they have a busy day planned for them. I see one of the teachers accompanying them is a constituent of mine, Elaine Olson. I also know that they probably appreciate, at this time of year, a day away from school, especially with this kind of weather. I, however, ask them to take note of their Government in action, democracy in action while they have the opportunity to visit this Legislative Assembly. I also ask them to take home and convey to their parents, my constituents, my warmest and best wishes. I ask all Members of the Legislative Assembly to welcome them and to wish them a good trip home.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. H.H. ROLFES (Saskatoon Nutana): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce to the Members of this House a group of 14 students from Aden Bowman Collegiate in Saskatoon. I am sure the name Aden Bowman is not unknown to Members of the House and certainly not unknown to Regina people, as Aden Bowman for many years dominated the football field and on many occasions has shown Regina what high school football is all about. Also, Aden Bowman Collegiate, Mr. Speaker, at the same time attained a very high academic standing and is known as one of the better collegiates in Saskatoon. Now all of the collegiates in Saskatoon are of high calibre but Aden Bowman is certainly known as one of the best. I would like to greet the students and their teacher, Mr. Washenfelter and I hope their stay here is very edifying and that they will leave this building with a good understanding of the democratic process.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

ANNOUNCEMENT

SHELL CANADA LIMITED EXPLORATION PROGRAM

HON. K. THORSON (Minister of Mineral Resources): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day, I would like to inform the House that yesterday, April 20, Shell Canada Limited, applied to take under permit some 1,700,000 acres in the area north of the Air Weapons Range in northwestern

Saskatchewan and generally west of Peter Pond Lake. This is all Crown land. The company is taking it under permit for the purpose of making preliminary explorations for crude oil in the oil shales in that area of Saskatchewan. The company expects to do some field geological work this year, some research and laboratory work, some drilling and it is expected that it will spend approximately \$150,000 in this exploration program this year.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

COMPOSITION OF THRUST GROUP IN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

HON. W.E. SMISHEK (Minister of Public Health): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day. On Tuesday last, the Hon. Member for Whitmore Park (Mr. Grant) raised several questions. As I understood the questions he wanted to know the composition of the Thrust Group that was established in the Department of Public Health and the composition of the Health Education Probe Group. Whether Mr. John Deverell was named Chairman of the Health Education Probe and whether the Health Education Probe had worked out its terms of reference.

Mr. Speaker, last fall I established a Thrust Group to look into some of the existing programs in the Department of Public Health and to bring in recommendations, ideas about the implementation of new programs that we are committed to implement during our first term of office.

Mr. Speaker, the composition of the Thrust Group was as follows, when I appointed it: Mr. Mel Derrick as Chairman, who is the Associate Deputy of the Department of Public Health, Dr. Louie Skoll is a member of the Thrust Group. He is the Deputy Minister; Dr. Ken Hodgins, the Executive Director of Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan, Dr. David Penman who was then the Medical Director of the Medical Care Insurance Commission and is now the Executive Director as well as acting Medical Director. Mr. Ian Rogers was appointed to the Thrust Group when he was the Executive Director of MCIC and has resigned from Thrust after being appointed Deputy Minister of Public Works. Mr. Dwayne Adams is a member of the Thrust Group who is the present director of Research and Planning and Mr. John Richards, MLA for Saskatoon University and as Minister I am ex officio member of the Thrust Group. Mr. Lynn McCaslin, from SHSP is secretary of Thrust. The Thrust Group has established a dozen or more probe teams who are dealing with particular topics that have been assigned to them by the Thrust Group. In regard to terms of reference the Thrust Group is the body that is responsible for determining the terms of reference for the Probe Committees. In some cases there are joint discussions between the Thrust and the various probes as to the terms of reference. One of the probe teams that was established is on health education. Those initially invited to the health education probe are Mr. Tony Cosgrave, Director of the Departments of Health and Education and Information Branch, Mrs. Alice Jenner, the Chief Nutritionist for the Department, Mr. John Deverell, who was employed by the CBC-TV as public affairs producer and Mr. Ed Mason, who is the Director of Education for Saskatchewan Hospital Association. Mr. John Deverell was asked to be the leader of this probe group. It is expected that other

people will be invited to this particular probe. The probe group has had only one meeting, an organizational meeting on February 22. No terms of reference have been agreed upon by the Health Education Probe nor have they been approved by the Thrust Group.

MR. G.B. GRANT (Whitmore Park): — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. It is quite evident from the answer the Hon. Minister has given to me that the Thrust Group is not a new group as he has led us to believe. This group has been meeting on Mondays and Tuesdays for about three years, the only difference is that he has put a title on it, and exactly the same people with the exception of the Member from Saskatoon University (Mr. Richards). I should like to ask the Hon. Member, since he is an ex officio member of that Thrust Group, does he attend the meetings or I will put it this way, how many meetings have there been since June 23 and how many has he attended?

MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, since the Thrust Group was appointed they have been generally meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the months of November and December, January and February because of our preparation for the Legislative Session and additional work, the group has not been meeting as regularly. In my own case. I have been only able to attend three or four meetings of the Thrust Group.

MR. GRANT: — Mr. Speaker, I should like to point out to the House that the only change that has really been made is that they meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays instead of Monday and Tuesday and if you will check back you will find that I only missed one or two meetings and we met every week.

MR. SMISHEK: — Mr. Speaker, I think that the Hon. Member is referring to the management committee that was established and that has an entirely different body than the Thrust Group.

BILL ON FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS

MR. T.M. WEATHERALD (Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Government presented a Bill called The Foreign Ownership of Agricultural Lands. It is impossible in my opinion rationally to discuss this Bill and I am sure the people of Saskatchewan find it impossible until the Government states to the people of Saskatchewan the amount of exemptions which they will allow through the regulations as being allowed in this Bill. Is the Minister of Agriculture now prepared to tell the House and the people of Saskatchewan so that a rational discussion may be carried on, the amount of exemption which will be allowed to not be under this Act?

MR. SPEAKER: — I think the discussion on this Bill can best be held when it comes up for second reading. I don't think we can start discussing second readings of Bills on Orders of the Day.

MR. STEUART: — Surely, Mr. Speaker, that is a legitimate question. This is a vital Bill and I think if you stop and realize that having announced this Bill which in effect is going to control, as soon as it is passed, the sale of land in a very major way in this

province and the ownership of land, that if the Minister has the answer that it would be of great help to us even if he would answer it and if he hasn't then I should like him to take notice and maybe make second reading to announce this.

MR. SPEAKER: — I still say that the Bill is on the desk and it will come before this House for debate on second reading. And I don't think we can entertain two different bases of discussion on the same and the Bill being laid down that takes precedence over motions or anything else. I think the best basis to discuss this is on second reading. It is no doubt that the Members will want to adjourn the debate after they have asked questions on it. Full opportunity will be given but I don't think I can allow it to be discussed on Orders of the Day.

MR. WEATHERALD: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order. We consider and for reasons that would be too lengthy to go into now that this is a matter of urgency. Simply because of the financing of land if I may over-simplify the situation, it is a matter of urgency and we think that this information is urgent enough that it should now be given to the public if the Minister has it in his possession.

HON. J.R. MESSER (Minister of Agriculture): — On the Point of Order. I will take note of what the Hon. Members to your left are requesting. I don't think this is much different from a lot of other Bills that have been introduced. There are bound to be clauses where they have not been clearly defined and I think it has been the practice of the Members to wait until the Member introducing the Bill gives his second reading. And I assure them that when second reading comes and hopefully it will be early next week, perhaps Monday, I will endeavor to clarify the area that they show some concern in regard to at this point in time.

MR. E.F. GARDNER (Moosomin): — Supplementary question to the Minister then. Does he realize as of today when this Bill was introduced or yesterday, no farmer can go into any bank in the province, borrow money to buy cattle feeders or anything else and use land as his security? This is why it is urgent because as of now you have stopped this type of thing and I don't think we can wait until next week. I think it is time that the people of the province really know what is going on.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! I must say the discussion on this Bill must take place on second reading and cannot come on Orders of the Day.

NATIONALIZATION OF OIL INDUSTRY

MR. H.E. COUPLAND (Meadow Lake): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day. In light of a news release in the paper, this is a question to the Minister of Mineral Resources. He doesn't like referring to the Paper, but 75 people in Swift Current voted unanimously to nationalize the oil industry. I am wondering if the Minister could assure us that it is not the intention of the Government to nationalize the oil industry in Saskatchewan?

HON. K. THORSON (Minister of Mineral Resources): — Mr. Speaker, I just saw the news item this morning, just less than an hour ago. I think I have made the position of the Government quite clear. We have no present intention to take over the ownership of any particular oil facilities but that is a matter which we're always studying, which is our duty to study and it may be at some time that that will be necessary in the public interest.

MR. A.R. GUY (Athabasca): — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. I wish the Minister of Industry then would tell the Legislative Secretary of one of the Ministers to stop going around the province threatening the oil industry with nationalization because this is what he did in Swift Current. It is no wonder they are not getting any industry in the province.

MR. THORSON: — Mr. Speaker, as I have had occasion to observe before, the Member for Athabasca (Mr. Guy) has many wishes but he will have to learn to restrain them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 18 – SENIOR CITIZENS' PROVINCIAL COMMISSION

Mr. D.G. Steuart (Prince Albert West) moved, seconded by Mr. G.B. Grant (Regina Whitmore Park)

That this Assembly recommends to the Government of Saskatchewan that it set up a special senior citizens' provincial commission upon which senior citizens' organizations will have representation to study and report on the following:

- a. The need for a special provincial government department for senior citizens headed by a competent person of mature age.
- b. Nursing or supervisory care centres.
- c. Senior citizens' apartment or grouped units.
- d. The practicality of a school tax exemption for senior citizens.
- e. The effectiveness and practicality of an expanded "meals on wheels" program for senior citizens.
- f. The major new program announced in Great Britain to give a "new lease on life" to senior citizens.
- g. The need for a substantial increase in the basic rate of pension, and the need of incorporating a "cost of living" clause in the formula which would automatically adjust income periodically in order to keep pace with general living costs.

