

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
December 7, 1982

EVENING SESSION

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 45 (continued)

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying a little earlier this evening, Mr. Speaker, this farm purchase bill really shouldn't even be called a farm purchase bill because it's nothing more than providing a bit of an interest subsidy.

This bill is supposed to enable young farmers to purchase farmland. Mr. Speaker, if this bill is supposed to enable the young farmers to purchase farmland. I cannot understand why the minister hasn't put into this bill the amount of money and the method by which they can acquire that farmland. It says nothing about where the money will be coming from or how they can go about getting this farmland.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, what it does say that if you are a farmer (that will be defined in regulations) and if you meet the qualifications (again defined in regulations), and if you are eligible (again defined in regulations) for a portion of the interest costs (defined in regulation) on money borrowed to purchase farmland (once again defined in regulations . . . When they talk about money provided to purchase farmland, one could only assume, I suppose, that it would be from the farm credit corporation, because that is what the Minister of Agriculture has been saying. But when you look through the bill it does not indicate that the farm credit corporation is going to be providing the funding for all these young farmers to purchase that land.

It doesn't say if the farm credit corporation is going to provide money in excess of what they have been for the regular business throughout Canada. It doesn't say if the Government of Saskatchewan is going to assist them with additional funding to allow these young farmers to purchase that farmland?

No, Mr. Speaker, this bill does not say any of that. It just says that everything will be determined according to regulations. This act, Mr. Speaker, also provides the minister with almost unlimited powers, unlimited powers to do just about anything he wants. He may go and ask the applicant for records. One could assume that they would be income tax records. Again, one has to assume that. It doesn't say that in the act. It does say in the act that the minister may require an applicant or a participant to forward to him or make available to persons authorized by him any records or extracts or records at any time and place and in any manner that the minister considers appropriate.

That, Mr. Speaker, allows the minister to ask for just about anything that the individual might have by way of information. It doesn't limit it to farm records or to the income tax of a farmer. But it gives the minister unlimited power to demand just about anything that he would want from that individual.

And that is coming from the same government that was saying that they want to move away from controlling people. They are going to move away from dictating what should be done, what the people have to do. But, Mr. Speaker, when you look at this act you

find that they are not moving away from the control of people, they are providing in every act that they introduce powers where they can virtually control the people right down to the last little item that the individual might be concerned with.

Those are the kinds of powers, Mr. Speaker, that this government is trying to provide for themselves through bills as vague as the farm purchase bill. Mr. Speaker, if the minister feels that a person, for whatever reason, is ineligible, and if he has been receiving some funding in the way of rebate . . . Maybe all that that individual would have to do is say something against the government program, and the minister has the power to decide that this person is all of a sudden ineligible. He does have the power just by submitting a certificate to the courts. He has the power then to demand that this person refund all the money that has been advanced to him through the mortgage rebate plan. And if that person doesn't, he can be prosecuted. The minister has that power, Mr. Speaker. He has total power over the individual that proposes to buy some land and enter into a contract with this government.

This same minister also gives himself the power where the government doesn't have to even ask for an appropriation of funds for this program. The Minister of Finance can just advance funds to the program without having to bring them forward to the legislature. That, Mr. Speaker, is giving the minister even more power and this government more power.

If the program, through the sale of land bank land or whatever other means of income they may have which will be going into that program (because both the land bank and this program are more or less tied together; when they repeal The Land Bank Act the money is going to be going into this so-called farm purchase program) they have some surplus money in there, what can the minister do with it? Well, he can just transfer it to the heritage fund, and nothing has to go through the legislature anymore. But he can put it into the heritage fund or any other fund he would wish to put it into. And just by that comment, Mr. Speaker, saying that that money could go into the heritage fund, or any other fund, that would mean that the view of this government . . . their perception of the heritage fund is nothing more than a bank account. And this seems to be what they thought it was when they made all their promises in April, and when they became the government.

They thought it was going to be a bank account with dollars sitting there that they can draw in and out at any time they please.

This is what they propose to do with this act, Mr. Speaker. They propose to have this act as open as possible, and to give them unlimited powers, where they can move money back and forth without the public knowing what is happening and how much money is being put into it. Those are the kind of powers that we see in this bill, Mr. Speaker. I know that we are going to spend a lot of time on this bill, Mr. Speaker. We will be spending a fair amount of time on it and I intend to later on, when this bill comes before committee, to continue to look at every section of this bill and ask the minister for some explanations of it, because as this bill stands now it is not a bill which will benefit the young purchasing farmer; in fact, it's going to create some hardships for the young farmers. It will create those hardships simply because combined with Bill No. 46 it will be either forcing some young farmers off their land, or it will be putting a debt load on them which most of them will not be able to maintain. There is no protection and no guarantee that these young farmers are going to get subsidized interest; there is nothing in this act that stipulates what they will be paying or whether they will even qualify.

Mr. Speaker, I will reserve judgment on this bill until a later time, but from just looking at it at present, it is a terrible bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Speaker, I am very happy and pleased to rise on behalf of the people of Weyburn, especially on behalf of my rural constituents, but be sure as well, Mr. Speaker, that their urban counterparts, whether they be in the city of Weyburn or the town of Stoughton, or wherever, share my enthusiastic support for this bill, because they know that what is good for the farmers in the country is also good for the business people in the city as well.

It is not often, Mr. Speaker, that one gets an opportunity such as this to rise in debate on such an historic piece of legislation. We have before us, Mr. Speaker, a bill that turns dreams into realities, a bill that enhances the basic instinct and desire of every farmer of this province, the desire to own his own farm, Mr. Speaker. This is the same dream, the same desire, the same inborn instinct that drew my grandfather to this province, and his father before him — the desire to take a piece of raw land and make it into something that is special and unique to that person.

This was a trait that could not be stifled in our pioneer ancestors and it is a trait that is as strong today as it was then. What a fine job those pioneers did some 80 years to 100 years ago. Owning your own land — a very special tradition in this province, a family tradition in this province. But, Mr. Speaker, this tradition had been assaulted by programs which had the government intervening with a program of state ownership. This tradition had been assaulted by the high cost of land and high interest rates; interest rates which, I might, add, Mr. Speaker, were not the doing of this government but a problem which this government recognized and was prepared to tackle on behalf of our farm communities.

These factors, Mr. Speaker, were affecting the transfer of the family farm from one generation to another — from father to son, from uncle to nephew, from father to daughter, and so on. It had become impossible for mom and dad to sell to their children at a price which would afford them a comfortable retirement and yet at a price where the son or daughter could provide for themselves and their families and yet still make the payments. Something had to be done. A mechanism to assist in the intergenerational transfer of the family needed to be found.

The people had categorically and absolutely rejected the land bank scheme as a mechanism. It had been, was, and is a dismal failure: 152 owners in some 10 years of operation. Sad. But no need to dwell on that disaster, Mr. Speaker. A mechanism had to be found to assist this intergenerational transfer given the obstacles that were standing in the way — the obstacles of high land prices and high interest rates.

One could not isolate Saskatchewan land prices and dictate that they should be lower. One could not dictate that any retiring farmer should sell for a given low price. Hence, the only other factor in the equation that could be adjusted was the interest rate — these interest rates that have risen to all-time highs, and virtually had brought land transactions to a halt. What was needed was a method of handling this interest rate problem, and the effect it was having on intergenerational transfers. What was needed by the young, beginning farmer and that young farmer who was developing his farm operation into a viable situation was some way of wrestling these interest rates down to

levels that they could not only live with but that they could farm with. This I submit is the why of Bill No. 45. This is why the Minister of Agriculture undertook An Act to establish a Program to Facilitate the Purchase of Farm Land, or as it's been commonly known in the country since day one, Mr. Speaker, the family farm purchase program. And the hon. member in opposition can quibble about the name of this bill but the folks out in the country know and understand what we are talking about when we talk about the farm purchase program.

What a great bill this is: simple and straightforward. Simple and straightforward. It requires the creation of no great bureaucracy. It is a bill that epitomizes common sense. I will enlarge for the oppositions benefit on these aspects of simplicity, straightforwardness and common sense. Number one, Mr. Speaker, it is for bona fide farmers or for young farmers phasing into a farming career. For some 25 to 30 years, Mr. Speaker, farm credit corporation has been defining bona fide farmers and phase-in bona fide farmers — for years. They do very well at defining that. They understand what the people are in the community, how they are viewed and what their intentions are. It is not for plumbers or lawyers who think that all of a sudden, Mr. Speaker, they might like to be farmers just because of some cheap money around. It is for bona fide farmers.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. HEPWORTH: — At the same time, Mr. Speaker, it does not penalize the young farmer for initiative and hustle. If the young farmer has the desire and the initiative to go out and work on the rigs in the wintertime, or his wife to teach or nurse in the nearby hospitals so they can make a better living for themselves and provide for their families and in fact make those and provide for their families and in fact make those farm payments, Mr. Speaker, then there is a mechanism for them to do that. There is a provision for off-farm family income.

Number two, Mr. Speaker, common sense would also dictate that this isn't for the 10-section farmer who doesn't need the help. It's for the beginning farmer. It's for the developing farmer . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'll go slower. It's for the developing farmer who may at this time have two or three quarters but needs yet another two or three quarters to establish a viable farming operation.

It is a bill, Mr. Speaker, that does not discriminate on the basis of age. It says, as the Premier has said: All those who have left Saskatchewan and want to come home and take over the family farm, welcome back; we will assist you. And, Mr. Speaker, they're coming home to take over dad's farm from Alberta and Manitoba and B.C. and Ontario and so on and so on. But, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is the money will be targeted to those who need the help, not the 10-section farmer and not the plumbers on the lawyers — not the professionals, the bona fide farmers. It will be targeted to those who have a net worth of less than 300,000. They will be eligible for the rebates, those beginning and developing farmers.

