

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
December 9, 1982

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Monday, December 13, 1982, move first reading of a bill, An Act to amend The Workers' Compensation Act, 1979.

HON. MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Monday, December 13, 1982, move first reading of a bill, An Act to amend The Election Act.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Monday, December 13, 1982, move first reading of a bill, An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. LANE: — Joining us in the Assembly today sitting in the Speaker's gallery is the New Zealand High Commissioner, His Excellency Edward Latter, who is visiting the province from Ottawa. He's here on an introductory tour, and I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming His Excellency to this Assembly. I hope this visit to the province is enjoyable, interesting, and that the relationship between this province and his great country will continue.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Land Bank

MR. ENGEL: — My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. He made a rather unique, strong statement yesterday. I don't know if he was suffering from jet lag because of his trip back from North Dakota. My question has to do with the claim that the minister made yesterday; it's on page 1462 of *Hansard* and says:

I will stack farm credit and the farm purchase program up against your land bank program any day of the week, any day of the year, any time, any place.

Brave words, Mr. Speaker. Are they only words? My question to the minister is this: is he prepared to back up those words? He has got the courage to put a hold on the land bank repeal act now before this house, and let the land bank and the farm purchase program stand side by side for a year in this province or for even six months?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I think, Mr. Speaker, that a measure will be made as history unfolds and that will be the test. I think that farm credit and farm purchase working in concert will outstrip the benefits accrued to the farming community by land bank hands down.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, the minister didn't answer the question. When he talked about his plan he said it's one of the most imaginative, innovative, and far-reaching pieces of legislation ever presented to any Legislative Assembly on this continent. If this claim is true, what has he and his government got to be afraid of?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I'm having a little difficulty following the flip-flops of the member opposite. This is the same individual who, 15 minutes after the announcement of this program some days ago, gave it a ringing endorsement out in the corridor here and across the news waves of Saskatchewan, and I'm a little puzzled now as to his vigorous opposition. I don't know what motivates this dude, Mr. Speaker; I just don't understand it. But, the simple answer to his question is: I'm not prepared to do anything but proceed with the legislation as it is tabled.

MR. ENGEL: — So, what you have said is that you were actually misleading the House when you said you would stop legislation against the land bank.

My question is: what are you afraid of? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! The member was asking a question.

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Simply my question is this: what are you afraid of? If you leave the land bank in place it will simply show that the program is designed for the well-established farmers, and the land bank is much better designed to help the young struggling farmers who want to get started in this industry. What are you afraid of?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I think your memory's great. I just don't think it's that long. I take you back to April 26 when our position was very well articulated as it relates to land bank — has been since 1975, and before. It should be no secret to anyone that when we present our legislative package to this Legislative Assembly, land bank, or the demise of it, will be part of that legislative package. That was well known prior to April 26. I think something like 55 percent of the popular votes went our way. We are reflecting the wishes of the people that sent us here.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, a new question. If this is such innovative, imaginative legislation, why the big rush? Why didn't one of your people stand up yesterday? The second day into debates was yesterday. The legislation was introduced Monday night, Tuesday was private members, Wednesday was the first full day we debated, and not one of your people was ready to speak on it. What are you ashamed of covering up and why the big hurry to get third reading through?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I can remember a week ago when the same member was out on the TV screens, Mr. Speaker, telling us that the only thing wrong with this program was it wasn't brought in last spring. I agreed. I don't understand the motivation behind this guy. It's just mind-boggling. Now he says: what are we afraid of? Are you telling us you want us to pull this legislation? Let it sit for six months? We've got a whole passel of farmers out there that are anxious to get this legislation on the books so they can take advantage of the benefits of this program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — We are going to proceed with the legislation, and we are going to deal with this legislation this afternoon and this evening, and tomorrow afternoon, tomorrow morning, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday — as long as it takes, but this legislation will go through. If it doesn't get through by January 1 so that the farmers of Saskatchewan can take advantage of this program on January 1, it will be on your shoulders, not mine.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Local Government for Northern Saskatchewan

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan. On October 21, 1982 the minister and his cabinet met with a delegation from SUMA. One of SUMA's requests was for the establishment of local government for northern Saskatchewan. Compounded with that, you have met with local councils throughout northern Saskatchewan, I understand, and there have been requests, proposals, submission by various communities throughout northern Saskatchewan. As the minister is aware, there is a great deal of concern created by the dismantling of DNS, and it is now even more important that the people of the North have strong local government.