He said: I'm glad to see I have got so many converts on the other side . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — . . . I thought it would take a little longer but I have accomplished it in ten short months. There is just room on this side, Mr. Speaker, to squeeze a few of the more intelligent ones in over here. Mr. Speaker, last week or a few days ago, we had a petition presented to this House by a group of people representing the Old Age Pensioners, the senior citizens of this Province. And in this petition they asked the Government to consider many things. We, on this side of the House met with that group and were very impressed with their responsible attitude and we are very impressed with the requests that they made and the manner in which they presented them. After they placed before the Legislative Assembly their petition, we decided to present to this House a motion which I will move in a very few minutes. Essentially the motion asked for, and the petition asked for two essential things. One, they requested the Government to set up a department concerned with senior citizens and their argument was that in these last few years in the Province of Saskatchewan we have set up a host of new departments concerned with youth and culture or concerned with Indian and Metis people and now changed to be concerned with a larger group of people in our Province, disadvantaged people mainly. We have set up a department to look after the consumers' affairs, we have set up a department to be concerned with geographical parts of the province, the Department of Northern Affairs and yet as they pointed out in their representation nowhere in our Government, and I am not saying this in a critical way because the present Government has only been here ten months and we had seven years, nowhere in our Government can you find any administrative centre or department or agency that is concerned totally with the serious problems facing many of our older people, many of our senior citizens.

The second essential request that was contained in their petition was that the Province of Saskatchewan set up a provincial commission to study the needs and make recommendations in regard to the needs of our senior citizens and our pensioners. And I just want to deal with this for a moment, I'll read into the record of this House some of the terms of reference. They wanted this commission to look into nursing or supervisory care centres, senior citizen apartments or group units, the practicality of school tax exemptions for senior citizens, the effectiveness and practicality of expanded 'meals on wheels' program for senior citizens, the major new program announced in Great Britain to give quote, "a new lease on life" to senior citizens, the need for a substantial increase in the basic rate of pension and the need of incorporating a cost of living clause in the formula which would automatically adjust incomes periodically in order to keep up with the general cost of living. I don't think that any one of us could quarrel with those terms of reference.

Now, people may say and Members of the House may say, well why another commission, another study, because there have been a great many studies in regard to the problems of senior citizens. Studies originated by the Government of Saskatchewan, studies originating out of universities, studies originating from Ottawa, and I don't suppose if you gathered all those studies you could find any area of concern for senior citizens that has not been probed and looked at and recommendations made in regard to them. So why a new one and what can it hope to accomplish? Well, I

think there are two essential differences, Mr. Speaker, in regard to the request of the senior citizens in Saskatchewan as far as this commission they are asking for is concerned.

The great difference is that they ask that the membership of this commission be made up of senior citizens. That, in fact, this commission be carried out by the people who are concerned with these problems, directly concerned, and that is the old people themselves.

I think that this is the very essential difference and the key to this request, because we have made, as a society and as governments, a great many mistakes in the past in regard to our senior citizens and our old people. They were mistakes that I think were obviously made and they weren't made by any particular group and they weren't confined to any particular group or any political philosophy. For example, some years ago with the best of intentions, we built old folks homes on the outskirts of the city. We built them in quiet settings with the idea that when the people reached a certain time in life, their old age, that they would sort of be put out to pasture and they would enjoy a quiet place to spend their declining years.

We built them sometimes in small centres. We found out that a great many old people, in fact the majority of old people, didn't really want to live in these kinds of settings. They, in fact, wanted to be in the mainstream of life. There was a study made, where in one part of Canada, or it might have been one part of the United States, the actual old folks homes set out in parks and in very quiet, lovely settings were half empty, and yet old hotels in the centre of the city were jammed with senior citizens because they wanted to be where the action was. And in this they are not different than most of the younger people. They haven't really changed just because they have become 68, 70 or 78.

We made other mistakes in regard to senior citizens. For example, the idea that everyone when they reach the age of 60, 65 or 70 wants to retire and have nothing to do but sit and rock, whittle and look at the sunset. Again, we have turned out to pasture, or we have denied many, many people who have a great deal to offer to society and we still are actually denying society this beneficial service and we are denying these old people a chance to be useful citizens.

I can enumerate other mistakes we made in this regard. Honest mistakes, mistakes with the best of intentions made in regard to our senior citizens. Mistakes in regard to pensions. Certainly I welcome, as all Members welcome, the idea of a contributory pension plan. The idea that the pension plan will be tied in some manner to the cost of living, and that there have been increases in the old age pensions in an effort to keep up to the cost of living. But again we have to recognize that the pensions paid to most of our senior citizens are inadequate. We also have to recognize that of all groups in our society our senior citizens, the people who in fact built this Province and this nation, are the prime victims of inflation. And it is essential – and this is a problem that is beyond the power, in most cases, of the province to solve – but certainly if we have more adequate information and if we are backed up by a study carried out by the senior citizens themselves, we can bring more intelligent and more responsible pressure to bear on Ottawa, to face this responsibility in a more practical way, even though they have made, I think, sound efforts in the past. We can

also face our own responsibility because there is an area here where we could be doing a better job of paying supplementary allowances to senior citizens who need help in our own Province.

We often talk about the cost-price squeeze that our basic industry, agriculture, the farmers find themselves in and it is very serious. If, in fact, and they are caught in a cost-price squeeze, then I think it is honest to say our senior citizens, or many of them, are caught in a cost-price vise, not just the people who live on old age pensions alone paid by the Government of Canada and supplemented in some cases by the Province of Saskatchewan, but people who retired on a pension – a contributory pension – that looked very adequate five, ten and fifteen and twenty years ago. Retired teachers, retired civil servants. And while there have been some moves in the past by our Government, and there are indications that there will be moves by this Government, to bring some help and some relief to people who have retired, who have worked for the Government of Saskatchewan and teachers who have retired. In other words, people for whom the Government has a very direct and in some cases indirect responsibility.

Again, there are a whole host of people who retired from private business or some other branch of municipal Government. We all know they have now found their pensions – their private pensions – just high enough to move them out of the bracket where they can get any supplementary allowance from the Federal Government, any supplementary allowance from the Provincial Government, and they have been left high and dry and caught in this very, very terrible inflationary squeeze.

So this is a whole area that needs looking at. If the formula can be found that is adequate, sensible and practical, and especially one that fits the need of senior citizens, surely it would be the senior citizens themselves who could bring it forward, backed by their own needs and backed by their own experience. I think it would carry far more weight than any study carried out by any other group, regardless of how well intentioned or of how comprehensive the report is. I can't think of any report that would carry more weight than one brought in by senior citizens themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out very clearly that although the petition asked that the Government of Saskatchewan set up a department for senior citizens, the motion that I am about to introduce does not bind the Government in this respect. It asks that the Government set up a commission composed of senior citizens to study and to recommend the need, among other things, for a department concerned with senior citizens, and, as it says in the petition, staffed essentially by the senior citizens themselves.

Again, I want to go back and say that the essential difference in the petition and the request put forward by the senior citizens from any other request of this kind that I have seen, and there may be others but I haven't seen them, is the request that the study will, in fact, be done by the people affected. I think there is no way that the Government or this Legislature could show its genuine concern, genuine sympathy, for the thousands and thousands of people in our Province, whom we all pay lip service to, the people who built the province, than by complying as quickly as possible with this request, setting up this commission, giving them the adequate support, the backing of the Government of Saskatchewan and then

April 21, 1972

allowing them to get on with the job, bringing back their recommendations and studying in a serious and sympathetic way the resolutions, the findings of this commission and as quickly as possible introduce them where necessary into legislation.

I think that this is a – and I hope – that this is a resolution that all Members in this House will support and one that the Government would give a very high and a very rapid priority to its implementation.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move this Resolution.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. W.A. ROBBINS (Saskatoon Nutana Centre): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few brief comments with respect to this Resolution.

I am in general agreement with the Leader of the Opposition with respect to the Resolution that he has offered to the House. I suppose I should argue on the basis that confession is good for the soul. But I couldn't help but be in agreement with it because I wrote it. I didn't know that plagiarism was going to be practised in the House or I might have taken a copyright out on it.

I should give you a bit of the background. When the senior citizens presented their brief it was some 11 pages long and to get it into brief form I was asked to revise it. This Resolution is word for word, Section 7 and 8 of that particular brief. I am in general agreement with the Leader of the Opposition with respect to his remarks related to our senior citizens who all too often as he said, feel that they have simply been put out to pasture.

As one who has mentioned in this House on more than one occasion, I believe that people should be retired at earlier ages, I do not believe that that should eliminate them from the mainstream of society. I am completely convinced in my own mind that if people were retired at earlier ages and we organize our society with reasonable efficiency and participation from those citizens, that those people will be in a position to participate much more logically in community life.

I often see people in their mid-years burdened down with far too many responsibilities in relation to community activity such as the United Appeal, Salvation Army Appeal and things of this nature. It has often occurred to me that our Senior citizens could be very usefully employed in this respect and that they would enjoy participation in this respect, particularly if people were retiring at younger ages. I certainly agree with the intent of the Resolution related to a study or commission and particularly with participation of people of mature age.

I think the Leader of the Opposition put his finger right on the problem when he said that individual persons in these categories want to feel that they are participants.

He also made some reference to the Canada Pension Plan, without mentioning it directly in relation to the fact that it is being used now in our country and that it does have a cost

of living clause in it which is a logical approach in terms of pensions because inflation inevitably erodes the purchasing power of the dollar. I don't think it is the responsibility of pension plans particularly to solve the problem of inflation. I think it is the problem of authorities, basically at the Federal and at international levels. But obviously some means must be devised to enable the purchasing power of pensions to bear a reasonable relationship to costs in our modern day society.

Therefore, I am particularly pleased to support that particular section. I think it is vital that these people feel that they are participants, that these people are appointed to a commission if one is set up and that their desires, their wishes and their participation be listened to. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I am not completely convinced necessarily that we should have a Department for senior citizens, but nevertheless the study should probe that very seriously and very thoroughly.

Therefore, in concluding my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I should simply like to say that in a general way I strongly support the Resolution offered by the Leader of the Opposition and I sincerely hope that every Member in this House will do likewise.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Smishek that Bill No. 98 – **An Act to amend The Hospital Standards Act** be now read a second time.

MR. G.B. GRANT (Regina Whitmore Park): — Mr. Speaker, I regret the Hon. Minister of Health is not in the House.

MR. ROMANOW: — He'll be here any minute. Just keep going. I am taking notes and I will give them to him.

MR. GRANT: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I will start because my comments are going to be directed to the Attorney General (Mr. Romanow) to start with. I am pretty sure that it is his responsibility and also that of the Premier because I am referring to the explanatory notes, the so-called explanatory notes, that came with this Bill and I would appreciate if they would look at them if they have them. They are four pages long, no wonder we need pulp mills in Saskatchewan. The first six lines merely cite the existing provision and the next three and one half pages under the heading "Explanation" repeats the Bill. So they are no earthly use whatsoever and I would strongly recommend Mr. Attorney General that if this is going on in other legislation that it be stopped because it is no help to us at all.