Number three, Mr. Speaker, as I have previously pointed out, this bill recognizes the needs and wishes of dad and mom in their retirement years and, as well, the obligations that must be met by the young farm couple undertaking their farming career.

Number four, Mr. Speaker, it is for farm land, our heritage. Farm land, whether farmed by individuals, partnerships or corporations — this bill recognizes all the different types of farm business relationships in the farm community today. There will be no legal manoeuvring necessary to qualify for this.

Number five, Mr. Speaker, it uses the farm credit corporation to deliver the program. This, I submit, Mr. Speaker, is another example of some co-operative effort between levels of government to prevent unnecessary expenditures, duplications or omissions. This government recognized that there was no need to build another government bureaucracy. This government recognized that there was no need for another vehicles to deliver this program to the farmers of rural Saskatchewan. This government recognized that the farm credit corporation has the same sorts of objectives in mind as we had in addressing the problem of the intergenerational transfer of farm land. So, who better to deliver the program?

In fact, Mr. Speaker, if you turn to the farm credit corporation's annual report '81-82, page 13, you will find these words and I quote:

The primary objective of farm credit corporation is to provide long-term credit and advisory services in order to develop viable farm operations, so that agricultural can provide farmers with a fair return on their capital, labor and skills, so that agriculture can make its greatest contribution to the Canadian economy.

And on page 20, Mr. Speaker, of the same report you will find, and I quote again:

The intergenerational transfer of farms and capital investment in agriculture are essential to the long-term productivity and stability of the agriculture sector.

It is obvious that the farm credit corporation is respected by the farm community, Mr. Speaker. They are a part of the farm community with district offices all over the province. Farmers like to deal with people in their community, not with a head office in Regina, I submit, Mr. Speaker.

The farm credit corporation has something in the other 22,000 farmers' clients, for the information of the member for Shaunavon — 22,000 farmer clients in Saskatchewan. That means, Mr. Speaker, that out of every three farmers, or very nearly, in the province of Saskatchewan, are clients of farm credit corporation. They know them and are to dealing with them. They are not a fly-by-night operation, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the farm credit corporation as we know it today has been around since the Diefenbaker years of 1958.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the farm credit corporation with its professional staff is an organization that can consistently and fairly apply the rules and deliver the program. Further, Mr. Speaker, taking their price is right. AT this time, there is no charge for administration. And what has been their lending, Mr. Speaker, in the past years? Something in the order of \$15 million in the last fiscal year.

To April '83 we have budgeted for rebated to cover \$150 million of transactions, Mr. Speaker. Over the next three or four months, we will have enough money in land rebates and available to cover more land transactions and capital value in the a three or four month period than was processed by all the farm credit for their year ending 1981. One hundred and fifty million dolls was the figure they processed that year, and we're prepared to rebate \$150 million to handle that bolus of anxious young farm people out

there waiting to take advantage of this program — waiting to take advantage of this program, Mr. Speaker.

The farm credit corporation itself will acknowledge that it has been constrained by a lack of sufficient capital to loan to all the farmers desiring funds for land transactions. But, Mr. Speaker, with the provision now that they can go out into the money market and borrow in their own names, there will be no longer that problem. In fact I think it is generally agreed that there is probably no better delivery system in Saskatchewan than the farm credit corporation.

And if you check through *Hansard*, and I think specifically of the debates in April of 1972, page 1880 — this was during the land bank debates, Mr. Speaker — the statement was made by the then hon. minister of agriculture of the day, Mr. Messer, and he said and I quote (and once again this is for the edification of the opposition):

The farm credit corporation already offers a comprehensive program for the purchase of farmland, and it is not our intention to operate a credit program in competition with the farm credit corporation.

Mr. Messer, Mr. Speaker, speaking some 10 years ago about farm credit during the land bank debates.

It was recognized then, Mr. Speaker, by the then minister of agriculture that the farm credit corporation did offer a comprehensive program. Support for the program was further shown, Mr. Speaker, that same year in the same debates when the Hon. Mr. Matsalla stated, and I quote:

We have one farm credit corporation. Why do we need another one? I don't want to seem as if I'm belittling the farm credit corporation. I believe the corporation has done a good job and is still doing a good job. There is a place for a farm loan agency in our agriculture industry, and the corporation should continue its function.

And in the same debate, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Messer also said on page 2227, and I quote again:

Surely, surely the hon. members opposite do not want us to spend provincial funds duplicating a program which is already in operation by the federal government.

And the list goes on, and on, and on, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of interest rates has been raised so let's now talk about the interest rate that this program has offered. The rebates will bring the effective rate of interest down to 8 per cent for five years and 12 per cent for five years, while some would argue that by thereafter we meant five years.

What it amounts to, Mr. Speaker, is we are giving the young farmers of Saskatchewan 10 years of rebate, and a very substantial rebate. Some would argue that it should be 25 years or more, Mr. Speaker. Our advice from farmers and people it he lending business suggests that if, after 10 years of rebate, they aren't on their feet, then maybe we're helping the wrong people.

It is interesting to note, once again on the question of interest rates, Mr. Speaker, that the farmers, through farm credit corporation, haven't seen these kinds of rates since prior to October 1, 1969. We have not only stopped the interest rate crisis, Mr. Speaker, we have turned the clock back on interest rates 13 years.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. HEPWORTH: — We don't set interest rates here in Saskatchewan, but we are certainly prepared to tackle them. This program will help stop the erosion of rural Saskatchewan. It will help stop the disappearance of farm families from the rural scene. We could no longer afford to leave the NDP administration in charge of rural Saskatchewan. The situation had developed into a very, very serious situation, Mr. Speaker.

To see how serious the erosion in rural Saskatchewan had been, Mr. Speaker, we only have to look at the Statistics Canada census records and see that in 1971 there were 76,970 census farms in Saskatchewan. And after 10 years of NDP misery and failed farm policy, 1981 showed 67,138 census farms in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — down 9,832 — 12.8 per cent in 10 years.

The members in opposition, Mr. Speaker, like to compare Saskatchewan's performance to other provinces. I do too. If we look at the same census figures for Alberta, they show a decline of only 4,646 farmers, Mr. Speaker, or a decline of 7.4 per cent. Not nearly 10,000, Mr. Speaker, not 12.8 per cent, but 4,600 and 7.4 per cent. The Saskatchewan figures are disgusting figures; they're revolting figure sand they are sad figures. When we think about the generations of young farmers and farm youth who have been lost from rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, it's a tragedy.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, the mechanism that was in place for the last 10 years, the Saskatchewan Land Bank Commission, and their pamphlet entitled "What We Can Do for You and for Saskatchewan" said:

For Saskatchewan land banking is an adventurous approach to land transfer. Its success has contributed to the stabilization of rural population and improvements of the social and economic life of our rural communities.

Stabilization of rural population, Mr. Speaker — I have to question that with the disappearance of nearly 10,000 farms in 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, there are some who would argue that this program should have been brought in sooner. I couldn't agree more. But some would argue, Mr. Speaker, that it should have been brought in last spring. That's where I disagree. I believe this program should have been in place not six months ago, Mr. Speaker, but six years ago.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. HEPWORTH: — Where were the NDP when the farmers needed them? There are some, Mr. Speaker, who would also argue that this bill and the low interest rates will do nothing but drive up the price of land. I say, Mr. Speaker, that this will be minimal. Minimal, Mr. Speaker, because in this province blood is still thicker than water. If we look at the Alberta experience the majority of transfers are within the family tree, and the father selling to the son or the daughter still shows that kind of compassion that his province is so used to, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. HEPWORTH: — The prices that a son, or a niece, or a daughter or whoever, Mr. Speaker, will pay in the family tree transactions that will make up the bulk of transactions throughout the program no doubt will be a fair and compassionate price. This is a family tradition, Mr. Speaker, in this province, a family tradition.

Another reason, Mr. Speaker, why I suggest that the elevation of land prices will be minimal to non-existent is that we do not encourage or expect the young farmer to go in and get over his head in land purchases. We are offering rebates for the family farm on land transactions as high as \$350,000. But, he does not have to go to the trough for all of it at once. He can go a little at a time. Providing that he maintains eligibility he can go to the trough as often as he wants, provided his rebate will not exceed that determined by his eligibility at any given time.

We do not intend, Mr. Speaker, we do not intend to encourage these young farmers to chew off more than they can handle. We do not want to encourage them to get in over their heads.

And thirdly, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps most importantly, as to why the effect of land prices will be minimal is that there's going to be one less buyer on the market. One less buyer, Mr. Speaker, pushing up land prices. And worst of all, Mr. Speaker, that buyer was pushing up land prices with the taxpayers' money. These young farmers will no longer be competing with their own tax dollars on properties that come for sale, Mr. Speaker. And why won't they be competing with their own tax dollars, Mr. Speaker? The answer is that the land bank will not be in the market of Saskatchewan land any longer.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. HEPWORTH: — They will not be there pushing up the price of land unnecessarily. I think these reasons amply demonstrate, Mr. Speaker, why the effect on land prices will be minimal to non-existent.

Mr. Speaker, I hate to bring up that word land bank again, but it was such a disaster and it serviced so few people and caused so much trouble . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The hon. member in opposition has raised the point of how many people it helped, when he fails to recognize that at its inception it was described as both bold and daring. Well, Mr. Speaker, thank goodness the PC government was formed in this province in 1982. Thank goodness this bold and daring experiment with the lives and livelihood of rural Saskatchewan people has ended.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Messer, the former minister of agriculture, speaking in debate in 1972, April 21, page 1868 said, and I quote:

It has no counterpart any other province in Canada or for that matter any part of the world.

Thank goodness, Mr. Speaker, that the rest of the world had more sense than that minister of agriculture in 1972.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. HEPWORTH: — And I see now, Mr. Speaker, after having further studied the history of the land bank scheme, how absolutely dangerous this scheme was to the fundamental lives, livelihood, and liberty of rural Saskatchewan people. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that even in 1972 the land bank scheme was recognized to be a poor piece of legislation, but the NDP charged on with it anyway.