Will the minister advise when he will start doing something positive for northern Saskatchewan and establish local government legislation?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Minister, I can advise the hon. member, as I have advised local government representatives in northern Saskatchewan, that during this present sitting, this fall session of the House, legislation dealing with northern local government will be introduced.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. YEW: — Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. With regard to local government legislation, can the minister advise the House and the people of northern Saskatchewan regarding the revenue-sharing program that he has (if he has, in fact, a proposal for such)? If he has a program for revenue sharing, can he advise the House and the people of northern Saskatchewan what this program is and what implications and benefits it has for northern local government bodies?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — I can advise the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, that there will be a component of revenue sharing, obviously, within the new local government legislation that will be coming forward, and I can only ask the hon. member to wait patiently and you won't have to be very much more patient, sir.

Economic Development for Northern Saskatchewan

MR. YEW: — Mr. Speaker, a new question. The minister, in the dismantling of DNS, emphasized and prioritized strong local government. He also emphasized economic self-sufficiency for people in the community of northern Saskatchewan. Can the minister advise if he has in fact an economic development program to boost the high unemployment rates in northern Saskatchewan, which are, at present, anywhere from

65 to 95 per cent unemployment? Can the minister advise if he has a specific economic development program strategy for northern Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the economic development and the unemployment situation in northern Saskatchewan, I believe I have answered on several other occasions that the unemployment problem in northern Saskatchewan certainly isn't something that has just begun. It is certainly something that we are concerned with, as the hon. member is concerned and certainly we are concerned, and certainly I am concerned about it.

As it relates to job creation for this winter, we have asked northern communities, in my consultative meetings with northern local government representatives . . . I have said to them that they will be very eligible for job creation programs that have been announced by my colleague, the Minister of Finance. I believe a number of applications have come in from there, although I am not sure of the details of that.

MR. YEW: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I commend the minister for emphasizing and giving special consideration to Northerners in regard to the job creation program. However, my question is: more specifically put have you got an economic development strategy program for northern Saskatchewan aside from the short-term program that you have just elaborated on?

HON. MR. McLEOD: — The brief answer to the member, Mr. Speaker, would be that the new Department of Northern Saskatchewan, post . . . (inaudible) . . . northern Saskatchewan, as I have stated many times before, will have an emphasis on economic development. I want to emphasize one more time that economic development projects that are viable deal with other than strictly government involvement, so that everybody who lives in northern Saskatchewan, or in any portion of Saskatchewan for that matter, doesn't look totally and only to government for their economic well-being.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Transfer of Harry Van Mulligen

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I have a question for the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Speaker. He's quoted in the media as saying he wished he had postponed the Van Mulligen decision until after Christmas. Since his judgment evidently improves with the passing of the holiday season, will he postpone the Van Mulligen decision until after Christmas and reconsider it then?

HON. MR. HARDY: — Mr. Speaker, no, I will not postpone the transfer. It is before the courts and we will let them make the decision.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I have a question for the Deputy Premier. The Premier, in a prepared statement, announced that tomorrow is Human Rights Day. He went on to express concern about all those countries in which people are punished because of their expression of their political beliefs. We now have a situation in this province where people are being punished because of an expression of a political belief. Will the Deputy Premier consider issuing a statement whereby tomorrow will be the one day out of the 365 that public servants may speak freely? Will you announced that for the benefit

of the public service?

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, I can't, obviously, speak for the Premier, and in his absence, of course. And I don't have the document the member opposite has, whatever it is. Maybe it's the back page of the *Leader-Post*, for all I know. And I didn't sense that the question was either urgent or relevant, so I'll just take notice of it.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, I suspect that it is urgent and relevant to some people, but perhaps not to the government opposite.

New question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Finance. I want to remind members opposite that the transfer of Mr. Van Mulligen has raised fundamental questions of democratic rights, questions that I suggest to the Minister of Finance should be answered by this Assembly and not by the executive. The definition of democratic rights is surely the prerogative of the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: — I've been lenient with the hon. member and have let you have a considerable amount of lead time on your questions, but I think today you are abusing that privilege and I would ask you to get directly to the question.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — My question is: will you consider referring the issue of the right of public servants to speak to a special committee of this legislature rather than having it defined by the executive alone?

HON. MR. ANDREW: — Well, I think first of all (if I can understand the question which seemed like a two-part question), he didn't want the matter referred to the courts. He wanted it dealt with in the legislature.

I would remind the member opposite that approximately two years ago we went through in this country a whole wide-ranging debate with regard to a constitution. Some premier indicated and agreed that some of these rights and fundamental freedoms should be taken away and put into the courts. And we had a charter of rights and that system was where the courts would determine and sit on those rights.