Speaking to this Bill, there are a couple of things and I will take them in the order in which they appear in the Bill, then the Hon. Minister can follow them more easily.

In Section 2, reference is made to chiropractors who are in good standing in the Chiropractors' Association. I know the Hon. Minister and I believe also the Premier had representations made in connection with the osteopaths and I will not repeat today the qualifications of this particular type of person because both the Premier and the Minister of Health have been acquainted with these qualifications. I believe they are somewhat superior to the training of a chiropractor, probably not comparable to a physician, but I think it is of note that the President of the United States took an osteopath with him to China when he went over there, as his medical protector.

There is reference made in defining a physician as being legally qualified. In checking other legislation I find that the word 'duly' is used and I refer, without going into it too far, to The Saskatchewan Evidence Act and the recent amendment to The Mutual Medical Act. I don't know whether there is really any difference between these two words or not but it seems to me there should be some consistency.

Speaking of the clause giving chiropractors the right to admission for diagnostic treatment purposes to the hospitals, I should like to have the Minister comment in his closing remarks as to what is involved in the question of access to costly outpatient services as a result of this. Because, as I understand, this would mean that the chiropractor would be permitted to utilize the services of the radiologists and the laboratory technicians and people of that type in the hospitals.

The reference to the Board of Appeal bothers me a bit because I feel that there is a possible downgrading of the courts or a bypassing of the courts here. There doesn't appear to me to be any appeal from the decision of the Board of Appeal. I should like to have the Minister comment on that because if that is the case I think it is wrong. I don't think we should be bypassing the courts in this particular area.

In Section 23(2), mention is made that the Minister shall not refer a complaint to an Appeal Board until after the expiration of at least 15 days from the date on which he first consulted with the Saskatchewan Hospital Association or the Council of the College of Physicians. I would appreciate his comments on the merit of using the word 'or' over the use of the word 'and'. It seems to me that both bodies should be consulted because they are almost equally interested in this.

The last clause that I wanted to comment on is the authority of the Minister, through the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council or the Cabinet to appoint a public administrator to administer the affairs of a hospital. In an earlier section in describing a hospital or in making reference to a hospital, I believe it is referred to as a general hospital and then later on only the word 'hospital' is used. It would seem to me that this could lead to some difficulty since you are not consistent and I would suggest that the words 'general hospital' should be used in every instance.

As I pointed out the other day, the Minister seems to be using a pretty strong piece of legislation or bringing in a strong piece of legislation for what appears to have been a minor hazard or danger in the past. As far as I can learn there has been no mass resignations of hospital boards; there have been no mass threats of resignation. I believe there was a

threat in the case of the Wilkie hospital board but if there are others I am not aware of it. I think the hospital boards in Saskatchewan have demonstrated over the years a great degree of responsibility. I am surprised on occasions that they haven't suggested resignations when they get up pretty tight about the economies of The Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan and the restrictions on bed allowance and many other things, but to my knowledge the incidence of suggested resignations are very, very few. Unfortunately, I didn't get an opportunity to check with Section 39 of The Urban Act but it was suggested to me that this might be a better wording for this particular Section.

I think, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister could adequately explain or elaborate on those particular points that we could support the Act. We may have some reservations depending on his answers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W.E. SMISHEK (Minister of Public Health): — Mr. Speaker, in closing debate on this Bill, let me first try to answer the questions raised by the Hon. Member from Whitmore Park (Mr. Grant). He raised a question about Section 2 of the Bill respecting the chiropractors and what is the intention of the words 'for diagnosis or treatment', and to whom a bed or bassinets is not being assigned for overnight which is for the use of the outpatient facilities.

In the case of treatment, it is my understanding that chiropractors do refer patients to physiotherapists from time to time. As he is aware the physiotherapists are basically located in hospitals. It would be possible to delete treatment for outpatient services but what would then happen is the chiropractor would then have to refer the patient back to the physician, who would then prescribe physiotherapy. Now I understand that it is not too often that this referral is made but that is the intent of it.

In case of the diagnosis he is correct in saying the use of X-ray facilities, and outpatient facilities of hospitals, as well as laboratories. As he is aware The Medical Care Insurance Plan and the Hospital Services Plan do not authorize the location of X-ray facilities in every clinic operated by the physicians certainly these are not paid by these plans for all the facilities that might be established by physicians, except where they are authorized. The intent here is that X-ray facilities of our hospitals and the outpatient departments will be used by chiropractors as well as by physicians. Certainly regulations will have to determine the extent of the use. Perhaps in this respect questions might be asked in more detail when we are in Committee of the Whole.

He made reference to insuring of osteopath services and that the President of the United States had an osteopath accompany him on his way to China. I can tell him, and he perhaps knows that we have had representations from a number of people to have osteopathic services insured as well. We were committed in our program to insure chiropractic services but I can tell him that we are looking into this question. I am hoping to get some answers from the departmental officials of what might be the possibilities. We are assessing the cost but I can't give him any assurance that that service will become insured this year.

There are people who are using osteopathic services. One thing in the Province of Saskatchewan there are very few osteopaths, in fact only one or two. So the service would certainly not be generally available to the people. But we are looking into that and perhaps when we are in Committee of the Whole I could give him some further information.

He said that the appeal procedure does not provide for review by the court. The provisions we propose on the appeal procedure are deliberate. Somewhere a decision has to be made if there are problems. I am not sure whether the courts are the bodies that are really equipped to deal with this kind of problem. It is intended in this Bill to establish a single appeal body rather than to have appeal bodies established every time a dispute arises. In other words we are hoping that we shall establish that kind of appeal body which will develop some real expertise. As I have indicated during the second reading of the Bill that this particular section was discussed with the Saskatchewan Medical Association and with the Saskatchewan Hospital Association. They gave approval to this procedure in principle.

He made reference to one of the sections about consultation with the Hospital Association or the College of Physicians and Surgeons. I will look into that. I believe there is a typographical error there and we will be able to correct this during Committee of the Whole because it is really the intent when a dispute arises to consult both the Hospital Association and the College.

The references to the question that in some cases we refer to 'hospitals' and in other cases 'general hospitals', these are very deliberate references. This again arises out of our consultation with the SMA and the SHA because it is really intended to apply to general hospitals because under the Federal legislation and other legislation a hospital is a much broader agency than a general hospital. So these are very deliberate references. Perhaps again we can go into more detail about this when we have the Bill in Committee.

Then there is the question of an appointment of an administrator. Mr. Speaker, the basic reason for this section is to ensure that the provision of an adequate level of hospital services and care are effectively and safely provided to people. The Bill, or that particular section, is not intended to provide the Government with a means of taking over hospital management under normal circumstances. However, where a hospital finds itself in serious difficulty and it cannot be resolved at the local level, the Bill will allow the Government to appoint a caretaker to ensure that the patients receive adequate care until such time as local authority is once again in a position to assume responsibility for competent management.

In the past there have been various problems which have indicated the mechanism of this nature could be useful. Fortunately most of these problems have been resolved locally before there was a need for outside assistance but they do illustrate situations which could give rise to the need for this kind of legislation. The Hon. Member made reference to only one situation that he was aware where there was a threat of the board resigning. May I bring to his attention some further situations and perhaps also refresh his memory because in our search we find that there have been a number of situations. Where a board

or corporate authority has threatened to abdicate its responsibility by resignation or withdrawal of support of hospital services. For example, in Broadview in 1971 the board threatened to resign. In LaLoche in 1970 the corporation threatened to give up operation of the facility, where a board experienced extreme difficulties in the internal management of the hospital. In Swift Current in 1964 the administrator and the director of nurses resigned at the same time in a dispute with the board. We had a situation in the case of Wilkie over a termination of an employee which created a lot of sharp feelings there. In Hafford a dispute between the two factions in a district developed some years ago which led to resignation of a number of board members. Where the board is not able adequately to control the activities of the medical staff, or where the board is mismanaging the responsibility for medical staff supervision, that situation is cited in the case of Balcarres in 1968, as he might be aware of. A major dispute with the medical staff and resignation of certain board members took place at that time. In the case of Lanigan, a problem arose over uncontrolled surgery. In Climax in 1968 uncontrolled surgery with certain questionable deaths and an inquest and investigation later on by the College of Physicians and Surgeons. Other situations can be cited. It was felt that it was important that some authority be provided in case of a hospital closing down and the community being left without hospital services and proper management because of these kinds of internal factions or internal problems that arise.

We can cite a number of cases outside the province as well and I wish to advise the Member again that other provinces, Ontario and British Columbia have enacted this kind of legislation. I can advise him that The Urban Municipalities Act provides for such authority. I trust he has checked this out. This kind of authority does exist. It is not intended to use this provision indiscriminately but it is certainly the advice that we have received that this kind of a section will be useful when there is no other way to resolve the dispute or differences that come up in a community.

So, with those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of the Bill. I will assure the Hon. Member that any further question he might have we will be glad to answer them during Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Snyder that Bill No. 83 – **An Act to amend The Labour Standards Act** be now read a second time.

MR. D.F. MacDONALD (Moose Jaw North): — Mr. Speaker, I asked for an adjournment on this Bill the other day in order that I might try to understand the implications of all aspects of the Bill. I pointed out that I was disappointed by the lack of information and interpretation of the Bill when it was introduced by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Snyder). There are many unanswered questions as to the full intention of certain clauses. And as I said last Tuesday these questions must now be considered in a clause by clause study in third reading.

Since the passing of The Human Rights Commission Bill, most of this Bill is of a housekeeping nature, except for clause 4 which deals with leave of absence to seek nomination in an

election. I will at this time confine my remarks to the broad principle involved in clause 4.

Mr. Speaker, I support the principle of permitting, in practical terms, all individuals in our society to be able to take part in our democratic process. I support the principle that makes it possible for every citizen to attempt to gain public office and if this public office is attained, to have the right to fulfil the duties of the office. We must consider this principle in practical terms, because, in fact, all people do have a right guaranteed by law to participate in our elective process as long as they meet certain legal requirements.

Those of us who are interested and active in political life realize that for practical reasons many individuals are denied the privilege of seeking or holding public office. There may be a number of minor practical reasons that deny people the opportunity to seek or hold office. But surely, the most important factor is security. It is well known to those involved in politics that this is a risky business to be in. It is most hazardous to undertake political life as a long-long career.