If you examine the remarks during the debates, Mr. Speaker, I think that you will see even though they were mouthing what was expected of them, in their hearts I believe I think they knew that it was a bad piece of legislation establishing state ownership of our farm land. Time after time again, Mr. Speaker, they continued to qualify their support for bill in the debate in second reading. The phrases kept popping up qualifying their support, expressing concerns and misgiving. I thin of phrase and sentences like the following, Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Mr. Baker on page 2213, May 2, 1972, and I quote, Mr. Speaker:

Yes, we'll run into some troubles with it.

Or the Hon. Mr. Robbins when he said on page 1959 and I quote:

No one on this side, Mr. Speaker, has argued that the land bank will cure all agriculture ills.

Or the Hon. Mr. Larson when he said on page 1923 and I quote:

Certainly, as I said, it won't be a cure-all. Certainly it can't do what a government the size of Saskatchewan has to do to take the ills out of agriculture.

Or another quotation from Mr. Messer on page 1876. This is perhaps one of the most important ones, Mr. Speaker, I quote:

If the program is not acceptable to the public, there will be no participation.

Mr. Speaker, 152 owners after 10 years, I guess the public considered it unacceptable.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. HEPWORTH: — This was the issue in the last election. For the edification of the members opposite, I will reiterate: this was the issue in the last election, Mr. Speaker. I know farm people considered it unacceptable. Look at the election results and you have your answer as to how unacceptable the public though the land bank scheme was.

So we come today, Mr. Speaker, to see that the land bank was not a good idea that was working. In fact, in one of the land commission pamphlets entitled *How to Qualify for a Land Bank Lease*, on the back page there is a little phrase that says, and I quote:

Land bank is a good idea that's working.

I would submit, Mr. Speaker, it was not a good idea that was working; it was a bad idea that was not working. Not only did the NDP members of the day have misgivings about the land bank legislation, but the press of the day also had misgivings about it. The

headlines in the *Leader-Post* referred to Mr. Larson's remarks, an hon. member of the government of the day. I quote from *Hansard*, April 21, 1972, page 1921:

You know when you looked at the headlines in the *Leader-Post* just a couple of days ago, April 22nd, "Steuart Denounces Government Land Bank Plan."

Compare that, Mr. Speaker, to the headlines we have seen since the introduction of the farm purchase program. I think of the Moose Jaw *Times Herald*, December 2, 1982:

Tory Purchase Program Better than Land Bank.

In fact, the copy underneath it goes on to read, and I quote again, Mr. Speaker:

It's far better than the land bank, said (and I won't give out the person's name) a rural farmer who helped the previous NDP government set up the land bank, which will be dismantled by the Tory government.

It goes on to talk about a reeve of a municipality who said that he definitely preferred the new program to the land banking system and never agreed with government ownership of land.

Or compare it to the headlines of December 1, Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*:

Opposition MLA Supports Farm Ownership Plan. Opposition agriculture critic Allan Engel had qualified praise for the government farm ownership program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. HEPWORTH: — And so, Mr. Speaker, I think you can see the introduction of this bill that the opposition, the press and of course, the farmers, Mr. Speaker — everyone is behind this program. It is not an experiment; it is a straightforward acknowledgement of what people in rural Saskatchewan want.

There are some who would argue, Mr. Speaker, that the bill has left Executive Council with sweeping powers through regulation. What's there to change in regulations that's so disturbing? Common sense would dictate that the net worth provision might have to be raised or lowered to live with some of those things that happen due to inflation and to provide for continuity in terms of qualification. Common sense would dictate that the provision for off-farm family income may have to be changed, yearly perhaps, to recognize the fact that wages do go up. Thirty-five thousand dollars might be reasonable today, but maybe not next year, Mr. Speaker.

Common sense also tells me, Mr. Speaker, that people get frustrated when the government of the day doesn't stay current. The simplest method of maintaining the eligibility requirements in a contemporary perspective is to make the mechanism of change vested in regulation simple and straightforward, just like the bill. The bill is only slightly more than four pages long. Keep it simple; keep the red tape to a minimum.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, the fundamental issue at debate here is what mechanism should be used to facilitate the intergenerational transfer of family farms. I will commend the NDP for one thing: they recognized the problem; they made the right diagnosis of the problem of transferring the family farm. But should the mechanism be

state ownership and tenants, or should it be a program to assist the ownership of farmland? I think, Mr. Speaker, it has clearly established that state ownership is not the answer. Similarly, Mr. Speaker, I think it has been overwhelmingly established that ownership is the desire of young farmers.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to extend my heartiest congratulations to the Minister of Agriculture for this bill. There was a reference in the land bank debates, Mr. Speaker, found on page 2224. The hon. minister of agriculture of the day, Mr. Messer, was speaking, and his remarks went something like this, and I quote:

For those members who have sat in the House as opposition prior to the government change in June of 1971, they would have been aware of the opportunities that the member for Milestone has taken advantage of previously to throw his fits of what I think can't be called anything else but verbal diarrhea.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to treating medical ailments, especially in animals, I have some experience and I referred earlier to the fact that the NDP had made the right diagnosis: how to transfer the family farm from one generation to another. But it was their treatment that was in error. The right diagnosis; the wrong treatment. In the medical profession, that malpractice. Using the land bank scheme to threat the intergenerational transfer problem is like treating a steer with pneumonia by using an enema. The previous administration was the wrong end of the problem. And sad to say, Mr. Speaker, that treatment nearly killed the patient.

Fortunately almost 10 years to the day that land bank was being debated in this very Chamber, Mr. Speaker, in April of 1972, 10 years later we had an election. April 26, 1982, in this province, Mr. Speaker, the family farm was saved. Ten years ago, Mr. Speaker, many people foresaw the pitfalls of the land bank scheme. But perhaps none put it so succinctly in debate as the hon. member, Mr. MacDonald, when on page 2197 he said, and I quote:

First of all (and he's referring to the land bank, Mr. Speaker) it is an unthinkable bad financial deal for the farmer, an unthinkable bad financial deal. Second, it only offers perpetual tenancy to any farmer who accepts it. Third, it is a socialist nightmare — a socialist nightmare that guarantees the state ownership of this land because very single proposal in the land bank makes it impossible for any man who accepts a lease to ever own his own farm. The fourth thing, Mr. Speaker, it lays the groundwork for the biggest corporation that the province of Saskatchewan has ever seen in agriculture and that's the state farm.

End of quotation, Mr. Speaker. He along with many others, recognized all those pitfalls.

What can I say, Mr. Speaker? Saskatchewan farmers have been saved. The right treatment has been put in place. It is the farm purchase program. The nightmare is over. I wholeheartedly support this bill and I'm sure the record will show, Mr. Speaker, that all members will. Merry Christmas, farmers of Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — Mr. Speaker, before I begin I would like to congratulate the hon. member, my colleague for Weyburn, for the masterful performance and the well-thought-out

delivery he just gave us.

It is my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to rise in the House this evening at this juncture in our history which is a most historic moment for Saskatchewan. For this session of the legislature, Mr. Speaker, will long be remembered by the people of this province and it will long be recorded in the history books of this province that this is the session when the government gave the land bank back to the people in Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — The Hon. Eric Berntson, when referring to the farm purchase bill, called it “an imaginative, innovative and forward-looking piece of agricultural legislation.” Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that that is the most significant, most positive piece of legislation in the history of this province.

The passage of this bill, Mr. Speaker, will take us back directly to the roots of our heritage. Mr. Speaker, it is this error, made by the pervious administration — their disregard for our heritage — that has caused them to be banished to the opposition benches last April.

What are the roots of our heritage? Perhaps we should take a few moments just to review that, for the benefit of the members opposite, who obviously had forgotten it for the last 10 years. Who were the people who settled this province and who were the pioneers and why did they come here? We all know, Mr. Speaker, that the immigrants who came to Saskatchewan many years back, around the turn of the century, were people who came from countries where there was no opportunity, let alone hope. What type of people were they? They were ordinary people, Mr. Speaker. They were people, many of whom had very little or no education. Many of these people had very little or literally no financial resources. Even more significant, Mr. Speaker, many of these people didn't even in actual fact know where they were going.

When you stop and think of those conditions and that background and what motivated the people, it's significant to note and ask the question: if this was the case, then why did they come to Saskatchewan? The only reason they came to Saskatchewan, having no money, having little or no education, no knowing the language and in many cases not even knowing where they were going, was because they knew that in Saskatchewan they could won their own land. That's the reason, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — They didn't come here to lease it, for those were the conditions they were leaving behind. They didn't come here to work for the state, for those also were the conditions they were leaving behind. They came to work and to own their own property.

The last few days, Mr. Speaker, I have been amused by the posturing of the hon. members opposite, pseudo-protectors of freedom. They have had a great deal to say about freedom the last few days, Mr. Speaker, and in a way, I congratulate them. That is their opinion ever though they are very misguided.

If they want to know what freedom is all about, they should have thought about that back in 1972, when they bought in this nefarious, cynical, and sinister land bank legislation. That was a bill, Mr. Speaker, that, by trying to camouflage the real intent

of the government, attempted to take over the ownership of the land of this province.

And if the hon. members opposite want to know what freedom is, maybe they should study the map of the world. And I suggest to them that there isn't one country in the world, Mr. Speaker, where the state owns the land and the people enjoy the freedoms we enjoy here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — Unfortunately, they lost sight. I shudder to think that they knew and were doing it on purpose. However, Mr. Speaker, the basic desires which caused the original pioneers to come to Saskatchewan still burn strongly in the people of Saskatchewan. And this is what the Progressive Conservative Party remembers and stands for. Progressive Conservatives know our roots and traditions, and Progressive Conservatives protect the good things in our past. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, Progressive Conservatives today and always will protect the right of the individual to own the land he farms.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — I found it interesting during the last election, Mr. Speaker, that the very people, the very people that the land bank legislation was supposed to be helping, were filled with frustration, uncertainty, and in many cases, anger. For those young farmers were the young farmers who were deceived by the former administration. These young farmers, and in many cases the fathers, were led to believe that if they sold the land to the state that in a few short years their sons would soon be buying it back.