The question that you raise is now before the courts. That's where I understand it's properly to be. I think it's improper when a matter is before the courts, and you as a lawyer know that as well as I, for us to comment with regard to that issue while it is before the courts. I've indicated before that the courts are going to decide on this particular question. How they rule then we will judge ourselves accordingly.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — New question, Mr. Speaker. I want to be clear to the Minister of Finance. I'm not asking you to refer the Van Mulligen transfer to a special committee. I am asking you to refer the issue of the right of public servants to speak freely to a legislative committee, or, if you prefer, would you be prepared to refer the policy statement on the right of public servants to speak to a special committee?

HON. MR. ANDREW: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think what the Premier indicated is that he is calling on input from various sectors to prepare and present guidelines. Once those guidelines have been determined, we will make those guidelines public. The members opposite know that this forum, through the question period, through rule 17, whatever they like, can bring those particular issues to the floor of this House. Those issues can be debated and discussed on the floor of this House at any particular time. I suggest that what we are trying to do is wrestle with the question and try to determine where

those guidelines are. When we have that we will make it available for the whole world to see, and, once that is done, then the debate can continue.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I'm still waiting for the answer to my question. Will you consider referring what you admit is a difficult and complex issue to a special committee of this legislature?

HON. MR. ANDREW: — No.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Why not?

HON. MR. ANDREW: — I just indicated, Mr. Speaker, what we intended to do. I think it was fairly clear what we intended to do. That is our policy; that is the process we're going to follow. If they object to that; if they disagree with that — fine, they disagree with it. We are proceeding with that particular course of action.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, a brief supplementary to the minister. He has indicated that by the process which he has outlined, there will be guidelines emerging to govern the conduct of public servants. Will he give this House an assurance that no public servants will be penalized for their conduct until such guidelines are made clear, and they know what rules apply to them?

HON. MR. ANDREW: — Well, Mr. Speaker, what is the hon. member suggesting? Is he suggesting, for example, if the deputy minister of finance is to go out on the steps of the legislature and shout that the budget was a hoax, that we shouldn't have had a deficit, that we shouldn't have done this and we shouldn't done that, that somehow we're supposed to stand there and say, "No, we will disregard that, we will leave him in his place"? Clearly, Mr. Speaker, we have to apply common sense to address that type of thing. The problem that we are finding and the problem that we are trying to determine is that fine line between . . . Let me just give you an example to show the broad range of this, Mr. Speaker.

Let's suppose that instead of the deputy minister of finance doing that, it was a janitor at the Department of Highways at Weyburn that did it. Obviously, one case is clear this way, and, obviously, the other case is clear this way.

The problem you run into is when those two meet in a gray area; that's what we are trying to define. That's what the guidelines are going to try to do, Mr. Speaker. We will do that with all haste. We will check with all the other provinces as to the types of guidelines they have, as to what the federal government has, as to perhaps some impact from the professional part of the civil service across this country, and then will come forward with the guidelines, Mr. Speaker, for all the world to see, including the members opposite.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — One further supplementary. In constructing these guidelines, would you also have reference to the comments made by the Rt. Hon. Mr. Clark and his colleagues in the House of Commons with respect to the rights of public servants and their right to speak out?

HON. MR. ANDREW: — We will take cognizance of that. We will take cognizance of the policies that Howard Pawley has in place, as we did with the Wolfgang Wolff

commission. We even asked the hon. member to present his views in front of that. If you want to prepare a document for me, perfectly be prepared to do, sent it forward to me. We're prepared to listen to anyone.

Corps of Commissionaires — SPC Building

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labor, and it concern the Saskatchewan Power Corporation and the policy that they have with respect to building security in Regina. It has been reported to me that apparently due to a change in policy, members of the Corps of Commissionaires are no longer being employed, or a number of them have been given notice that they will no longer be on the security staff at the head office building in Regina, and that these layoffs are effective December 19.

In view of the policy of the government of over a very long period of time to give employment to members of the Corps of Commissionaires, who are for the most part persons who have served in the armed forces of Canada, could you confirm that there has been a change of policy, and can you confirm that a number of Commissionaires have been given notice that they will no longer be employed at the head office building in Regina?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I was made aware of the situation yesterday. I contacted the office, and discovered that the corps has been revised, or has been rescinded, but there was no policy made from Sask Power. Evidently there was a letter came from the Corps of Commissionaires, and we rescinded that yesterday.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, I am not quite sure and I'm genuinely not quite sure what information you were conveying. Are you saying that the layoff notices which were sent out to the members of the Corps of Commissionaires have been rescinded, in your word, and that they are no longer effective?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — That's correct.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, I refer to a notice which appeared in the *Leader-Post* of November 24, dealing with tenders of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation and tenders for security services. I'm asking the minister (and they refer to the supply of security services required at the Saskatchewan Power head office building in Regina, Saskatchewan): when did the power corporation adopt the policy of tendering the supply of security services at the head office as opposed to using the Corps of Commissionaires?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of that. I just said that the Corps of Commissionaires sent the letter of Sask Power. It was not a policy of Sask Power to do that. And we rescinded the thing yesterday.