This Bill before us, Bill 83 contains provisions to ensure that employees will have a clear and easy passage to take regarding opportunities to seek or hold public office. This Bill, in effect, will remove the risk of political life from employees. To use the Minister of Labour's words, "It will remove an occupational barrier". It is agreed that the possible loss of a job is indeed an impediment to employees seeking or holding public office. Many of the Members of this House are faced with financial and job insecurity.

Because of the nature of many jobs or professions a person must resign from his job or quit his business in order to hold public office. And in many cases the same applies to even seeking the office in the first place. This situation is certainly an impediment for some individuals who enter our elective process. I think that one could go even further and say that, for example, a man with a family owes his first responsibility to his family. It might be considered an irresponsible act for a man with a family to give up his job and risk the security of his family in order that he might attempt to gain public office. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I could do nothing but support any principle that would allow individuals in practical terms, to enter into the Canadian elective process.

We are seeing in this Bill that this is not an easy principle to adopt in practice. We shall see when we study this in third reading that by giving rights to one individual, we shall be taking rights away from another. We shall see that easing a burden from one person will result in loading it on to another. It will be seen that there will be detrimental effects on employers as a result of provisions in this clause. It is interesting to note what type of employer will suffer these detrimental effects. It will not be the large corporation that will be adversely affected. These companies will not find it difficult to adjust personnel to compensate for the granting of leave to one employee. A large company may find it a slight inconvenience to grant sporadic leave to accommodate an employee. He will find it even less onerous to grant an extended leave as may be the case for a Member of Parliament or a Cabinet Minister in the Provincial Government. The large companies will not find it too difficult to fit an employee back into his job after he

has been on an extended leave. It will, at most, mean a transfer or a shuffle of employees.

Mr. Speaker, it is the small employer who will feel the adverse results of the provisions in this Bill. In fact, it is interesting to note that the smaller the employer the greater will be the detrimental effects. The employer with one or two employees and there are hundreds of these in Saskatchewan, will find it very difficult to grant leave for either short term, long term or sporadic occasions. It is interesting to note that the employer who employs one or two employees will grant job security in the form of leave to the employee who seeks or gains office, the man that he hires to replace him will not have the same job security and when the former employee's term of office is up, the man who is hired to replace him will now be out of a job. We now see how the security of one man is guaranteed by this Bill at the expense of the security of another man.

These are just some examples of how difficult it is to institute a principle that we all believe in. However, we will study these problems in third reading and it is hoped that we may find some solution to the apparent inequities inherent in this Bill. I asked to adjourn debate on this Bill because I am very interested in this matter and I wanted time to study it in detail. After consideration of Bill 83 I find I have a suggestion. Clause 4 which is the section regarding leave of absence to keep nominations and election, should be struck out of Bill 83. This section should not be brought forth as an amendment to The Labour Standards Act. The clause on the principle involved should be brought forward as a Bill by itself. If the Government believes in the principle, it should be prepared to bring it forth in the least discriminating manner possible. I personally don't think The Labour Standards Act should contain such a provision. I think this provision should stand by itself. However, the Minister of Labour obviously disagrees and I don't intend to debate this issue. There is a very good reason for deleting this section from Bill 83. It is outright discrimination to have it included in The Labour Standards Act. We are dealing with a principle, at least, I am. That principle is that all individuals should have a practical right to seek nomination and election. I see no reason that this provision should be provided to one segment of society and not to other segments. Surely, if it is a just principle then it is just for all people. By including it as an amendment to The Labour Standards Act, then we are denying the same right to anyone who employs one employee. We are denying the same right to anyone who acts as an agent of any kind of employer. We are denying the same right to anyone acting in a managerial nature of any kind. We are denying the same right to any representative of any employer. We are denying the right to contractors and subcontractors or to any person who has any control or direction of one or more employees. If a Bill was presented that dealt only with guaranteeing leave of absence to seek nomination and election, then the principle could be extended to include people of various walks of life. Let's just take a couple of examples. Should the Assistant Manager of a small town Credit Union be denied the same right as that of one of the tellers? Should an out of scope employee of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation be denied the same right as that of a lineman with the Saskatchewan Power Corporation? If we are discussing a principle then surely it should apply to all individuals.

It might be suggested that this would create many problems and I would be the first to agree. The provision we are now looking at, allowing leave, could be disrupting to say the least. We are faced with the same problems when we consider the present Bill 83. There are no easy solutions to the provisions in the clause that the Minister has placed before us. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the Minister that clause 4 of Bill 83 be deleted and that he could place before this House a Bill that would be fair, equitable and non-discriminating.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

PRINTING OF BILLS

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, before you leave the Chair, may I beg the indulgence of the House very briefly. We are having some difficulties getting Bills printed because of problems which seem to be arising in the printing trade and this has been going on for some days. In order to assist Hon. Members, I have had prepared some mimeographed copies of The Succession Duty Act which I will distribute to the Opposition Members, if I may, so that they will have this advance opportunity to have it over the weekend. We had confidently hoped that several of these Bills, including The Succession Duty Act and The Gift Tax Act would be available some days ago. I still think The Gift Tax Act will be here in printed form before we rise today. It now looks as if the Succession Duty one will not. I will arrange to distribute these for the assistance of Hon. Members.

MR. J.C. McISAAC (Wilkie): — Mr. Speaker, just a brief word. I appreciate the Act that the Premier mentioned being made available. We regret the problems with respect to printing. We only hope that they will be straightened out so we can have all of those Bills and promise to deal with them as expeditiously as we can.

MESSAGE FROM LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Provincial Treasurer): — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 117:

An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Year ending the Thirty-first day of March, 1973,

Be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

At 2.35 o'clock p.m. His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor then entered the Chamber and gave royal assent to the Bills presented to him.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

MR. F. MEAKES (Touchwood): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce to you and through you to other Members of the House 43 students from the Gordon Residential School at Punnichy. They are in Grade Three, Grade Six and from the Opportunities classroom. They have with them teachers, Mr. Thakkar, Mr. Blakeney, Mrs. McCullough, Miss Jones, Mr. Fight and one parent, Mrs. Cyr. I am sure that all Members will join with me in hoping that this will be an

educational process that they have here this afternoon and that they will go home with a little more knowledge of the democratic process here in this Legislature.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. E.I. WOOD (Swift Current): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce to you and to the Members of the Assembly a very fine group of young people who are sitting in the front benches of the Speaker's Gallery. These are 25 Grade Eight students, from the town of Cabri. This is one of the outstanding towns in Saskatchewan. We have people coming from there such as Bobby Gimby and many other notable and important people. We are glad to have them with us today under the care of their teacher, Dale Frankie and their bus driver Sigurd Bue. We hope that they have a very good afternoon with us and that they learn how democracy is carried on in Saskatchewan. We hope they have a very good trip and tour through Regina and a safe journey home.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. R. GROSS (Gravelbourg): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you 21 Grade Eight students from Consul, Saskatchewan, seated in the west gallery. Today they are under the guidance of Mr. Allan Eddy and their driver, Mr. Bill Omstead. I would hope their stay today would be an educational and enjoyable one and that they have a safe journey home.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. D.G. STEUART (Prince Albert West): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the House to join with me in welcoming a group of students from St. Ann's Separate School in Prince Albert West. I hope that they enjoy their stay in Regina, that they find their visit to the Legislative Building and this Session very interesting and that they have a very safe journey home.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

SECOND READINGS

HON. J.R. MESSER (Minister of Agriculture) moved second reading of Bill No. 110 – **An Act to facilitate the Acquisition and Disposition of Farm Land in Saskatchewan.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, I should firstly like to recognize and thank the Opposition for allowing us by leave of the Legislature to proceed with second reading of The Land Bank Commission Bill even though the Bill has only a few moments ago been tabled in the Legislature. I am sure the weekend will give them the opportunity to be able to peruse the Bill and also digest the remarks that I shall be making in regard to second reading of this Bill this afternoon. I hope that they will be well informed in regard to what we are introducing in The Land Bank Commission Act.

I should also, Mr. Speaker, like to make mention of the corsage that was given to me by some Members of my staff, unfortunately I left it in the Members' Lounge. I think it

signifies the importance and the faith that a lot of members in the staff of the Department of Agriculture have in The Land Bank Commission. I think if anybody should be recognized by such a gift it should be perhaps the Minister recognizing a good many members of my Department who have worked most dedicatedly in the past months in regard to the drafting and the final implementation of the Act that we present to the Legislature this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, it is with both pride and satisfaction that I speak to this Bill to establish the Saskatchewan Land Bank Commission. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the commitment to place such legislation before the Assembly was one of the most important commitments made by the New Democratic Party last June. The people of Saskatchewan indicated in no uncertain terms last June 23rd that they wanted this kind of legislation. This Government has remained determined to respect the opinion of the electorate. Mr. Speaker, this legislation is both bold and daring. It has no counterpart in any other province in Canada, or for that matter any other part of the world. It is a pioneering piece of legislation involving the application of new idea and new principle in an attempt to deal with problems which have plagued Saskatchewan farmers for decades. This legislation has its roots with farmers. The original idea grew out of the statements and discussions among farmers themselves. Farm organizations and groups participating in the formulation of the legislation as it now stand and farmers will have an important and direct role to play in the administration of the program.

As I look back, Mr. Speaker, on the history of this Province it seems to me entirely appropriate that legislation such as this should have its origin in Saskatchewan. Our Province has been traditionally known in Canada as the most important source of bold, and pioneering initiatives. Initiatives aimed at resolving the pressing social and economic problems. I think back to such things as co-operative marketing, the Wheat Pool concept, public ownership of public utilities, larger school units, Medicare and many others. These ideas have been brought to fruition by the grassroots people of Saskatchewan, people with a sense of daring, people with the courage and the confidence to try something new and something different, people, Mr. Speaker, who have confidence in themselves and confidence in the future of this Province. All of these attempts to move into new and untried territory have had to overcome the obstructionism of small but vocal minorities who lack the courage to become involved with progressive change. Yes, the prophets of doom have always been with us in this Province ever ready to obstruct and to oppose but never, Mr. Speaker, never willing or able to propose constructive alternatives to the problems of the day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MESSER: — Looking back at the history of progressive change in Saskatchewan, it comes as no surprise to me to find that the established leadership of the Liberal Party has over and over again manifested its lack of imagination and daring by coming out in this instance totally opposed to the Land Bank idea. The Members opposite, Mr. Speaker, have been involved in a regrettable, but not surprising effort, to sabotage this legislation, ever since they first became aware of the fact that we intended to proceed with it. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't deny the right of the Opposition to be critical nor do I deny

the right to obstruct and for that matter attempt to sabotage legislation through false and deceitful statements. That's their right if they wish and choose to exercise it. However, I do wish to remind this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan that the Opposition has responsibilities as well as rights. It is the responsibility of the loyal Opposition to be constructive in its criticism. It has a responsibility to offer alternatives and positive suggestions, something the Liberal Party has not been able to do during seven years of Government.