And I'm talking to these young farmers, Mr. Speaker, many whom this situation applied to. They sat in their farm houses this last winter when I visited untold hundreds of them and they told me that, "Here we were led to believe that in five short years we would have an opportunity to purchase that land that our farmers sold to the state, and we know that under the present circumstances the possibility of that simply do not exist nor will it."

These were the same young farmers who through their frustration told me that they would be supporting the Progressive Conservatives, and many of them had not been in the past. But why do they support us? They supported us simply because of the farm purchase program, a crucial cornerstone of our election platform. And the time has come, Mr. Speaker, for our party to deliver on another one of its promises, because our party keeps all the promises it makes to the people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. TUSA: — Mr. Speaker, just before I close, I would just like to outline a few basic features of this farm purchase program which bear repeating, even though the hon. member for Weyburn did a very good job of going through the whole program.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation will preserve the tradition of the family farm as understood and experienced by the farmers of Saskatchewan since the beginning of this province. That tradition, Mr. Speaker, was to pass the family farm from the father to the son or daughter, from that son or daughter to the next son or daughter, generation to generation, always keeping it in the family, always having pride of ownership and always benefiting from any economic benefits that that farm may

generate.

Our 8 per cent for five years, and 12 per cent for another five years, this is the cornerstone of our legislation which will make it possible for this government to once more keep up this tradition in our province.

Mr. Speaker, refinancing through the farm credit corporation, as the hon. member for Weyburn pointed out, will eliminate a great deal of administrative expense. It is a mechanism which the farmers of this province have been dealing with for many, many years. They well understand it and we have confidence that the farm credit corporation and the administration of this program will serve our farmers well.

Mr. Speaker, in concluding, I would just like to repeat once more that I am very pleased to stand here in support of this piece of legislation, for the piece of legislation will once more give hope to young farmers in Saskatchewan, it will give them desire, it will give them economic independence, and the young farmers in Saskatchewan can look forward to a life of productive farming here in this province which will be possible once gain here in December 1982. Thank you very much.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes of time here on Bill 45, a bill that I have to admit contains very, very little. We've heard two speeches where the members have talked about the farm credit corporation and I just don't see it here in the bill, I suppose the question that many farm groups are asking is: what kind of agreement there is signed between the farm credit corporation and the Saskatchewan government? What kinds of commitments are made and what kind of deal was really struck between the Devine government and the Trudeau government on this farm purchase program?

I think it is fair to say that there are sections in this bill that leave a lot to be desired. Section 12(1)(b), which establishes the qualifications of persons eligible for the interest rebate under the act, as well as 12(1)(a), "defining, enlarging or restricting the meaning of any word or expression used in this act." Those two will be designed in the regulations.

Mr. Speaker, basically what this bill says is that anything at all in this bill, a nothing bill, can be amended or changed simply through regulations.

It was interesting to read the press release that came out with the bill from the Minister of Agriculture. It contains about 10 times as much as the bill itself, and what the farm group are telling us now is that before this bill is passed, we should see the regulations in order that we know what is included.

Many Saskatchewan Wheat Pool members, many farmers' union, many land bank lessees, have contacted us this past week and told us that this bill is nothing less than abrogation of power from the legislature to the Minister of Agriculture. And I think, Mr. Speaker, over this past week we have seen enough of a large majority government's power, to go ahead with a bill that includes nothing more than powers written in regulation to amend or expand the bill itself.

Mr. Speaker, if the press release that the minister sent out is accurate, what we're talking about is a program that will be operated by the farm credit corporation which will allow a maximum of \$350,000 to be borrowed by people who have less than

\$300,000 in assets.

Let's use a few examples into that little formula. Let's take, for example, a young fellow who has three quarters of land which he has bought and paid for and worked very hard to pay for over the past five years. When he goes into the farm credit corporation and applies for the loan, he simply won't be eligible because his assets will be too high . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Usually, but there are many out there who have worked hard for 10 years and have the mortgage paid off. They will not be eligible.

Let's take, for example, a young person who has a father who isn't a farmer but has been working in a farming establishment and goes in, has no titles, his father has no titles, and wants to borrow some money. The farm credit corporation very simply wants two titles clear for every title of purchase. This is the regulation that farm credit corporation told us. Mr. Speaker, this person is not eligible either.

Let's take the young farmer whose father does own five quarters of land. Let's use the example of a father who is 50 years old and has a 20-year-old son. He goes to farm credit corporation to help his son get started. The farm credit corporation tells him he has to put up every title in order to get a half section of land, and the father says, "I simply can't do it. I simply can't do it because I need it for retirement. I can't give it to farm credit corporation for 30 years." And he goes back, and the young fellow doesn't go farming.

Let's use the example of the guy who has 40 quarters of land and has a son who is 18 or 20 years old. And they go into the farm credit corporation. The young son, who hasn't started yet, doesn't have any assets. The father has 40 quarters. That person will qualify instantly.

So here we have another program where everyone in the spectrum that the members on this side of the House would think would be eligible for the program are excluded because of what we see in the regulations, or think are in the regulations, and those people who could very easily start on their own being eligible for a subsidy of around \$24,000 a year.

Mr. Speaker, many farmers are telling us, and the numbers that we have figured out show, that this is simply another program for those who already have, another program that will be run on the backs of those people who pay taxes but don't meet the qualifications of the provincial and federal governments.

Mr. Speaker, this new, wondrous program which has been established here is not new at all. It exists in three other provinces already. It has been in existence in Quebec for 10 years. The program in Quebec works like this: the farm credit corporation operates the plan and the provincial government subsidizes one-half of the rate between 4 per cent and the farm credit corporation's lending rate. This wondrous program is a plan that had been instituted under a Liberal government in Quebec in conjunction with the federal Liberals in Ottawa.

Let's say, Mr. Speaker, if you look at this bill very closely and look at who is running the federal crown corporation, farm credit corporation, you'll find that it's one Sonny Anderson, the former Liberal member for Shaunavon. I think the connection is very obvious, Mr. Speaker. The farm credit corporation is a very, very difficult corporation to get money out of. Yes, it is. There are many people who will tell you that it's difficult to

get money out of farm credit corporation. You put in the regulations, on top of that, that the provincial government has instituted — the \$300,000 in assets that farm credit corporation does not have, because that is not the farm credit corporation regulation, that will be yours between the two sets of regulations. Between the two sets of regulations you don't have a program. Simply put, Mr. Speaker, the program that has been introduced here today is no program, and there are about three farmers who will be eligible, and they will be the sons and daughters of those farmers who already have 30 or 40 quarters of land. We will be expected to subsidize them to the tune of 22,000 or 24,000 per year for five years, and 5 or 6 or 7 thousand a year for the next five.

Mr. Speaker, if you want to look at the numbers of those few people who will be able to get the money and do the numbers on a three-quarter section of land at \$300,000, very simply, even at 8 per cent the money that they would earn off that land would be about \$24,000 and the payments would be about 27. That doesn't include the spray and the chemicals and the taxes. It doesn't include things like wages that may have to be paid. Mr. Speaker, what this program will sentence a few farmers who are eligible for it to, is a life of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, because I have many other reservations on this bill which I'll want to go into at a later date, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Berntson that Bill No. 46 — **An Act to repeal The Land Bank Act and to make Certain Temporary Provisions for Lessees** be now read a second time.

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I only want to say a few words about Bill 46 — The Land Bank Repeal and Temporary Provisions Act. I had the opportunity of working with a lot of the land bank lessees in Saskatchewan in a couple of by-elections, and I found that a lot of them were very concerned about the possibility of land bank ever being taken away on them. I'm quite concerned myself, Mr. Speaker.

I think that the farming community in Saskatchewan is quite aware that land bank has been a good program, and has done a good job of getting young farmers out on the farm and making them quite successful. They are quite concerned, Mr. Speaker, that this is going to be taken away from them. I feel quite strongly about Bill 46 and I would only urge the Government of Saskatchewan to take another look at the bill, with the possibility of pulling this bill out. I think that it's something that we need in the province, and I know that the young farmers out there and the lessees are very concerned about this, Mr. Speaker. I just urge the provincial government to take a second look at this bill.

MR. GERICH: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to address The Land Bank Repeal and Temporary Provisions Act. This act shows the new government's policy on farm land. The farm land belongs in the hands of private ownership and not state ownership. The Land Bank Repeal and Temporary Provisions Act will work in conjunction with the farm purchase plan. These two programs working together will give a totally new direction in agriculture ownership.

Mr. Speaker, this government will invest money into its Saskatchewan farm families rather than the Saskatchewan family of crown corporations. Mr. Speaker, the farm purchase program with \$350,000 at 8 per cent interest for five years and 12 per cent for the next five, or whichever is lower will help the young Saskatchewan

farmer to own his farmland. The farmer in Saskatchewan, 1982, will be like his pioneer forefathers working on his own land and I state that again, his own land, giving him pride of ownership, personal ownership and something to turn over to his family in years to come. This was not given to him under the land bank.

The farm purchase program, Mr. Speaker, does not only aid in the transfer of the family farm within the given family, it allows young farmers to buy land from anyone anywhere in the province. Mr. Speaker, the land bank lessee will be able to purchase his rented quarter or quarters through the farm purchase program. Mr. Speaker, in the previous 10 years of NDP government, the farmland was rented to the farmer through a scheme called the land bank. This scheme called the land bank, this state-controlled scheme, has only helped 150 farmers to own land in the past 10 years. Mr. Speaker, the farm purchase program will help in the first three months, 1,500 applicants. In simple arithmetic and common sense, it's easy to choose which program is going to be the best. I was appalled at the opposition's comments on the farm credit corporation looking after our farmers out there and not having any confidence in them. The previous administration spoke for the farmers but in speaking against the farm credit corporation, I can see they even lost faith there.