Workers' Compensation Board

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I have another question of the Minister of Labor and it's very brief. You said some time ago that you were planning on introducing legislation on the workers' compensation board before Christmas . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You

did today? I missed it. My apologies.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Chairman and Mr. Minister, just to confirm the last question, Mr. Speaker and Mr. Minister, can you advise whether the content of the bill which you introduced today will be substantially in the terms of the bill which was before the House last March?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, the first reading is coming on Monday, and you'll hear the contents of the bill next week.

Minimum Wage

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker and Mr. Minister, I have a question to the Minister of Labor concerning minimum wage. I wonder if he can advise the House when we might expect an announcement with respect to minimum wages and whether or not they will increase on February, they not having been increased on January 1?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Mr. Speaker, I cannot give the member opposite any details of the minimum wage proposal. It has to go through our cabinet, and I'm not seeing any date whatsoever on the announcement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Job Creation for Northern Saskatchewan

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Social Services. The Minister of Social Services announced on November 22 that the federal and provincial governments were contributing 50 million toward job creation to create 2,700 jobs in Saskatchewan. Earlier this week the federal government committed a further \$318,000 to the province to go toward Saskatoon, Battleford and Wilkie. I took note of the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan's comment in regards to consideration for northern Saskatchewan. But, can the Minister of Social Service advise this House as to how much of the funds allocated under the job creation program is earmarked specifically for northern Saskatchewan, where unemployment rates are as high as 95 per cent in most northern communities?

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Speaker, the amount that will go to northern Saskatchewan, as you call it, will depend on the number of applications and the kind of applications that come into the job creation program.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Sale of Crown Petroleum and Natural Gas Rights

HON. MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Speaker, just before I read this I want to apologize to the opposition, because in most cases I was provided with a copy of a ministerial statement was provided with a copy of a ministerial statement when I was in opposition. I just simply forgot, and it dawned on me about five minutes ago, so I'll apologize for not sending a copy across.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to announce the results of the December 7 sale of crown petroleum and natural gas rights. Bids totalling \$15.4 million were accepted . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. THATCHER: — . . . surpassing by a considerable margin the bonus bids received at any of the previous sales held this year. In fact, one has to go back over two years to the boom times prior to the national energy program to find land sales with higher revenues.

The sale this week represents another step forward by the petroleum industry in Saskatchewan. I would like briefly to mention some of the highlights. Four exploration permits with total bids of over \$2 million were sold in southwestern Saskatchewan, an area of the province where there has been little drilling the last few years. I may point out, Mr. Speaker, that there's a subject of some question during my estimates, that area was pointed out. We are delighted that strong companies such as Bow Valley will now be active in southwestern Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. THATCHER: — Seven drilling reservations were sold for \$2.8 million, with the highest prices in the Lloydminster heavy oil area. Bids for the 160 leases sold totalled \$10.4 million. A group of companies led by Argyll Resources made the top bid of almost \$500,000 for a 320-acre lease near Alameda. Most of the leases sold were in southeastern Saskatchewan.

We are ending the year on a positive and promising note. Crude oil production is at capacity. I believe the severe marketing problems we faced earlier are behind us. Drilling activity has shown a significant increase in the second half of the year. The results from the land sale add to the momentum that has been building as we approach a new year. The oil industry is responding very well to the recovery program this government implemented in July.

Mr. Speaker, I would like also to pay a very special tribute to the professional people in the Department of Energy and Mines who have accepted the challenge put to them by the government to turn this oil industry around. I would like to send my compliments on behalf of this government to the professionals in the Department of Energy and Mines who have played a very significant role in having this very promising sale go so well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I join with the Minister of Energy in complimenting the department and the professionals in the department who have put together this sale. It does appear that there is some indication of the oil industry in western Canada reviving. It is far from the peaks it reached in 1980, but naturally all of us are pleased that there is some indication that the difficulties which followed the introduction of the national energy program in October of 1980 are being relieved, and are being effectively alleviated. That crude oil production is at capacity is I think surprising to no one, since everyone expected that crude oil production would come back to capacity as it has everywhere else. The test will be whether or not drilling increases. And certainly a land sale gives some indication that drilling will increase. And while it is, I think, far too soon to record the recovery of the industry, I join with all hon. members in the good news that the minister has given us that land sales were brisk and that this may presage an expansion in drilling, perhaps unlikely for some time, but perhaps to the very high levels we enjoyed in 1980.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Cosmopolitan Industries, Sheltered Workshop — Saskatoon