They weren't able to do it during seven years of Government nor have they shown any indication of being able to do it as an Opposition Party in this Province.

The Members of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, have spoken and spoken clearly and for those with short memories I remind them of the address which the Hon. Member from Milestone (Mr. MacDonald) made in this Assembly on the 7th day of March. That, and many other speeches of the Members opposite, have been so obviously negative, so obviously loaded with half truths, so obviously opposed to the whole idea of the Land Bank as to lead one to conclude that there is no hope that the Opposition will fulfil its historic responsibility to ensure that this legislation is capable of meeting its objectives.

I am indeed sorry that I have to come to this conclusion from their actions. Sorry because I thought the events last June might have convinced the leadership of the Liberal Party that they must tune in to the future and in so doing help this Legislature to create and develop progressive new policies for the future.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Government, are convinced that the farm people in Saskatchewan want to see this legislation enacted and tried. The public interest in our proposals has been tremendous. This was obvious during the election of last June and has become even more obvious since then.

The Opposition believes that contrary to the wishes of farmers, a Land Bank should not even be tried. The Hon. Member from Milestone said so in this Assembly on March 7th, just past. One of the reasons that I made the decision last fall to go out into rural areas and discuss our Land Bank proposals with the people of Saskatchewan was because I recognized the need for intelligent, rational discussion of those proposals. I was fully aware, Mr. Speaker, that the farmers of Saskatchewan did not want to see this important program discussed only within the context of what could be considered partisan political strategy. I fully believe that they were interested in looking at the proposals, discussing those proposals and, in fact, even criticising those proposals, and then have them tried.

This belief was fully justified by subsequent events. As most Members of this Assembly know, during the winter, my Department sponsored 13 public meetings throughout the province, meetings which I personally presented proposals which would be used in establishing a Land Bank Commission and the legislation and the regulations attached to it.

These meetings were attended by over 12,000 people, Mr. Speaker, a record I believe for attendance at meetings held to discuss policy proposals of any kind.

SOME HON MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MESSER: — During the course of these meetings, Mr. Speaker, people attending were invited to ask questions and offer criticisms, or written cards and orally by means of floor microphones. These questions and comments were of immense use in assisting myself and my staff to gauge the degree of acceptance of the program in the areas about which people were concerned.

A number of important factors became clear to me, Mr. Speaker, as a result of these meetings. One was that an overwhelming majority of the people are in favor of giving the Land Bank a try.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MESSER: — They know, Mr. Speaker, that the Land Bank is a new program, one that may run into some problems. But they are willing to give it an opportunity to work. However, they also know that existing programs designed to assist in land transfer are inadequate in many respects. This is the first attempt by any government, anywhere in Canada, to correct these defects by designing a radically new system to complement those already existing.

May I warn those who are trying to sabotage this Land Bank that farm people generally are demanding some workable alternatives to deal with the problems associated with the transfer of farms from one generation to the next. And they will not tolerate obvious political manoeuvring designed to delay or to destroy any such legislation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MESSER: — Another factor that became clear from these meetings was that some people were hoping that the Land Bank would be a program that may or would solve all the problems currently confronting Saskatchewan farmers. This is understandable, Mr. Speaker. The income problems of the last few years have taken a terrible toll in the farm and rural areas of the province. However, I think that most of these people left these meetings recognizing, just as we in the Government recognize, that the Land Bank cannot be used to solve all of the income problems that are confronting Saskatchewan farmers.

Should we attempt to enhance significantly the incomes of those leasing from the Land Bank Commission, through massive subsidization, the benefit would be unevenly distributed. If incomes are to be enhanced significantly, it must be on the basis that gives equal treatment to both land owners and land renters.

I know that it is difficult to categorize problems in any absolute sense. However, the terribly depressed income situation of Saskatchewan farmers can only be solved by a program different from, but complementary to, the Land Bank. This program must be one that establishes prices of farm products and levels of farm receipts in sane and reasonable levels.

I believe that our Government has developed workable proposals that will do just that. Unfortunately much of the

responsibility for such a program rests with the Federal Government, and that Government has not seen fit to take the action required. But I might add, Mr. Speaker, that the proposals which the Saskatchewan Government put forward in this regard for the grain sector and as an alternative to the Federal Government's Grain Receipt Stabilization Plan, appear now to be receiving serious consideration by the Federal Government at this time.

If that Government should see fit to implement our proposals, and I sincerely hope it will, then the program, combined with the Land Bank, would go a long way toward providing the stability so much needed in the rural areas of this Province.

We are proceeding with the Land Bank legislation, Mr. Speaker, firmly convinced that we have the support of the majority of the people in the Province of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MESSER: — The pamphlet that we printed outlines the proposals made last January and it went into several printings with over 30,000 pamphlets having been distributed to date. We have had requests for this pamphlet from practically every major organization and group in the province.

A survey of the request for pamphlets indicates that the only important — the supposedly important and interested organization in the Province — which did not request a significant number of pamphlets for study sessions was the Liberal Party in the Province of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MESSER: — Now this might well have something to do with their apparent lack of understanding of what we are trying to do with this legislation. In formulating this legislation, Mr. Speaker, we have considered briefs and submissions from organizations and individuals from throughout the Province. The concerns expressed in those briefs and submissions were carefully considered in formulating this legislation in its final form.

Mr. Speaker, the Members opposite say it is not true that they didn't ask for the pamphlets that I referred to. Thirty thousand were printed, and I believe, and I may stand to be corrected, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Steuart) asked for 20.

MR. STEUART: — On a Point of Personal Privilege, Mr. Speaker. We asked for and we got about 120. I phoned his secretary and she said, "We only have about 20 now. We will supply you with some more", which she very kindly did. I hope she is a little more close to the truth than her boss is.

MR. MESSER: — We had two requests to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, and the total amount of pamphlets that were requested were 200 or 300. Out of 30,000 pamphlets the Liberal Party saw fit to ask for only several hundred in order to inform themselves and to members of their Party or the people in the Province of

April 21, 1972

Saskatchewan, they want to do or know about the Land Bank Commission.

MR. STEUART: — We asked for and never got.

MR. WEATHERALD: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Privilege. I had . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! The Hon. Member is not in his own seat so he cannot speak.

MR. MESSER: — Mr. Speaker, my Government is concerned about some of the trends which are developing in rural Saskatchewan. We are concerned about the declining farm and rural population. We are concerned about the inability of many smaller and beginning farmers wishing to obtain land, while larger farmers grow even larger. We are concerned that in many areas older farmers at retirement age are not able to find acceptable buyers of their land. One of the great problems in the area of land transfer and land tenure is that there has been not enough alternatives available.

Government programs have been predominant in the whole area of land transfer with the Farm Credit Corporation being the only agency of any significance in this Province. Now as everyone knows, Mr. Speaker, the Farm Credit Corporation is, in fact, a mortgage company. Land can only be acquired through it providing one purchases the land. Under the Farm Credit Corporation Program one can only obtain land provided that he has substantial equity in land already and the whole of this land must often be encumbered by a mortgage. This in itself creates problems. First it means that a farmer who purchases land must risk loss of all of his own lands should he be in a position where he cannot meet his obligations under the mortgage. Many farmers in just this position have consulted my Department during the past year and there is absolutely nothing that we can do. These people bought land in the mid and late 1960s mortgaging their total farm in the process. They now find themselves in a position where they cannot meet the payments and they can only clear themselves of their obligations under the mortgage by allowing foreclosure to take place, in which case many will lose the whole farm. This illustrates one of the major problems with this type of system of land transfer, namely that the purchaser assumes all the risk.

The second problem with land acquisitions through the Farm Credit Corporation and other mortgage companies is that a farmer must often put up all of his own assets as security on land purchases leaving him with no security for loans needed for investment in machinery, equipment, livestock and other highly productive and needed assets. The result has been, Mr. Speaker, that there has not been enough farm capital invested in non-land assets. Farmers have been forced to overconcentrate on an expanded land base when developing their farms with the result that there has not been adequate farm diversification. As is well known this lack of diversification has made our farmers susceptible in the extreme to the instability of the world grain markets. Mr. Speaker, a survey was recently completed in Moose Jaw and it indicates that only 10 per cent of the farm operators are under 35 years of age and this to me indicates the magnitude of problems that young persons are

experiencing in establishing farm operations. Farmers wishing to purchase land to establish a farming operation or to expand a small-scale farming operation, find it difficult if not impossible to compete with owners of large farm units or persons with off-farm income. The farmer who is trying to establish a farming operation under our present system must acquire land, machinery, in many cases livestock, buildings and all other implements necessary for agricultural production. To acquire these assets he must borrow large sums of money. Such a farmer faces a tremendous cash shortage during the first years of operation. Such a farmer must pay all operating costs such as taxes, fuel, repairs and cropping expenses. He must provide himself and his family with the necessities of life such as food, clothing, a decent home, transportation and hopefully some entertainment. He must pay interest on the large amount of money he must borrow and in addition, Mr. Speaker, he must make payments on principal. These payments of principal are in effect a forced saving. The Members opposite will claim the principal payments will ultimately give the farmer title to his land, that the farmer is building up an equity for future years.

Now I ask you, Mr. Speaker, what is the point of forcing farmers to save money for the future if they cannot afford to live today? If we look around Saskatchewan at this time, there is a catastrophic shortage of young farmers. With the current available methods of land transfer and low incomes which have been prevalent in agriculture for the past few years few persons have been able to establish farming operations. The majority of young men have found it impossible to establish a land base sufficient to provide a meaningful operation. For this reason the young potential farmers of this Province have been forced to seek other occupations. In the midst of this problem we have the Liberal Party maintaining that farmers must buy their land to build up an equity for the future.