Mr. Speaker, with the introduction of the farm purchase program we have changed the total direction of agriculture in Saskatchewan and we've changed the direction from a serf under the previous NDP government to a landlord in the Progressive Conservative government in 1982.

Mr. Speaker, I support the land repeals act.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. YOUNG: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It comes as some surprise to me in listening to the remarks from the members opposite. It had, for some time, considered from everything they'd said in the past that they had no great objections to the farm credit corporation; certainly nothing until what we heard today would have made us think that. But now it seems, Mr. Speaker, that all of a sudden the farm credit corporation isn't doing such a good job, as pointed out by the member for Weyburn in his quotations from some of the earlier NDP members. Certainly I guess the remaining group of eight has made an about face with respect to their standing behind that particular body as an efficient administrator.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Which tow are you talking to over here?

MR. YOUNG: — There's only two of them left (for *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker); neither of them farmers. But I will continue my remarks directed to the remaining two members sitting opposite in the hope that something may get through their heads with respect to the record of the land bank.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, the benefits of our new program and differences in philosophy have been explained in detail by earlier speakers. I think there are possibly only two more areas which I would like to comment on this evening, that are possibly deserving of some further comment. First, Mr. Speaker, the fact (and I feel it is something that has possibly been overlooked) that our farm purchase program and the repeal of the land bank are keeping our commitment, keeping our promise. That was our election promise and certainly, again, Mr. Speaker, we are holding true to the people of this province in delivering on our promises. I think that is, firstly, one

particular item which needs to be stressed in this debate.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, there are not only the differences in philosophy, but the differences in the way our system will work. The land bank system, besides involving state ownership and a poor, poor attempt to remedy the problem of intergenerational transfers, created a giant bureaucracy, Mr. Speaker. I would like to, if I can, read from an article that was written in the *Saskatchewan Law Review* and it reads in part, Mr. Speaker:

By section 7 of the act, the commission is given power to appoint technical and professional personnel as well as employ officers or employees as it considers necessary for the purposes of the act. In the commission's operations to date, under this section, the commission has employed a secretary, appointed an administrative officer, a supervisor of land dispositions, a conveyancer, an administrative assistant, regional counsellors have been appointed in 11 points in Saskatchewan, and six appraisers. The act further allowed them to appoint a land bank committee and a land bank advisory committee.

So what we have, Mr. Speaker, in my submission, is the creation of a giant bureaucracy to administer the land bank. Our program is entirely different. It uses an existing framework, the farm credit corporation, to administer our programs. Certainly our program is going to result in more dollars to the farmers in —s by efficiency than the land bank system did.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. YOUNG: — The difference in the two programs, Mr. Speaker, can be looked at from another angle. You have, under the NDP program, this large administration. I've read maybe a dozen different positions crated: inspectors, appeal boards, commissions, appraisers and conveyancers and a whole bureaucracy created to administer farms. What we have, Mr. Speaker, is agricultural produce in this province which is the result of the amount of arable farm land and the amount of rainfall — the two most important things that determine how much grain we are going to produce in this province.

Now, under the NDP program, you introduce a whole army of bureaucrats to administer farmers, and what you have then, Mr. Speaker, is a situation where you have that many more people riding on the backs of the farmers. If you go to the land bank inspector's fridge and you open it, Mr. Speaker, you will find he has a steak in the fridge, shall we say. That steak is put there on the on the backs of the farming community. They put it there. This guy is riding along, this bureaucracy is riding along on the backs of the farmers — an add cost. Certainly, prior to 1971 or '72, when there was no land bank commission, X amount of grain was produced in Saskatchewan. Now, with the commission in place in '72, the same amount of grain is produced. It has nothing to do with the land agreement but all these extra hangers-on are riding on the farmer's back. And in the end, Mr. Speaker, it is the people of Saskatchewan who paid for that bureaucracy. I am certainly very proud to be part of the government removing that bureaucracy and that burden around the Saskatchewan taxpayer's neck.

I take note of the remarks made by the member for Shaunavon with respect to what wasn't in the act and what would presumably be in the regulations.

I'd like to draw to the member's attention section 67 of the old Land Bank Act which

reads:

For the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act according to their intent and supplying any deficiency therein, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations as are ancillary thereto and are not inconsistent therewith; and every regulation made under, and in accordance with the authority granted by this section has the force of law: and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make such regulations, not inconsistent with any provision of this Act.

Certainly when you got into the pith of the land bank legislation, the point system, who is going to get the ground, all of the qualifications, the factors that the commission could take into account in allocating leases — where was it? It was in the regulations. And I don't think the member for Shaunavon would quarrel with the necessity of putting variable things such as that into regulations. And as pointed out earlier in this debate, Mr. Speaker, things change. Net worths change, the economy changes, inflation makes changes, and certainly it would be hampering our legislation to put those particular items into an act which would require going back to the legislature every time to change it. Certainly the regulations are the only reasonable area that those sorts of points could be put into.

And in closing, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the repeal of The Land Bank Act. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I have a few words on Bill 46 before I adjourn it. Mr. Speaker, this bill, which follows what I had called a very terrible Bill 45, I think, could only be superseded by Bill 46 in its taking away of people's rights. Mr. Speaker, there are a great number of problems that will come to light over the next day, two days, week sin terms of Bill 46, An Act to repeal The Land Bank Act and to make Certain Temporary Provisions for Lessees.

Mr. Speaker, I have here a letter from the land bank tenants' association which I would like to read into the record. Mr. Speaker, it's an open letter to all members of the Saskatchewan legislature:

As secretary of the Saskatchewan Land Bank Tenants' Association I have been authorized by my board of directors to seek legal advice respecting the implications of Bill No. 46, The Land Bank Repeal and Temporary Provisions Act. Our legal adviser has informed us that section 4 has stripped us of any legal options to defend our rights and to protect the terms and conditions of our present leases, our ownership and all improvements on the land and our security of tenure. Furthermore, he advises us that Bill 46 has effectively confiscated all of the property that we own on the land in the form of buildings, improvements, or chattels, and has stripped us of protection we previously enjoyed through the act, regulations and most importantly, through the terms and conditions or our lease agreements which will be completely obliterated with passing of Bill 46.

We in the Saskatchewan Land Bank Tenants' Association respectfully request that our rights be restored to us. Our first choice would be, of course,

the retention of The Land Bank Act, its regulations and our present lease agreements. We sincerely believe that the existing land bank program could run parallel to you proposed land purchase program, and do not understand why you should chose to discriminate against us. Failing acceptance of our first request, and at a very minimum we believe our right as Canadian citizens must be embodied in the act which would allow us access to the courts of this land in seeking justice should we feel aggrieved. As well, we have long believed that our contract, the lease agreement that each of us holds, is a contract with the Government of Saskatchewan and the people of Saskatchewan which would be honored by any fair-minded legislator.

I have been in contact with lessees all over the province for months, and firmly believe that their reaction to this regressive legislation will be swift, consolidate, and that they will be solidly opposed to it. We therefore believe that in the best interests of all concerned you should immediately reconsider Bill 46 and restore our rights. Yours sincerely, Chris Mewhort.

Mr. Speaker, I think that letter would summarize very clearly, after all the hoopla and the back patting of the session here on these two bills, that the people, the farmers of Saskatchewan, are not terribly pleased with Bill 45 and Bill 46. That, Mr. Speaker, in fact, these 2700 lessees, their spouses and their families — about 10,000 people, maybe 12,000 — are not very happy with the Conservative government. The member for Saskatoon mentioned that many of the land bank lessees voted Conservative on April 26 and I don't believe that, I know that. But, Mr. Speaker, what I cannot understand is: knowing that, why would the Conservative government now come down and make enemies of another 10,000 people in the province of Saskatchewan after the alienation process they've carried out over the past few months with the heavy hand of government?

Mr. Speaker, I think these 10,000 people, who will be affected by Bill 46 if in fact it is passed, will not forget quickly what has been done to them by the people who they voted into power. Mr. Speaker, I think what should be done with this bill is it should be withdrawn, that there should be studies held and hearings held throughout the province, that the people who farm and the people who rent the land should be allowed their say on it.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it's very interesting that this bill 46 is brought in at the same time as Bill 45, because it is our contention in the opposition that Bill 46 is brought in simply as a means of getting the money to pay for Bill 45. A very interesting concept but here again not surprising. We find that in order to pay a subsidy to farmers who, in many cases, are already established — their parents are established and could very easily set the son or daughter up — we will be calling on land bank lessees to pay the bill. But it's not surprising after looking at the many others where that has been the case, where those who are weaker, have less money are being called on to pay the bill for those who already have. Mr. Speaker, for that reason we want time to talk to the farmers of Saskatchewan. They are very concerned about Bill 46 and there are many other things that I have to say about this most regressive piece of legislation. I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURES

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 16

Item 1 (continued)

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Chairman, I have some information for the hon. member on the little note you sent up to my office today. We appreciate the co-operation, and we have the information here for you on that.

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank the minister for providing this information. I will not try to delay this too long. I think most of the information I was asking for is on here.

One of the other things the minister could provide me with, in addition to the information that he has there, would be the cost of each project, fi they have that.

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Chairman, and hon. member opposite, we don't have all of that information here, but no problem supplying you with that information.

Also, you had asked for salaries of executive administration, deputy minister, associate deputy minister, director of operations division, director of support services division. It has not really been a precedent in the table, or to pass this information directly across. I will not read it into the record necessarily right now. I will send it over to you for your information.