HON. MRS. SMITH: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to inform the House that a very ambitious project providing Cosmopolitan Industries of Saskatoon with a new sheltered workshop was approved by cabinet yesterday. Three community organizations, the city of Saskatoon and our government have agreed to contribute toward the project estimated to cost \$2.1 million. Mr. Speaker, it is the largest co-operative project of its kind in this province's history. Such co-operation and dedication bodes well for persons who have a handicap.

The existing centre is in dire need of replacement. It is severely overcrowded and without room to expand. It cannot properly accommodate the 300 persons that are presently attending the centre. Mr. Speaker, the new centre will enhance the quality and range of services, giving persons who are handicapped an ever greater opportunity to participate in and contribute to the social and economic fabric of their community and their province. The new facility is being purchased at a price of \$1.5 million with renovations and equipment estimated to cost an additional \$600,000. It will double the space available to the centre.

I am pleased to announce, Mr. Speaker, that our government will provide \$450,000 toward the purchase and renovations of the new 55,000 square foot facility. In addition Cosmopolitan Industries will receive from the province an estimated \$600,000 in this fiscal year for operating costs.

The existing centre will be sold by Cosmopolitan Industries to the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation for \$700,000. Funds will be applied by Cosmo Industries to the project. Mr. Speaker, the co-operative funding arrangements consist of \$200,000 from the Cosmo clubs of Saskatoon; \$400,000 raised by the Kinsmen foundations; \$145,000 by Cosmopolitan Industries; and the city of Saskatoon has given \$200,000.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate members of the organization and residents of the city of Saskatoon, not only for their initiative but their contribution to the project. We have all joined in this undertaking with the goal of involving persons who are handicapped as fully as possible in the mainstream of life. Our government, Mr. Speaker, welcomes the opportunity to be involved, and I am certain that all members share with me in wishing future success to Cosmopolitan Industries and the best in the new year of 1983. Along with the member for Thunder Creek's statement on moneys coming in, perhaps it is an indication of competition with compassion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the minister in congratulating Cosmopolitan Industries in Saskatoon for the undertaking which they are carrying out in Saskatoon. I worked with the group very closely, as a minister, and know that the citizens of Saskatoon and the Cosmos are very aggressive and very caring people when it comes to dealing with handicapped people.

Mr. Speaker, I realize as well that the Kinsmen organization has for some time, through Telemiracle, been very involved in helping handicapped people in sheltered workshops as well as in many other areas. It's also well known that the Kinsmen have pledged \$1 million to a facility in Regina, better known as a rehab centre, a project that was worth some \$43 million, which many in the province have been waiting with great

anticipation for the same minister or the Minister of Health to come to some decisions on, so they can move forward with this \$43 million project which has been put on hold since April 26.

We in opposition look forward to the day when the minister comes to the House and announces that the Kinsmen and workers' comp, as well as the government in Saskatchewan, have carried out that agreement, and once again I congratulate Cosmos in Saskatoon.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Berntson that Bill No. 45 — **An Act to establish a Program to Facilitate Financing the Purchase of Farm Land** be now read a second time.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, thank you very much. It's so kind of the Minister of Finance.

I want to begin by just expressing a word about the process here. I have been in this House the same number of years as the Deputy Premier, the member for Souris-Cannington, and Mr. Speaker, and a very few others. I have never seen . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I am dealing directly with the bill. I have never seen this process before. I have not in my years in the legislature ever witnessed a refusal to the opposition to adjourn a bill with less than one sitting day after it was given second reading. I have never seen that. I have never seen that with a minor bill, much less a bill that is stated to be one of the prime bills of the legislative session.

I want it known that I object to that process. I object to ramming things through this legislature. There comes a time in the life of any government when, if the opposition is too obstructive, you have no choice but to get out the battering ram, but I am amazed that the government thinks that time has come with less than one full sitting day of the discussion on the bill.