I should like to suggest another reason why our present system of land ownership is not satisfactory to many farmers today. How many farmers in this Province have lived in relative poverty for the major portion of their farming lifetime to establish ownership of farm land? These people have saved thousands of dollars which they pay to mortgage companies. They have worked hard, with poor equipment, because they could not spare the money necessary to replace it. They have sacrificed opportunities for recreation and for pleasure. They have sacrificed personal comforts and conveniences because they were committed to building up a large equity in their farm. I again ask you, Mr. Speaker, and Members of this Assembly, is it necessary for farmers to make such sacrifices to build up an equity, an equity which is not available to them until they retire or to their estates upon death? The Land Bank will attempt to remove some of the problems associated with the acquisition of farm land. The Land Bank will lease land to farmers wishing to establish a farming operation. Such farmers will pay a rent which will often be less than the cost of borrowing money to buy land. Such farmers will not be forced to forgo other profitable investment opportunities in order to build up an equity in land. Such farmers will not need to own large amounts of assets, nor will they need to risk all of their assets as security in order to expand.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to give a specific example of the kind of advantages that will be available to farmers through the Land Bank program. The Members opposite, on a number of

April 21, 1972

occasions have quoted figures which were very inaccurate, which leads me to question their knowledge of simple arithmetic and mathematics.

The Land Bank will be charging a rent based on the cost of money to this Government. Rents will be announced in the month of November prior to the year for which the rent is being charged. A formula will be prescribed which will establish rental rates considering the cost of money to the Provincial Treasurer in a period just prior to the announcement of the rate. The Land Bank will not be in a position to lease land in any major way until 1973, therefore, I cannot say what the rent will be at this time. However, if the program had been introduced one year earlier and the land was available for lease this year the Land Bank would be charging a rent of 7 per cent. A farmer leasing land in January or February to farm in 1972 would pay a rent equal to 7 per cent of the market value of the land.

I should like to give a comparison of the cost of renting land as opposed to buying. Let us consider the case where a farmer wishes to expand his land base by an additional 320 acres. Let us assume this land is worth \$75 per acre or \$24,000 for the half section. If the farmer bought the land prior to the beginning of the farming season this year, that is before the 31st of March, and borrowed money from the Farm Credit Corporation for the purchase he would pay 7½ per cent interest. If the farmer buys the land using a 29 year amortized loan the annual payment of interest and principal is \$2,052. The farmer must pay \$2,052 per year for 29 years for a total of \$59,507. If the farmer had leased this half section from the Land Bank the rental would be 7 per cent times \$24,000 or \$1,680. The difference in annual payments between renting and buying is \$2,052 minus the \$1,680 for a difference of \$372. \$372 per year may seem insignificant at first, Mr. Speaker, but it may make the difference between the farmer establishing a successful farm unit and having to abandon his farm.

Let me outline some of the uses to which a farmer can apply this difference of \$372. The farmer may decide to use the money in a livestock operation or in some input such as a higher quality seed or fertilizer which may well yield him, according to our returns, 10 per cent on his investment. If this annual difference is employed in a venture earning that 10 per cent, the \$372 per year plus accumulated earnings amounts to \$55,291 in the 29 year period. The Members opposite will say that the lessee still does not own his land. I ask you which is better, a half-section of land or the \$55,291?

If the lessee desires to own land he may, after leasing for five years, purchase that land, or if he so chooses he can keep his original half-section of land under lease and buy other land in the district from private individuals. The \$372 difference in annual payments which he has avoided by leasing may well be applied to payments of additional land he is purchasing. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and Members of this Assembly, does this sound like a program to reduce farmers' opportunities to own and farm land? On the contrary, I feel the Land Bank will be of assistance to those farmers who choose to lease land as a stepping stone to the eventual ownership of a farm unit. No doubt the Members opposite will claim that the lessee does not have an opportunity to benefit from capital gains in farm land. The benefits of capital gains are largely a myth, Mr. Speaker. In the 40-year period, 1920 to 1960 the

average annual capital gain was 7/24ths of one per cent. Only slightly higher than one-quarter of one per cent. Only in the mid 1960s were there significant capital gains in farm land. In the years 1968 to the present time, there have been significant capital losses in farm land and it is unlikely that we will ever experience another period in which land values are inflated at the rate experienced in the mid 1960s. These examples clearly indicate that the Land Bank can offer cost advantages to farmers. The Land Bank program is definitely going to be advantageous to those farmers eligible to participate.

Mr. Speaker, the Members opposite have criticized the Land Bank saying that it will create a tenant society, that farmers will become share-croppers and have no security of tenure. I should like to refer again to the study recently completed in the Moose Jaw area which indicates that one-third of the land farmed in an area comprising 14 municipalities is now rented land. Some of this rented land is now owned by the Provincial Government, but the largest portion of it is owned by absentee landlords and corporations. Under the conditions that farmers have experienced in the last few years many farmers are finding they either cannot afford to buy land or it is not in their best interest to purchase land. The Land Bank will offer leases of sufficient term to enable a farmer to lease land until he chooses to retire. Leases will only be cancelled for specific causes mentioned in this Act. Where lessees do not have adequate buildings to operate a farm the Land Bank may loan money for the construction of buildings. Where buildings are available on a lease, the lessee will be able to purchase or lease the buildings. The Land Bank will loan money for the purchase by the lessee if he so desires. The Land Bank is attempting to put lessees in a position as similar as possible to that of an owner of land.

This Government made provisions in this Act for leases to be transferred from one generation to the next. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, where farmers can obtain such leases from private individuals or corporations in the province today? If farmers have been willing to lease up to one-third of their land in this Province under the types of leases prevalent today, I can assure you that they will be most appreciative of the types of leases offered by the Land Bank Commission.

Mr. Speaker, the Moose Jaw survey also indicated that 20 to 25 per cent of the land in that area will come up for transfer with no follow-up operator readily available. With such a large amount of land available and so few farmers at an age to consider acquiring additional land, land owners are going to experience great difficulty in finding persons in a position to purchase or operate their land. The Land Bank will purchase some of this land from retiring farmers in an effort to enable these farmers wishing to sell to do so. Without a program such as the Land Bank many of these farmers of this Province wishing to retire will only have three alternatives available to them. They will be able to sell their land at a very low price, which will not realize the amount of money needed for retirement. They will be able to sell their land again at a low price to a corporation or a private individual with access to large amounts of capital, which in many cases may already own large amounts of land. And finally, they may be able to rent their lands to another farmer.

However, private individuals when renting land to farmers will not be able to offer such long-term secure agreements as the Land Bank. Consequently, such land owners will have to rent

to large established farm units which are in a better position to absorb another parcel of land. None of these three alternatives will appear very satisfactory to the majority of retiring farmers. It is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that this Province desperately needs a program such as the Land Bank. The Land Bank will benefit not only retiring farmers but farmers wishing to establish or expand farming operations. The program will be completely voluntary, those land owners wishing to sell to private individuals will still be able to do so. Those farmers who prefer mortgages to leases will still be able to buy land outside of the Land Bank program. The only person who stands to lose from the implementation of this program will be the large land speculators who hope to obtain land at fire sale prices and resell it and those operators who farm large tracts of land using hired labor and large scale equipment.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the fact that the Land Bank program is completely voluntary will be one of the most important features of the program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MESSER: — If the program is not acceptable to the public there will be no participation. This Government is convinced that the farmers of Saskatchewan were serious in their request for a program such as this and will utilize it to its fullest extent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MESSER: — Mr. Speaker, I want to outline to you and to the Members of this Assembly in a little more detail some of the background to the provisions of this Act. However, before doing so, I wish to make two more general comments. First I wish to refer to an editorial in the April 20th edition of the Leader-Post. That editorial discusses the farm survey which was undertaken in Agricultural Extension District 8, centered in Moose Jaw, and to which I have already made some reference. Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of that survey and of the information generated by it. This survey was a joint project involving the Extension District Board, the University and the Department of Agriculture and Municipal Affairs. A member of my Department's staff was instrumental in designing the criteria used in the survey and he supervised much of the field work involved. Now the Leader-Post editorial implies that the results of this survey might come somewhat as a surprise to me, it might thus create complications for the introduction of the Land Bank Bill. It also suggests that the data revealed in the survey will mean that the Land Bank somehow may become obsolete. I am rather amused by this editorial, Mr. Speaker, amused because one assumes that editorials are based on clear and objective thinking, such an assumption would appear to be quite unfounded in this case. The results of this survey are of no surprise to me at all, indeed they have been known to myself and my Department for quite some time. The Land Bank legislation was drafted with quite adequate knowledge of what the survey would reveal.

The results of this survey indicate quite clearly the need for a Land Bank such as outlined in this legislation. The survey indicates that far too few young farmers have had an opportunity to become established in farming. The Leader-Post

recounts the result of the survey which shows that 20 to 25 per cent of the total land in the district will come up for transfer during the next decade for which there is no visible follow-up operator. This situation is tragic to say the least. However, it is not a result of farm operators not having offspring who might have been interested in farming, rather many sons of current operators have left the farm, simply because they could see no possible way of obtaining the land and other assets needed to start a farming operation. This is precisely the kind of situation which the Land Bank will work to correct. I am at a loss to know how the Leader-Post editorial writers conclude that their figures indicate that a Land Bank is not needed.

The other general point I wish to make is with regard to purchase as a way to obtain land. Mr. Speaker, we are not opposed to people owning land, particularly if that is what they want to do. We do not intend to interfere with ownership of land by residents of this Province, particularly if they are interested in making farming an occupation. Our concern, Mr. Speaker, is rather that not enough public funds have been utilized for land purchase with the object of making such land available for disposition by lease. Young people who are not emotionally committed to owning all the land they farm as an end in itself will find leasing a desirable alternative for the many reasons which I have already outlined. However, the unavoidable fact is that very little land is available to those people under long-term secure leasing arrangements. With the Land Bank we will create the alternatives which will broaden the range of choices open to people and particularly young people who wish to establish or to expand a land base.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me turn more specifically to some of the more important provisions of the Land Bank. In general outline form prospective sellers will be made reasonable offers by the Land Bank Commission where the Commission deems such an offer appropriate and consistent with the general objectives of the Commission. The decision to sell will be made freely and independently by the land owner. The land will then be distributed to farm operators on the basis of predetermined allocation criteria. In all cases, selling farmers who wish to lease back and sons of retiring farm operators will be given absolute priority in land allocations. In cases where there is no son or son-in-law who wishes to take over the farm operation first preference will go to younger families with a farm background who are striving to establish and develop farm operations, but who face difficulties because of their inability to obtain an adequate land base. In some cases, land will be purchased by the Land Bank and made available to the operators of relatively small farms who are striving to accumulate a resource base sufficient to fully employ the family labor and to enhance family living standards. In other cases, land will be rented to young persons just starting a farming career. Lease contracts will be long-term with an opportunity to purchase after a certain period and under certain conditions. In general, land may be purchased from anyone provided it can be effectively used to earn a living from farming. However, recognizing that in any given year budget restrictions could prevent the Land Bank from purchasing all the land offered to it and an order of priorities will be established and the following groups of farmers selling land will be given first priority.