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't take too much time up, Mr. Minister. I have a few questions. First of all, could you indicate to the House if the department has any plans for doing any work on Highway 101 in the upcoming fiscal year?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Chairman, we're looking at some spot improvement work on 101. All of the details are not finalized yet, but when we get that project array in the spring. I'll be happy to give you all of the details pertaining to that.

MR. THOMPSON: — That's fine, Mr. Minister. That's what I wanted to hear, because that is not a very long road, but it has some bad corners and steep hills and I think that spot work is what I have been requesting for a number of years. I thank you very much for that.

Could you indicate how much money was spent on Highway 155 in grading this summer, and what your plans are for finishing the grading of 155 to La Loche?

HON. MR. GARNER: — In the neighborhood on 155 of grading — and these are very rough dollars — approximately \$2 million. An as far as any additional information, I'd just as soon wait until we do the whole project array in '83-84, and we will advise you at that time.

MR. THOMPSON: — There are only 11 or 12 miles to be completed in the grading. Could you indicate if your plans are to finish that grading this summer?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, once again I don't want to announce the project array here tonight with the spring, but for the hon. member's information. It is one of the higher priorities we are looking at.

MR. THOMPSON: — Has the Department of Highways any plans to take over the maintenance of the Key Lake road and the Cluff Lake road from the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, or have you already taken over that responsibility?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Okay. For the hon. member's information, on January 1, as you are no doubt aware, we are taking over the maintenance of all roads in northern Saskatchewan, and the Key Lake road will fall into that. We will be taking over maintenance responsibility on that road as well.

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you. One final question. You indicated a couple of week ago in the House that you would be proceeding with the bridge across the Dillon River, and you indicated at that time that you would also be putting a bridge across the small creek that's right in the village of Michel. Could you indicate when the construction of that bridge is planned — you said it would be shortly — and approximately how much money is involved in the major bridge?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Once again depending on moving men and equipment into location, we will be starting in January. The cost is once again a ball park figure — in the neighborhood of about \$300,000.

MR. THOMPSON: — For the two bridges?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Yes.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, I have a question and part of it may be repetitious. I wasn't here the other night. It deals with a contract on 37 Highway south of Shaunavon. Could you give me a report on whether that contract had been let, or if it was cancelled?

HON. MR. GARNER: — The tenders had closed and all the contracts or estimates were in. All bids were rejected and returned to the bidders. The reason is that — I may be moving ahead to what your next question is — I believe there were other roads in the province of Saskatchewan that had a higher priority for reconstruction or servicing.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — No bids accepted and no agreement or contract signed?

HON. MR. GARNER: — None whatsoever. All bids were returned.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, I have a question on the Red Coat Trail Association. The minister will be well aware that communities — I could say all, but I'll say most communities — R.M.s along 13 highway from the Manitoba border to the Alberta border are involved in what has now become a fairly active group known as the Red Coat Trail Association, and pay some type of a due to belong to the association. What I am wondering is: does the Department of Highways pay any grant to that organization, or is consideration being given to paying a grant to this organization to promise what I am sure you will agree is a very well-used highway, and one which is building traffic significantly over the past couple of years?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Okay. I have a couple of points to that question. Number one: we have no legislative authority to pay grants to any organization whether it be the Red Coat Trail or the Yellowhead Route Association. I personally believe that we should let individuals, whether they be in Saskatchewan or in a joint venture with three provinces like this, run their own organization. The lines of communication are open with this government as I think was quite evident as their last annual meeting when we went down and had the official unveiling of the Red Coat Trail. The commitment I have made to them and I make to all members of the Legislative Assembly, is that we intend to work toward a better road on Highway 13 in improved safety features.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, another question dealing partially I suppose with the Red Coat Trail has to do with an agreement that we had with the Alberta government. I believe this to be true, on the extension of Highway 13 from Govenlock to the Alberta border. Is the agreement on paving that stretch of road as well as the portion in Alberta still in place?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Okay. Number one: there was no written agreement with Alberta. There was a verbal agreement between the previous minister and the minister from Alberta regarding the grading so that both connecting links would reach the border at the same time. The information I have before me is that grading has been done.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — What you are saying then is there was no agreement on hard surfacing either side?

HON. MR. GARNER: — That's right. There was no agreement.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, there were similar meetings that took place between the director of highways in Montana and the minister of highways on Highway 37 as well as the stretch of highway in Montana, I believe it's 204 but I can't remember the number exactly. I'm wondering if you have had any contact with the administration in Montana to date, and whether that oral agreement is still in place or not.

HON. MR. GARNER: — No. I have had no contact with anybody from Manitoba regarding 204 or whatever it is. I am not bound; I would like to inform all of the members of the Assembly, by any verbal agreement by the previous administration to build any roads anywhere whether they connect south, west, north, or east.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, could you give me the names of your executive assistants and their salaries?

HON. MR. GARNER: — One executive assistant, a Miss Lauren Johnston, at \$2,262 per month.

MR. LUSNEY: — One executive assistant. Am I correct? Do you have any special assistants or legislative secretaries working in your office?

HON. MR. GARNER: — No special assistants and no legislative secretaries.

MR. KOSKIE: — I just want to, Mr. Chairman, direct one question to the minister. I note that the Yorkton mayor recently said that the study was a stalling tactic. He indicated that he received a letter from the highways and transportation, indicating that

rather than providing funds for a highway by-pass in Yorkton, in fact the word is that the government is merely going to set up a study.

I want to say that the council of the city of Yorkton seems to be somewhat perturbed in respect to this and they indicate that other cities have received funding from the previous government and they wonder why the stalling tactic with respect to the treatment of Yorkton.

HON. MR. GARNER: — Regarding your Weyburn concern, the York Road is going to be funded on a 50/50 per cent basis on that by-pass and we have a bit of a concern because the by-pass does go through a residential community —a residential part of the city. What we're saying is that we would like to look at something north of the York Road and that's why we would like to do a study on it before we leap into something else. We have to look at the city expanding. After all, Saskatchewan is open for business.

MR. KOSKIE: — Just as a follow-up. I wonder whether or not the council or the department had previously made any studies with respect to the routing of the by-pass, and are you now changing the particular plans that were previously made by the city in conjunction with the province?

HON. MR. GARNER: — No, the specific by-pass was not studied before and we're not changing any plan.

MR. KOSKIE: — Let's put it more simply. Was there any study done or completed by the department with respect to a by-pass for the city of Yorkton?

HON. MR. GARNER: — And there were some studies done and in those studies, there was a traffic count done as well on the York Road and it is our concern that it is not the best location for building that.

MR. KOSKIE: — Have you accordingly advised the city, or is this the first announcement in respect to it? In this article they are very concerned that now they have been told that there's going to be a study. It seems as though this is the first indication or a recent letter from your department. If in fact you had concerns, why wouldn't you have been in contact with them prior?

HON. MR. GARNER: — The information that I have is that the York Road has been ongoing for many years. The north of York by-pass has started within the past month and there has been some communication with them.

MR. KOSKIE: — How long is your study going to take before the city of Yorkton will be advised as to whether or not you have established a route that is satisfactory to the department?

HON. MR. GARNER: — We will be doing this study in conjunction with the city of Yorkton and it will be done as soon as possible.

MR. KOSKIE: — Any anticipated length of time that it'll take to complete it?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Sometime in '83. We can't give you a specific detail.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I wonder if I might ask

whether there is in this budget, money to share the cost of the Lewvan Expressway construction and, if so, how much is anticipated, stated either in dollars of grants or amount of construction expected?

HON. MR. GARNER: — For the Leader of the Opposition's information, we will be funding south of Regina Avenue to No. 1. 100 per cent. We'll have the figures for you here shortly, we'll have the figures here shortly for you on the dollars spent to date, but we're 50-50 north of Regina.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I'm well aware of that funding arrangement and its original . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . There is a difficult problem of a commitment made when an area was outside a city, in accordance with the then funding formula, and then it's incorporated in the city: do you use the old one or the new one?

But the question I meant to ask, Mr. Minister, is with respect to this year, the year that we are dealing with, up to March 31. The grant is in there to cover construction up — how far, if I may ask that?

AN HON. MEMBER: — For the '82-83 year.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Yes, in the year we're in.

HON. MR. GARNER: — While they are getting the rest of the information, we will be starting it in '83.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Just one short one. I'm just reading out of the Saskatchewan Viewpoint. Mr. Speaker, and there is a winter tendering highway project in the amount of \$27.5 million. I am wondering if the minister could tell the Assembly, tell us whether or not this is part of the winter works project announced by the Minister of Social Services.

HON. MR. GARNER: — Yes, it is part of our overall strategy for job creations throughout the winter, and just further for your information, on the \$5 million of aggregate crushing the funding is in place. As soon as the jobs are done the cheques can be mailed out to those individuals.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — On the issue of four-laning, Mr. Minister, I think that you are on record as saying that four-laning in Saskatchewan will not be carried out this year, any four-laning on the Trans-Canada that is. Can you correct me whether or not the road west of Webb. I guess it would be between Webb and Gull lake, is under consideration for this coming year; whether or not the people down there who were led to believe during the election campaign that it would be four-laned to the Alberta border, whether that anticipation will come to fruition this year or whether it's being considered?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well okay, the hon. member was not here last night so we'll excuse him from that. And please don't try and put words in my mouth. I'll set my own project array, I don't need your help. You guys were government; we're government now.

I have never said at any time there was not going to be no four-laning of the Trans-Canada next year. Nowhere, at no time, have I said that. Furthermore, I did extend the

Trans-Canada west of Webb an extra three kilometres which your previous administration did not seem to be too concerned about when we had a drastic loss of lives in that bus accident. We are concerned about safety in the province of Saskatchewan, and we will be doing the surfacing on that new section of grading.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Yes, Mr. Chairman, I really think that the surfacing of that stretch of road that our government built, as well as the 3 kilometres that your government built — the 15 or 24 that we built and the 3 that you built — should be paved as soon as possible, because that stretch of road as the Minister of Social Services will know, is very heavily trafficked and I'm sure if there were an accident on that stretch of road this winter, simply because an effort wasn't made to pave in this summer, it would be a very difficult task for all of us in the Assembly to put up with. I would urge the minister to carry out the promise that was made in both the constituencies of Maple Creek and Swift Current that four-laning to the Alberta border will be carried out with the greatest of speed.