The bill was given second reading Monday night; there were a few speakers late Tuesday night (which was private members day), and then Wednesday, before a full sitting day had passed, the government was not putting up any speakers and was denying adjournment. That, I think, is without precedent. I object to it. I think it shows the same kind of contempt for this legislature that we saw by members opposite when they were in opposition. They showed a continuous contempt for this legislature. They acted as if it didn't really matter whether they were prepared or otherwise, or whether they gave it their full attention or otherwise. They seem to have the same contempt for the legislative process when in government because it doesn't really seem to matter whether we have a reasonable opportunity to debate the bill. The members opposite seem to take the proceedings of this legislature to be largely irrelevant, the debates largely irrelevant. I say that the length of time that you have given us to consider this bill is not reasonable. It is unprecedented. I'm just amazed that the battering ram is on in

less than a full single day. I'm really amazed that we have come to this . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I'm sure it will get worse. It will get worse.

I would like to remind the member for Souris-Cannington that arrogance is something that grows. You people have just got started. It isn't on every subject that I agree with the Liberal leader, but he may have been accurate in saying that you people have achieved the level of arrogance in seven months that took the NDP government 11 years. I shudder to think how members will treat this Assembly given three or four years in harness.

MR. SPEAKER: — The item that is before the Assembly is second reading of Bill No. 45 and I would ask the member to come to the subject before us.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly respect Mr. Speaker's ruling. I may have dwelt on the subject too long, but it does bear directly on the bill that's before the House. If members will bear with me for a minute while I find Bill No. 45.

It is not so much the goals of this bill that I think we object to, although I want to admit that from the vantage point of all my vast farming experience and all the advice I get from all the farmers in Regina Centre, from the vantage point of all that wisdom, experience, and advice, I have concerns about the goals of the bill. I want to express those concerns.

I personally have a concern that this bill may not achieve its objectives. I have always believed that if you are dealing with a finite quantity, as farmers are fond of saying, the one thing you have to say about land is that they're not making any more of it. If you're dealing with a finite quantity and you take some artificial step like reducing interest rates, it strikes me that elementary rules of economics would suggest that all you're going to do is increase the price. I fear that, in fact, that may be the case by lowering interest rates. Unless there is thought to be an endless supply of farmland on the market, and I don't think that's what we're suggesting, then I'm afraid that all we are doing, at a very considerable expense to the public, is simply increasing the price.

I very seriously question whether or not this is going to get any new people into farming, or whether or not it will simply facilitate ever larger holdings. There are so many issues before this Legislative Assembly upon which we give lip service but are really doing nothing about. I will not get into the details but I refer to such things as accessibility which we all support, but seem to do so little about. And keeping the size of farms down to what I would find as a reasonable limit is something we all give lip service to, but I really wonder what we're doing about it.

I really wonder if we think this bill is going to facilitate more farmers getting into the industry, or is it going to simply facilitate the gathering of larger holdings?

I have not been pressured by farm credit corporation to do a lot of legal work for them. I can't begin to understand why. I thought myself a very good conveyancer but somehow or other I haven't been asked to do a lot of work for them. I have, however, had some contact with them. Their security requirements are quite high. Their security requirements are higher than the banks when they're in the business of lending money. They don't do a lot of that now. They're certainly higher than the credit unions. Their security requirements are high. Their interest rates are reasonable, but their security requirements are high. You have to have at least one to one, and if there's any difference in the value of the land you're buying, compared with what you're putting up

for security, you've got to have two for one — two quarters for every one you want to buy.

That isn't going to get new farmers. It isn't going to get new people into the farming industry. Never mind such trifling problems as buying machinery.

I really wonder what this bill is going to accomplish. I really wonder if we need to, at considerable public expense, subsidize farmers with considerable assets. You must have considerable assets to deal with farm credit corporation. And you really wonder if they need to be subsidizing those with considerable assets to enlarge their holdings.

I was waiting for some member of the government benches to get up and give us a reasoned explanation as to how this bill facilitates new people in the industry. What we got from the three or four who trifled with the bill, who spoke on it, was yet another series of gloating about the election past, and how this bill marked the difference between government benches who know what the people think and the opposition who clearly don't. I wished we had got something of a little more substance than that from those members who bothered to speak on it. I frankly have a very serious question about whether or not this bill will facilitate the transfer of land to new people.

I recall when we took office, and I say we, the NDP government in 1971. I recall those days, campaigning. One of the problems which we said we would address was that the average age of a farmer in Saskatchewan was 57 years of age. I'm not sure what the current stats are, but I suspect that they are still a matter of concern. The land bank went some distance toward assisting new people getting into farming. I would admit that it did not provide the cure-all which had been hoped for it, but that's not to say that the land bank was not in its own way a success. It was getting new people into farming, and getting additional farmers on the land. To that extent it succeeded. I think time will show that the land bank succeeded to an extent that this bill will not, if your goal is to get new people into farming.