1. Farmers who are at or beyond 65 years of age.

2. Farmers between the approximate ages of 55 and 65 who wish to reduce their investment in land and wish to utilize the capital to improve the family's living standard. Farmers in this category may require the Commission to lease the land back as a condition of sale.
3. Farmers who are incapacitated due to poor health or other factors to the extent that they are unable effectively to operate a farm unit.
4. Farm operators who wish to enhance the family's living standard by transferring to some alternative type of employment. In these cases every effort will be made to ensure that alternative employment opportunities have been realistically and adequately assessed and that such a transfer will offer a definite improvement to the family situation.
5. Father to son transfers providing a lease to the son will be a condition of the sale contract, making it obligatory for the Commission to lease the land to the son.

As I have already stated, Mr. Speaker, these five categories of farmers will be given first consideration when the Land Bank makes offers to purchase. This is not to suggest that purchases will only be limited to that group. It does mean, however, that should we find that the money budgeted to the program is limited relative to the number of people wanting to sell, this group will have the first chance. Cases of somewhat lower priority will be where the owner has substantial arrears on land debts and is unable to continue as a farmer without a substantial reorganization of the operation. The Land Bank will also be prepared to purchase large farms which are placed on the market and which could be divided to form a number of more acceptable farm units. I consider it extremely important that the Land Bank causes as little disruption as possible in land prices. We must recognize that land is an important earning asset and that prices paid must bear a reasonable relationship to the earning capacity of the land. In principle the Land Bank will be offering to purchase at market prices. This means that offers to purchase will be consistent with prices generally for land of that quality and in that region. I recognize that the Land Bank will, by its very nature, mean there is an additional factor affecting the demand for land. For this reason some people suggest that prices may be slightly higher than they would otherwise be.

There are two reasons why this effect should be small if in fact it occurs at all. First, since the Land Bank will be renting out the acquired land to people who would otherwise be attempting to purchase will now lease from the Land Bank. This will mean some reduction in the number of potential buyers. Second, the Land Bank will be under specific direction. Not to disrupt traditional and reasonable relationships between land values and earnings per acre. If in a given year the Bank could not meet its land purchase objectives only by noticeable pushing up land value, the Commission will be expected to reduce purchases. The procedure we propose for establishing offer prices on a specific farm or parcel of land will be as follows: At the beginning of each year regional targets will be established regarding the amount of land which is to be purchased. These targets will be determined after taking into account various objectives of the program. Estimates will be made for each region, estimates of the amounts of land which will be offered for sale at various prices. Within each region a base price

will be established for each productivity index rating. This will be done by using (1) all available data on recent land sales and rental arrangements. (2) Changes in returns per acre. (3) Surveys of intentions to sell. Prices stated on individual offers to buy will be determined in relation to the base prices within each region. Trained people will carry out an assessment of the property using productivity indices. Historical yield value and other data relevant to determining the physical productivity of the land. They will also assess buildings and improvements given that buildings and improvements will certainly be sold to the tenant, it is essential that prices paid reflect real use value. The Land Bank will not offer to purchase any assets other than real estate. Sellers will be required to dispose of their other assets through means of their own choosing. In general, no special grants or other financial assistance will be paid to sellers of land. Retirement pensions are now provided under the Canada Pension Plan and apply generally regardless of occupation. Assistance for those who wish to transfer to other occupations is available under Canada Manpower programs and there is no necessity to duplicate these programs. The Land Bank field staff will co-operate and work with Canada Manpower staff where appropriate while transferring people out of farming and into other occupations, although this is not one of the objectives of the Land Bank. We must not close our eyes to the fact that some people who sell their land will, in fact, be doing just that. The Land Bank must and will accept its responsibility to see that these families are not disregarded and left solely to their own devices in their new location and/or new occupation. Sellers will be given the opportunity to accept at least partial payment through an annuity payable for an agreed period. The annuity payment will be calculated so as to yield a bond rate of interest on the unpaid funds. In the event of death before the annuity is completely paid out the balance of the payments will be made to the estate. Sellers will have the choice, however, of receiving full cash settlement if they so choose. We are, however, convinced that the annuity option provides a very desirable means by which a retiring farm operator may gradually liquidate the capital he has tied up in the land while at the same time earning an attractive rate of return on that capital. This gradual liquidation of capital is often exactly what is needed, since the retiring farm family often uses the savings it has put into land as a means of support in retirement.

We are proposing that people be excluded from leasing land because they already have adequate assets and bases and an adequate income. We are suggesting that two types of criteria be used. Namely, net worth and net income. Our proposal is that these maxima be set by regulation. The maximum net worth being \$60,000 and the maximum net income being \$10,000 per year, averaged over a three year period. With the exception of lease backs, father to son transfers and widows of lessees, there will generally be a number of competing eligible applicants for land which is available at any one time.

The method of choosing between competing applicants will be to assign points to each applicant according to those factors which make him more or less desirable as a recipient of land. We are proposing such a system with points assigned for the following factors:

1. The probability that a satisfactory farm operation will result. This will include a consideration of the applicants' ability to implement and develop a plan for the farm. And the probability that the resulting farm will be well managed, responsive to alternatives and able to reach a point of fully utilizing all available family labor. Historical farm experience, education, financial and tax record, reference and willingness to undertake further training will be some of the factors used to evaluate the operators' ability to operate a successful farm unit.
2. The extent of the applicant's commitment to farming. This will be established on the basis of the assets already owned, experience in farming and the degree of involvement in farming as a vocation.
3. The need for land. This will include a consideration of the size of unit now owned or operated, family responsibilities, other income, other income earning alternatives and the type of farming that is proposed.
4. The fourth factor, where applicable, will be the proximity of the land to the farm currently being operated by the applicant.
5. Under the fifth factor, where the person selling the land wishes to specify a preferred recipient, a limited number of points will be allocated to an applicant who has been so designated.

We are proposing that land be made available to farm operators on the basis of a lifetime lease with an opportunity to buy. After leasing for a period of five years, land will be sold on a cash basis. The sale price being the market value at the time of sale as determined by the Land Bank Commission. Leases will be subject to termination only for cause. Neither loans nor agreements for sale will be offered to farmers who purchase from the Land Bank. The Farm Credit Corporation already offers a comprehensive program for the purchase of farm land and it is not our intention to operate a credit program in competition with the Farm Credit Corporation. These contracts will be such as to permit the lessee to stipulate that land be transferred to a spouse, daughter or son, providing he or she intends to farm and otherwise meets the eligibility criteria. In cases where the recipient is not yet of working age, the land will be administered jointly by the Land Bank until the son or daughter or the recipient reaches an age that he or she may be able to take over the farming operation, but it will generally be farmed under the same arrangements as applied to the rest of the estate.

It was originally proposed that all tenants be required to carry all-risk crop insurance available from the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Board. We do not intend to make this a requirement at this time. It is proposed that rents be paid on a cash basis. Rent charges will be subject to annual change and will be calculated as a certain percentage of current value of land.

The value of each particular parcel of land will be established at least once every three years. Land valuation will involve the establishment of particular physical productivity index to the parcel in question. This rating will not change significantly from one year to the next since it will depend

upon such physical factors as soil quality, topography and historical yield records. To each productivity yield index there will be established a dollar value per acre. This dollar figure will be based primarily on average Land Bank prices offered for land of that type and quality in that particular region. The value of the land will be multiplied by a factor representing the average interest charged on money borrowed by the Government on behalf of the Land Bank Commission. This rate will be based on a period just prior to the announcement of rates in November of the year previous to the period for which rents will apply. This rent will then be adjusted by a factor varying from between 0.85 and 1.15. This factor to be determined by comparing current cash returns in farming in the region to a base period when cash returns were set so as to provide a reasonable return to labor and capital. Rent payments may also be amortized if crop returns are inadequate in a given year to permit a farmer to pay that year's rent.

The Commission will consist of three members, one of whom will be chairman and chief executive officer. The Commission will be directly responsible to the Minister of Agriculture but will not be part of the Department of Agriculture.

The province will be divided into six land bank regions and within each region there will be two sub-regions, making a total of 12 sub-regions. Each sub-region will have a Land Bank officer resident in the area. He will be the Commission's representative in the field. He will provide information on the Commission's activities, receive applications and assist those farm people participating in the program in whatever way he can. We are very anxious that the substantial degree of community advice and control of policy and management take place at the regional level. Within each region a regional committee will be constituted composed of farmers and representatives of farm organizations and the rural communities as well. These regional committees will advise the Commission and the Minister of such things as application policy, rental rates, prices for land and Land Bank activities generally as they affect that region. As time progresses, some of the powers of the Commission may be delegated to the committees if the Minister deems this appropriate. In all cases, the three-man commission sitting as a group will review and make final decisions about all individual purchases and allocations.

There will, however, also be a provincial advisory council composed of representatives of the regional committees, representatives of farm organizations and a limited number of ministerial appointments. This committee will offer general guidance and policy advice to the Commission and Minister. An appeal board will also be constituted which will deal face to face with applicants appealing decisions of the Commission.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that brings to an end my introduction of what I think people in Saskatchewan consider to be a very, very important piece of legislation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MESSER: — I know, Mr. Speaker, that there will be many further questions which the Members of this Assembly will want to have answered. Answers which I and my staff will only be too happy to provide when we enter into clause by clause consideration of the Bill.

April 21, 1972

I wish to close, Mr. Speaker, by urging the Members of this Assembly to have the courage and the determination to implement this radical new approach to the problems of land transfer in this Province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MESSER: — We all admit, Mr. Speaker, we all admit and recognize that the current situation is not a satisfactory one. We know that the farmers of this Province want and need an expanded range of alternatives. This Bill provides the most important type of alternative which can be made available through the use of public funds. I believe that this legislation will be of particular importance to families where the son or daughter wishes to take over the father's farm operation. However, it will be no less significant in terms of transfers of land not involving persons within the same family.

I would ask all to note that we have gone to great pains to try and ensure the lessees will have every bit as much security of tenure as land owners now have. This, I think, is of particular importance.

We are not attempting to reduce the rights and security of farmers to possess and use land. I fully recognize that these constitute the primary justification for individual ownership. However, as I have already outlined in some detail, the ownership patterns as we currently know them, tend to create serious transfer problems. I sincerely believe that many farmers in Saskatchewan will find that Land Bank leases will provide them with the security and the rights to land use that they legitimately desire while at the same time providing an alternative form of transfer that relieves many of the problems which now currently exist.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I move second reading of An Act to facilitate the Acquisition and Disposition of Farm Land in Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. D.G. STEUART (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I don't think anybody should get carried away because over there after the Minister of Agriculture spoke about the so-called Land Bank there was applause. I think it was just a death rattle of the NDP.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — The Minister says that we are not satisfied with the current state of affairs, with the inability of young farmers to go farming if they want to, the inability of some farmers to add to their holdings to make them viable units. And we agree. But let no one be misled that this Act, this so-called Land Bank scheme is the answer. On the contrary, it will make the situation even worse unless the Government is prepared to amend it and amend it drastically.