HON. MR. GARNER: — First of all, don't start rapping my knuckles for something that you guys didn't do. Now, let's start calling a spade a spade and telling people the truth. I went the extra three kilometres; your administration did not. It's a joke. We're talking about the 20 people that got killed. The administration that was in here before, Mr. Chairman, think it's a joke. We personally don't think that's a joke' we are very concerned about it. Safety is one of our number one priorities in the province of Saskatchewan. The NDP didn't care enough about it; they didn't have the funding in there for surfacing it. We're making sure that that the funding is in place, and that section of road will be done next spring.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I find it very interesting that the minister will huff and puff about all the things that he has done. When you go west of Swift Current you will find a barricade on a stretch of highways about 17 miles long. Both ends are barricaded and have been for the past 8 or 10 months. They have been for the term that this minister were strong enough in cabinet not to have given \$20 million away to someone else, that stretch would be paved, and we wouldn't have to face the possibility of having a severe accident on that stretch of road. So you can't talk about all the great things you've done to three kilometres of road you have built. The simple fact is that there is Russian thistle growing on that stretch of road, and it's not helping anyone very much.

HON. MR. GARNER: — Okay, I thought we were going to move along with these, but it doesn't look like it.

Mr. Chairman, once again, we will point out to the people of Saskatchewan that the previous administration did not — and I repeat, did not — have that funding. They, also, did not have the funding of seven out of every 10 roads that their administration stood up in this Assembly last spring and misled — I would use another word but it's unparliamentary, Mr. Chairman, and I wouldn't do something like that — the people of Saskatchewan about. Now just try and realize this. I know it shoots over your head, and it's a little deep for you guys to understand, but you don't go out and announce d project array and not have funding for seven out of 10 roads for the people of Saskatchewan. An election ploy by the NDP that failed. The people of Saskatchewan saw through their smoke screen; the people of Saskatchewan will not be misled anymore by the Conservative administration.

Mr. Chairman, I have some information for the Leader of the Opposition. Regina Avenue to Third Avenue North estimated \$4.485 million. The city may not spend this much due to the strike, given their urban assistance funding, and the final billings are not all in. As soon as those are in, we can provide you with that information on the Lewvan Expressway.

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to address the Minister of Highways.

I'm just not sure how to phrase this. I'm not accustomed to the procedures of the House yet. But, anyway, in respect to Highway 105 and Highway 106, I noticed that in your estimates there is a complete blank in terms of the expenditures allotted for those areas. And, seeing how there is no priority or moneys appropriated for these highways that link into the very remote, isolated communities in northern Saskatchewan, what is the rationale for that, Mr. Minister?

HON. MR. GARNER: — What was it — 106?

MR. YEW: — 105 to the south end of Wollaston Lake and 106 to Deschambault.

HON. MR. GARNER: — There is just maybe a bit of an accounting differential here. Last year the money was in the heritage fund. This year it's in the regular capital expenditure in the new blue book.

MR. YEW: — Mr. Minister, could you explain to the House what the specifics are in that portion of the budget?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Okay, total expenditures for this fiscal year are, on No. 106, 2.7 million, and on 105, over 1 million.

MR. YEW: — Mr. Chairman, am I to understand that, Mr. Minister, this portion of moneys appropriated for 106, 2.7 million; 105, 1 million plus, is to be expended on those highways between now and the end of the fiscal year?

HON. MR. GARNER: — No, that has been done already.

MR. YEW: — Thank you.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 5 inclusive agreed to.

Item 6

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if I might revert to Works Branch which just got by me. I was curious to know why the drop in the payment for personal services. Apparently the same number of employees, a drop of \$15,000. Are they a different class of employees or is there some reason for that?

HON. MR. GARNER: — The previous director for Works Branch changed jobs and went to another job. A new director for Works Branch came in and came in at the bottom level where the other one was at the top level. That's why the differential.

Item 6 agreed to.

Item 7

MR. LUSNEY: — I notice, Mr. Chairman, there is a bit of a drop in the communications. Could the minister explain why the change in communications?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Basically, Mr. Chairman, it's a reduction in advertising and reduction in travel. I guess it just shows that this new government is quite concerned about tightening up all the way around.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LUSNEY: — What kind of travel was the minister referring to when he said a "reduction in travel"? Is he talking about the people in the Department of Highways?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Yes.

Item 7 agreed to.

Item 8 to 10 inclusive agreed to.

Item 11

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I want to ask, and I know this isn't exactly the subvote; I can wait and ask it in . . . (inaudible) . . . but I may as well ask it here: is it anticipated that the Saskatoon bridge will be completed in the year under review? I know that that is a grant program as opposed to one that the highways is operating. I simply ask that, and I will ask about the Meridian bridge as well.

HON. MR. GARNER: — Okay. Regarding the 42nd Street Bridge in Saskatoon, due to the strike that was on, that is why it wasn't completed on schedule. Expected completion date is next summer sometime. On Meridian bridge we are still experiencing foundation problems. Until that foundation stabilizes we don't want to go ahead and construction the bridge. I mean there is no point in building a bridge in the middle of the river and then have the embankments on both sides slide away into the river.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, is that bridge being build in Meridian by the Saskatchewan highways department with contributions from Alberta, or vice versa, or by some combination of the two departments?

HON. MR. GARNER: — We are doing all the engineering and will be doing the construction, but it's on a 50-50 basis.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, would the minister advise whether in this branch any other bridges are at the planning stage at this time, that you are in a position to say? I am not asking you to announce anything that you would wish to announce at another more appropriate occasion, appropriate from your point of view.

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, we might as well call it for what it is: the Borden bridge. The engineering and location studies are under way right now and the final decision will be

made in 1983.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, is any consideration being given to another bridge on the South Saskatchewan River in the south of Eston or in the Glidden area or generally between the Saskatchewan Landing Bridge and the Leader Bridge, anywhere in that span?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, there is no consideration being given to any bridge in that area at the present time.

Item 11 agreed to.

Items 12 to 17 inclusive agreed to.

Item 18

MR. YEY: — Mr. Minister, in terms of item 18 there, I wonder if the minister might inform the House if he has had any priorities placed for a Cumberland House weir?

HON. MR. GARNER: — There has been communication with many departments and I think the hon. member is aware of that. But there has been no decision made as of yet.

MR. YEY: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. One further question. Is there, more specifically, a study under way at present regarding access to Cumberland?

HON. MR. GARNER: — For the member's information, it is basically still under DNS and will not be under my department until January 1, so you will have to ask that information of the minister of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, just one simple question. The subvote there, 18, and the salary figure just covers salary for three months then, I take it.

HON. MR. GARNER: — Yes, that's correct.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Would the minister make a very brief comment on what the other expenses are? They're very large for such a small subvote but obviously there's something else in them.

HON. MR. GARNER: — Okay, it's basically the maintenance of all roads and airfields for that three-month period of the takeover from January to the end of the 1982-83 year.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — The maintenance of that figure. Okay.

Item 18 agreed to.

Items 19 and 20 agreed to.

Item 21

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Minister, with respect to maintenance, and reverting at least in part back to northern district but hooking the two together, the seven people who are associated with maintenance in the northern district, where are they located?

Physically, where are they likely to be located?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Basically the 7.3 people are management and they're based in Prince Albert and La Ronge, and salaries for the others are in the next vote, the second section of that vote.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I'm curious to know why the maintenance in the northern district would be in the 18 vote and not in the maintenance of highways and transportation. Are they likely to be, is it just for convenience because you're blending them this year?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Basically of keeping them together so that we can keep an accurate accounting record of them. That's why.

Item 21 agreed to.

Item 22 agreed to.

Item 23

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, in asking questions on grants to highway associations, I wonder if you can clarify your earlier comment that you had no budget for grants of that type. How does that square with the 16,000 here?

HON. MR. GARNER: — We still have no authority under The Highways Act, but under The Appropriations Act (that's why it's in here), we do have that and its recommendation from cabinet. This went to the RTAC association, this grant.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — So, Mr. Minister, what you're saying is that although you don't have the authority in the act, you still have and still do give grants to associations such as the Red Coat Trail, and if you wanted to make a decision to that effect you could do it.

HON. MR. GARNER: — There is nothing budgeted for those types of grants. This here was strictly budgeted for the RTAC association.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Okay, I understand. So therefore if a group were to apply to you, it would have to be given special consideration, and there wouldn't be a budget allowance for that. Is that what you are saying?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Yes, that is correct.

Item 23 agreed to.

Vote 16 agreed to.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

Capital Expenditure — Vote 17

Items 1 and 2 agreed to.

Item 3

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, on that point, could the minister tell me what portion of the \$346,000 . . . I see a portion of it is from DNS. Can you give me an idea of how much of that is from DNS?

HON. MR. GARNER: — \$46,400.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — In looking back at the budget that we had introduced, the number then would be the same, of around \$300,000 for air transportation. Is that the surfacing program — the \$45,000 per municipality if they apply for the grant to upgrade their airport?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Yes, that is correct.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Is the reason that it is that much lower than the \$750,000 of '81-82 simply because of less demand in a program that is just going downhill because people in our villages and towns are not building airports, or what is the reason for that?

HON. MR. GARNER: — The difference in that costs comes in on the 50-50 cost-share basis that was done on the Lloydminster airport.

Item 3 agreed to.