I really would have been interested, but I guess we're not going to get any more speakers from the government benches. I really would have been interested in a clear explanation of the goals of this bill from the government. I listened with some interest to . . . I read with some interest, rather. I was not in the House when the hon. member for Cannington gave his second reading, but I read the transcript with some interest, and I did not get from that speech a clear definition of what the goals of this bill are. I really wish we had got that. It would have made it a good deal easier for the public to decide what they were going to do with it, and a good deal easier for the public to decide what they were going to do with it, and a good deal easier for this debate to have taken a sharper focus earlier.

None of that was forthcoming, Mr. Speaker. What we got was a bit more gloating and an explanation as to what the content of the bill was.

AN HON. MEMBER: — What's your permit ticket number, Ned? Tell us.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — The member for Wilkie wants to know what my permit number is.

I want to say about this bill and about all farm bills, I'm sure there are jurisdictions (Ontario is probably one; New York state is probably another) where members who live in urban ridings can be unconcerned about farm issues. That is not the case in Saskatchewan. My constituents are almost as directly affected by the health of the farm

industry as many rural members. To that extent it is incumbent in this province for all members, be they urban or otherwise, to take an interest in the farming industry, and to be informed about farm issues. To that extent I make no apology for being part of a debate on what is purely a farm bill. It does affect my constituents. I would be the first to admit that, and I'd make no apology to the hon. member for Wilkie for injecting myself into this debate.

Having stated my concerns, however, about Bill 45, I want to say that you have one thing going for you with respect to the broad goals of the bill. You held this bill up before what I describe as the ultimate court, the court of public opinion in election. You got elected. I would be prepared to admit that this bill was a factor in that election. It was one factor, but it was a factor . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Well, I said earlier, and I'm not going to transgress the rules of this House, as you are doing by interrupting, but I said earlier that we are not stalling the bill. I recall no instance of a major bill in which the opposition have not been given a few days to consider it, on which the battering ram has been out almost immediately the bill was given second reading. I recall no instance of it. I am not delaying this bill. I am giving it some debate, something members opposite didn't bother with, but, as I say, I am close to transgressing the rules, and I want to avoid doing that. I want to admit for your benefit that you did hold this bill up before the ultimate court of public opinion. It seems to have passed the test. So with regard to the broad goals of the bill, while I have my reservations as a participant in a democratic process, I have to admit that you could at least make the honest argument that an election was held on this issue and you got elected. To that extent it is more difficult to oppose the broad goals of the bill than if an election had not taken place. A bill has to be judged in second reading not just on its goals but in broad terms on how it's going to meet those goals. It must be judged not just on the view of the horizon which you people have which I would have been delighted to hear you define. I listened for it and did not get it in the little blather that came from members opposite. A bill should also be judged in principle on the effectiveness and the fashion in which it's going to reach those goals. I have never seen, in the years I have been involved in the legislative process (and that predates by some times the years I have been elected), a bill which is such a sharp transgression of the ordinary principles of civil liberties, never mind drafting, as this bill. For all the disparaging comments I may make about members opposite, I really wonder if you intended what you are doing in this bill. I really wonder if you gave this bill the careful thought that you should have before you introduced it, because I know the process. The process is the public servants, the vast majority of whom work long hours and have a sincere concern about the public who pay their salaries, approach it from a different point of view than you and I. They want to be sure the bill can be administered. That's important to them because they are going to be charged with that responsibility. You people, or whoever may replace you as government . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — You?

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Well, yes, I suppose it may well be us. The government of the day is going to hold them responsible for administering the bill. That is their primary task. Their primary task is not to define the goals. They leave that to us, to you in your role, and to us in ours. Their job is to administer. A bill is drafted from the point of view of how easy it is going to be to administer. I say that this bill is a public's servant's dream. But from the point of view of legislators, and the point of view of people who should be concerned about the welfare of the public and their civil liberties and the fashion in which they are going to deal with. We should be shocked at this bill.

I want to refer to a number of sections. I want to refer to section 6, the section that deals with the overpayment . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I am explaining why I am having difficulties supporting this bill, and I make the argument that I may have difficulty supporting the bill — I may have difficulty supporting the bill — either because of the goals of the bill or because of the form it takes, and I may have difficulty in supporting it in principle on either of those two grounds.

I've said that I have some problems with the goals that this bill defines. I think it's not likely to reach its — I'm not sure what those goals are. But my goals, if I were spending this amount of money, would be to assist new people in getting into farming. I think that is what this province needs. I don't think the farming industry we have needs even larger holdings.