We've just heard a rather incredible defence of socialism, in fact, of state-owned, communistic farming, farmers working land that belongs to the government, as tenants.

We heard the Minister of Agriculture probably one of the greatest private entrepreneurs in the Tisdale area, give a very glowing account to the young farmers in the Province of Saskatchewan. He said, 'come and lease our land, come and be tenants on our land, we'll give you total security. You don't want to own your land, you want to take that \$372 and invest it.' If you listen to the wizard of finances from Tisdale, he says he'll take the \$372 a year that they will save by not having to worry about owning their own land, he'll take it and in 29 years he'll run it up to \$55,000.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we get into Committee of the Whole, I wish he would explain that in much greater detail because the Members on this side would love to understand it more clearly. We'll all give him \$372 to invest and I tell you right now, Mr. Speaker, if he offers the farmers, young or old in this Province, the choice of whether they would sooner invest an extra \$372 and have the chance to own their own land, or rent, I am willing to bet that 90 per cent of them will opt to pay the \$372 and own their own land.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — The Liberal Party will support and does support the idea of a true Land Bank that will make possible the transfer of land from one generation to the other. It will make possible the purchasing and acquiring of land so that farmers can make small farms, family farms viable and economic units. But, Mr. Speaker, make no mistake, this is not a Land Bank plan, it's a Government land grab scheme that's all it is.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — The Minister stands up and he says, we dare, we dare to do this and we dare to do that. Did you ever notice how those socialists dare to do things with other people's money and other people's land? I wonder if the Hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Messer) will dare to do the same thing with his own land? Oh! they're very daring with someone else's money and with someone else's land. And he proudly says there is no other scheme like this in any province in Canada or any country and I agree with him, outside the Iron Curtain, there's not a scheme like this.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — This plan will mean, unless it's changed and changed drastically, that it will be the same old thing because it's the same old plan ever since the NDP or the old CCF was formed. Nationalize the land, nationalize the means of production.

MR. ROMANOW: — You fought Medicare too.

MR. STEUART: — At least you should have the intestinal fortitude . . . We made you change Medicare, we'll make you change this. We made you change Medicare and we'll make you change this before we're through. They will turn our farmers in one or two generations into tenants or sharecroppers.

The Minister stands up and waves a Bill and says, “look at this great Bill and here’s what it will do”. What Bill, what plan? All you’ve got in here is a great deal of pious hopes and the threat and the promise of massive regulations. You don’t put enough details in this Act so that you or anyone else can go out and with honesty tell the farmers exactly how this plan will work. And this is just the beginning, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately in a few short months the plan or the style of this Government is becoming clear, government by regulation. Take this Act. On almost every page you find regulations, everything it should deal with, will be dealt with by regulations. The Mineral Marketing Act dealt with by regulations. Three or four lines on a page and that Act gives the Government sweeping powers.

The so-called foreign ownership Bill just introduced will make everybody that lives outside Saskatchewan, as far as the NDP are concerned, foreigners and that Act will be dealt with, we are told, by regulation.

They set up a Department of Northern Affairs, the Department of Consumer Affairs, everything will be dealt with either by regulation or by ministerial power, if the Minister decides this or if the Minister decides that, it will be law.

And now the front benchers sit there, smirking and smiling and that’s fine. Let me challenge the Minister of Agriculture to bring the regulations into this House and let us debate them. And I challenge those backbenchers . . .

MR. KRAMER: — No way.

MR. STEUART: — No way, he says. That’s the right answer . . . no way. I challenge the backbenchers, the new Members who tell me that they are not very happy with the parliamentary set-up they find. And I don’t blame them, for if I was sitting over there as a backbencher, I wouldn’t be very happy either. I wonder if you gentlemen are going to show your courage and say to Mr. Messer and to the Members of the Government, show us the regulations. Let’s take a look at some of those regulations.

The regulations will cover just some of the following things – to set the lease fees; determine the price to be paid for land; determine the eligibility of applicants to lease or buy; respecting the total management and control of commissioned land, in other words, who is going to control the land and how it will be managed; what use can be made of the land; determine the procedure for consideration of applications; the method of determining net income and net worth to qualify for a lease; the price of buildings and improvements; capital improvements; the interest on capital loans; price of improvements on land, by regulations; interest on arrears; payments and rent, by regulation; make temporary loans up to \$10 million, by regulation; cancel or guarantee all bonds and debentures issued, again, by regulation.

Mr. Speaker, let’s be very clear. Legislation by regulation is poor legislation. It’s lazy legislation. It is hidden power. It is government by Cabinet. It’s government by whim of the Cabinet, it is government hidden from the eyes of the public and I recognize all governments are guilty these last few years of too much government by regulation. However, I don’t think in the history of this Province or this country any

government in such a short time has given to the Cabinet and the Ministers as much power as this Government has in regard to this and other Acts. They can control the very lives of the people of this Province by the Cabinet any day in secret meetings, by the stroke of a pen or by the whim of the Premier and ten or twelve people. Again, Mr. Minister, bring in those regulations. Put them in front of this House, put them in front of all the Members so we shall, in fact, know exactly what kind of a land scheme or Land Bank plan that you are talking about.

Let's look at one thing that comes out clear though. This is a land rental scheme. I said this plan would turn the farmers of this Province in time, as the Government acquires more and more land, into tenants, into sharecroppers, and it will. Why do you not give the farmers a reasonable chance, in fact any chance, to buy the land? Oh! he says, the Liberals want them to buy the land so they will be burdened with principal payments. We say, give them the chance to buy the land or give them the chance to lease the land. Let them have that free choice, but you don't do it in this Act.

Let's take a look at what you're offering. First you say we'll only lease this land to people with very modest incomes. Then you set an extremely high rent because you're going to base it on interest and don't use 7 per cent because your Government can't get money at 7 per cent. The rate you'll have to pay for long-term money when you get this plan into action will be closer to 8 or 8½ or 9 per cent. They also have to pay the taxes. Oh! They took away crop insurance, that was a big deal. However, you are giving them that option. I'm pleased to hear that. They will be paying very substantial rents. You tell me how in agriculture today a farmer starting off with modest means can pay his family a decent living and still acquire enough money to buy this land for cash. Because that's what you say, you say to the farmers we'll buy your land, we may pay you cash or we may give you an annuity and pay it over a period of time. Today you turn around to the farmer who is going to buy it and you say ah! we'll judge you for five years and then and only then will we sell you the land. On what basis? You will have exactly six months to raise the cash.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it may be that there are some Members, young Members in the teaching profession and other professions, on that side of the House, that don't think that it's a serious thing and one of the basic principles, the farmers of Canada and of Saskatchewan do want and desire to own their own land. A great many of our farmers came from Europe, from countries where they had no chance to own their own land. They came out and they suffered incredible hardships and they carved this land out of a wilderness so they could own their own land.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — And you are going to reverse that. I say, Mr. Minister, you'll regret this. The basis of sound agriculture in this country has been free farmers owning and operating and farming their own land as free from government regulations as had been possible and compare their records to the record of those farmers behind the Iron Curtain where the government owns all the land and the farmers in fact are tenants. And don't say oh! oh! oh! because that's exactly what you're suggesting in this.

MR. BOWERMAN: — You're barking up a tree, Davey.

MR. STEUART: — I'm not barking up a tree. The Minister of Agriculture stood up and he said the farmers won't mind being tenants. The farmers don't really want to own their own land, we're going to take that worry off their shoulders. You compare the record of our free farmers owning and farming their own lands with the record of the farmers in the situation that you're developing here, in the socialist countries of the world, where they've done exactly what you are planning to do to our Saskatchewan farmers, where they are in fact, tenants. You tell that to the farmers of Saskatchewan and if you can sell that then you'll be in power for a long time and I don't think you can sell it.

MR. ROMANOW: — Tucker or tyranny!

MR. STEUART: — Well, never mind. Tucker or tyranny was just a little way ahead of his time. The old CCF never had, I will admit, the gall, they never had the intestinal fortitude or the lack of perception that you people, the people in the front benches of this Government have. In ten months, one session, you have brought in more discriminatory legislation and control, control of the everyday lives of the people of this Province and you haven't really got warmed up yet and you have done more harm than the old CCF did in the 20 years they held office.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. STEUART: — And I'll tell you something, Mr. smart alec Attorney General, the downfall of the old CCF was exactly this. The people of Saskatchewan got fed up with the regimentation and the control and the controls of the old CCF government and it won't take them 20 years to get fed up this time. That I can guarantee you.

MR. BOWERMAN: — What was your downfall?

MR. STEUART: — The great weakness of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is that it is not a Land Bank scheme. As I said, it is a plan or a scheme to put the government in the land business. It is too uncertain and it really doesn't answer the basic questions because the Minister is giving himself, his officials in the Cabinet, far too much power by regulations. Just one example — the uncertainty. Every February the government, by a whim, will decide what rental the farmer will have to pay for the following year. Under almost any other contract that you can bring forward they know their costs, not just from year to year, but on a five year basis, on a ten year basis, or a twenty year basis.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate once again that we will support a sound, practical Land Bank scheme that will, in fact, allow our young farmers or our small farmers to buy and own their own land if they wish. But we will never support, never support a plan that, in fact, will end up nationalizing and socializing, farm land . . .

MR. BOWERMAN: — . . . and Communism.

MR. STEUART: — . . . and communizing, there's no other word for it. What's the difference between socialism and communism? A Socialist is just an individual who hasn't got the guts to admit he's a Communist. That's all.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order!

MR. STEUART: — Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but we will also bring forward positive, alternate proposals to this so-called Land Bank scheme that will, in fact, do what the Government promised the people of Saskatchewan they would do and they've already indicated by this Bill they will break that promise and do it in such a way that our farmers will not have the choice whether they, in fact, want to lease the land or own the land or lease it for a few years and then take a chance and own it in the latter years.

So, Mr. Speaker, we haven't had a chance to really study the total contents of this Bill and I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

MR. ROMANOW: — In spite of the time and the heaviness of the debate, I beg leave to adjourn this House.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:22 o'clock p.m.