Vote 17 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 16

Items 1 to 9 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 16 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Capital Expenditure — Vote 17

Item 1

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Chairman, I'm having some difficulty in running from one book to the other here, trying to keep up to you. I don't mind admitting something if I knew what supplement we're under. We've got two supplementary estimate books here and you didn't indicate whether it's the white one or the blue one that we're supposed to be working out of. The Further amounts required: \$9 million for rural surface

transportation — could the minister explain what this further amount is required for?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Additional funding is \$2.9 million and was provided to proceed with construction projects; \$2.5 million was for the 42nd Street bridge; \$3.7 million was for accounts payable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — For the member's information, there are only the two books. I explained that when we started, that the third book has nothing to be voted on. So there is only the main book and the white supplementary. So I'd like to clarify that.

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 17 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC BOARD

Ordinary expenditure — Vote 15

Item 1

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce the staff: Mr. Bill Sheard, chairman of the highway traffic board; Carl Shiels, executive director of the traffic safety services division; Terry Pollock, executive director of transport services division; and, right directly behind me, Gordon Russell. Gordon's not here; Mr. Bill McLaren is here.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Chairman, I have a question for the minister. Could the minister advise if there have been any changes made in the highway traffic board as far as the members on the board?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Chairman, the previous board was relieved of their duties. A new board is in place, and I will give you the following: motor carrier committee members: Mr. Gerald Bobbitt from Regina, who is a retired retail distribution supervisor; Mr. Herb Shea from Swift Current, a former owner of a trucking business; Glen Sitter from Kindersley, former owner of a trucking business; Mr. Jake Wiebe, from Dalmeny, farmer and house mover; Mike Beard from Luseland, retired RCM Police force officer; Mr. Joe Stang from Macklin, who is a house builder.

Driver licensing committee members are: Jack McKinstry from Weyburn, retired Department of Highways engineer; Barbara Larson from Regina, a housewife; Bill Rudichuk from Regina, a public accountant; Dan Stevens from Regina, businessman and former RCM Police force officer; George Wicket from Rosetown, a farmer; Carl Zielinski from Canora, a businessman; Anne Doran from Price Albert, real estate salesperson; Garth Swan from Saskatoon, a businessman.

I believe that each one of these new individuals will make a great contribution to not only the highway traffic board, which is an independent board, but also to the people of Saskatchewan. And they are working very hard at the present time.

MR. LUSNEY: — Could the minister indicate why he has cut back on the traffic safety services in his budget here?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Chairman, we are talking about an expenditure of about \$173,310. The previous administration had set up a program, I believe it had to be reviewed, and we are currently looking at most likely going into improvement or expansion of the DWI program in its place.

MR. LUSNEY: — Could the minister indicate how many applications are outstanding at this point regarding trucking franchises, road franchises?

HON. MR. GARNER: — You mean trucking firms wishing to obtain operating authority? Between 40 and 45.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, could the minister advise whether he is giving any consideration to removing the necessity for truckers having a franchise? Is any consideration being given to deregulating trucking?

HON. MR. GARNER: — We're not talking about taking franchises away. I guess what we are saying is that we would like to go kind of the middle of the road instead of total regulations which I believe the previous administration had adhered to. We don't want to go to complete deregulation, so that the terminology that I am using is reregulation. We want to make sure that the carriers can become all very viable in the province of Saskatchewan. We also want to allow some competition but as well protect the people of rural Saskatchewan, to allow them to still obtain a high level of service.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, I'm sure all those are highly laudable objectives. What changes do you intend to make in the regulating procedures in order to bring about all this protection and competition?

HON. MR. GARNER: — I think a little different than has been done in the past. Instead of total control, we have asked and I have asked the new independent board to study the situation and make their recommendations to myself to then take to cabinet, to try and appease industry — and when I say industry I mean the truckers as well as the shippers, to make sure that we do have a very viable trucking industry in the province of Saskatchewan — but I guess the bottom line to it is that we want to try and remove as much as possible the bureaucratic red tape from the Saskatchewan Trucking Association.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I'm sure once again those are laudable objectives and you have simply stated the objectives and said you're going to ask someone else to give you recommendations as to how to achieve them. Do you have any plans to bring about this reregulation so that one can assess whether or not your plans will achieve your objectives?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Chairman, we have taken these steps, and the highway traffic board is a prime example where we have retired truck drivers, house movers, retired RCMP officers. I believe that we have the expertise in place on the board right now today. They are meeting with the Saskatchewan Trucking Association, the consumer affairs throughout the province, to find out what the people want. I don't want, as a minister, to come down and tell the trucking industry what I believe should be done, nor the bureaucrats. We're going to let the people set the

regulations as to what they want in the province.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I wonder then how the minister is so confident of what the result will be if he doesn't know what the regulations are, and he's not going to set them, and the highway traffic board is not going to set them, but the people are going to set them and when the people have set them this will be the result, says the minister. He has a particularly confident view of what is likely to be the result of "feeling the pulse."

HON. MR. GARNER: — Okay, Mr. Speaker, I think why I am very confident not only in the highway traffic board but in the people of Saskatchewan is because on April 26 they made a very smart decision to remove the NDP as the Government of Saskatchewan.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, during the year for which we are voting the funds, were any changes made in the fees charged by the highway traffic board for licences for car registration? I'm speaking now of private passenger vehicles and light commercial vehicles and drivers' licences.

HON. MR. GARNER: — Yes they were, Mr. Chairman. They were \$5 or 7 per cent which, I believe, was a very reasonable increase to the people of Saskatchewan, since there had been no increase since 1980.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, what was the increase in drivers' licences? From what to what? For an ordinary private driver?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Chairman, once again it's just a mere \$5. It's goes from \$5 to \$10. Five dollars or 7 per cent. I believe it's a very realistic proposal that we have put forward to the people of Saskatchewan. They have accepted it very well.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, do I understand the minister to say that he has doubled the cost of drivers' licences, a 100 per cent increase? Do I understand that?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, I guess if you want to say it, say it whatever way you want. I'm simply going to say that it's just \$5 or 7 per cent.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, does the minister assert that that is in accordance with the restraint program of the government that is restricting other people's increases to 7 per cent or 8 per cent?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, I mean, Mr. Chairman, once again we're talking \$5. We're not talking \$500. If the previous administration would have been in here, Mr. Chairman, I'll tell you, they would have seen increases in not only this but every other aspect of government. We've simply said to the people of Saskatchewan: we have given you one of the largest tax breaks in the history of the province of Saskatchewan and we're asking for \$5 or 7 per cent.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, in view of the minister's admission that he is increasing this fee by 100 per cent, when he's asking other people to agree to increases of 7 or 8 per cent, is it contemplated the minister will be moving to Prince Albert shortly?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, it depends on when the by-election is called. I imagine I will get up there and have a great deal of input and deliver another seat for Grant Devine

in the province of Saskatchewan.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 and 3 agreed to.

Item 4

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, I don't intend to delay the committee except to say to the minister that I commend for continuing emphasis on highway traffic safety. I believe it's an important function. I know he believes it's an important function, and I simply want to commend him for the emphasis he's putting on it, as we tried to do when we were in government.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Chairman, I also don't want to delay this. I just have a little question of the minister. The minister in the past has always, when he was on this side of the House in opposition, talked about seat belts and said that the people should be allowed to make their own decisions on seat belts. Recently I've heard the minister changing his mind on it. Could the minister tell us: is he now, since he is in government, saying that seat belts are a necessity in the line of safety for the people, or does he still intend to say to the public that if they want to wear them, they can wear them if they don't, they don't have to?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'll be as brief as possible. I think it just points out that we're not as narrow-minded as the administration that was here before us, Mr. Chairman. We've seen that come up when we were discussing the land bank this afternoon, you know, I mean, foresight is just in one direction, and that big socialist tree is standing up in the middle of it. We can change our minds. I have changed my mind on the seat belt. I was opposed to it, not ashamed to admit it, not ashamed to tell the people of Saskatchewan.

One other step our government is taking. The courage that is on this side of the House with the white paper that we have introduced for discussion to the people of Saskatchewan has been around since about 1968. There has been issued a challenge out there. This government is picking up that challenge. We're concerned about the safety of the people of Saskatchewan; we're asking the people of Saskatchewan for input, not as the previous administration has done.

I will give you one example: Bill 13, where they took over total control of telecommunications in the province of Saskatchewan. This government is asking the people what they want for a new vehicles act.

MR. KOSKIE: — I noticed the minister's chest bloat out on the comments of the Leader of the Opposition in respect to the comments that our leader made and his emphasis toward the traffic safety services. I think it is a lot of words that the minister issues, because if you make a comparison of the budget which we proposed and the one which he is presenting to this legislature, we will find that he is proposing to spend 2,758,250, and we were proposing to spend 2,931,560. I want to say, while the minister does a lot of talking, can he justify why again he failed to respect to treasury board, and convincing the Minister of Finance? Or is this another clear indication of the total inadequacy and weakness of this minister?

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Chairman, we'll go over this again. We're talking of

\$173,000, \$173,000 for some little happy program that you fellows were going to set up. I am more concerned about the serious problems facing the people of Saskatchewan. That's why I stated earlier we were looking at expanding most likely the DWI program and I recommend that maybe the member opposite would take that program. He would understand what I'm talking about then. I mean this is three times to the well.

You know, we want to expand a program that the people of Saskatchewan want to have. We're talking safety' we're talking saving lives. We're not talking just their figures versus our figures. We're concerned; we're going to take action. That's why we introduced the white paper — to get feedback from the people of Saskatchewan. It's as simple as that, Mr. Chairman.

Item 4 agreed to.

Items 5 and 6 agreed to.

Item 7

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, would the minister give us an indication as to how many of the 180 positions are vacant, and how many are filled?

HON. MR. GARNER: — There are approximately 12 positions vacant right now.

Item 7 agreed to.

Vote 15 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC BOARD

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 15

Item 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 15 agreed to.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:03 p.m.