I think that is, in this province, an alarming process. Holdings get larger and larger and larger, and I think we should be doing whatever we can to stop that. I think that's the proper application of the public funds.

I recall the area in which I grew up. There was a school — I think there were 17 pupils in school when I went, and 15 when I left eight years later; an elementary school. There was a church function which was financially viable. There was a community hall in that community. None of those things are there now, and that isn't because there are children in the district who don't go to school. I think that I could even say, with respect to that district, it isn't because the people who live there are any less religious, or any less faithful, in attending church. Certainly the community hall didn't disappear because people are no longer interested in recreation. They have a lot more time for that now than they used to. What it is is an indication that there are a lot fewer people living in that district now than there were.

They used to farm a half-section, a section; a section and one-half was large farm. Now it is a small holding and will not likely continue as a farm. A section and one-half now in the area where I grew up would likely be absorbed into a larger unit.

That's something that we should be concerned about. Because I think the rural community gave this province a flavor that I cherish. There was a sense of being able to cope with adversity. Much of the adversity and hardship was natural. Those communities gave this sense of co-operation, which I think is unique.

I spent a most enjoyable two and one-half years as minister of co-ops. One of the things I learned about Saskatchewan is that it is different. There is a difference between those who live in Saskatchewan and farm in Saskatchewan and those who live in Ontario and farm in Ontario. And that difference is the rural community. That sense of being able to cope with adversity and that sense of being able to co-operate simply doesn't exist elsewhere.

That, I think, related to that rural community that I grew up in. Had I grown up in Regina or Moose Jaw, I think I would not have had that sense of co-operation . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I'm not always proud of the company I keep but it's the same home town that the member for Thunder Creek has, so I'm not always proud of the company I keep. Indeed, I'm getting well off the subject, but the member for Estevan, the member for Thunder Creek and the member for Regina Centre all share one thing in common: we all grew up within five miles of each other.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Keep good company there . . .

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Yes, I say, I'm not always proud of the company I kept and it may have something to do with the obvious limitations I have today. But there's not an awful lot one can do about the company one keeps when one's young. I think there is a difference between life in Saskatchewan and life in other areas. I think that is something to be valued and treasured, and as the farms grow larger and those rural districts disappear, that quality is lost.

I ask you what this bill is going to do. What is the bill going to do to keep people living on small holdings? What is it going to do with respect to the number of farms? I ask members opposite to explain to members over here what that bill is going to do to increase the number of farmers and increase the number of people getting into farming.

I suggest it's not going to do an awful lot. I'm well aware that the average size grew under the land bank. I admitted when I was speaking that the land bank was not the outstanding cure-all. I shall put it somewhat different. The land bank was not the cure-all that we had hoped it would be, but to some extent it worked. I predict it worked to a degree that this program will not, if your goal is keeping young people on that land. I started into this area by saying that I can legitimately oppose a bill on second reading because I don't like its goals. I can legitimately oppose a bill on second reading because the fashion in which this bill seeks to arrive at those goals is unacceptable. And I frankly have some problems with this bill.

I hope no one here knows this from personal experience, except those members of the legal or accounting profession who've had to deal with it. But there was a similar section to section 6 in the Income Tax Act. The Income Tax Act allows the federal department to garnishee one's wages or bank account without ever obtaining a judgement. Anyone who's ever had to deal with it finds it absolutely abhorrent. They will garnishee your bank account for an amount which is often in dispute. But they just pick their figure, and they garnishee. I don't know a lawyer in the province of Saskatchewan or in this dominion who doesn't find that highly objectionable.

I say that's mild compared with section 6. At least with respect to the federal Income Tax Act, after they've drained your bank, after they've garnisheed your wages, you can dispute, because it's not a judgment. You can go to court and you can dispute the amount which they've claimed. In this system there's no such right to dispute it. I think members opposite will agree that in many cases where the government is claiming an overpayment, the precise amount of the overpayment will be in dispute. The precise amount of the overpayment will be in dispute. And the farmer (I guess nobody else but a farmer would be in receipt of an overpayment) will be saying, "No, there was no overpayment," or he will be saying, "No, the overpayment was \$1,200." And the Department of Agriculture officials will be saying, "No, the overpayment was \$10,000." Well, man, I'll tell you, when they file that certificate, I think it is, it's all over. It's about \$10,000. No right to appeal; no method of disputing the thing. I find that to be highly objectionable. Highly objectionable.

If you find the federal Income Tax Act, the provisions of that income tax act, to be objectionable, and as I say, I don't know a practising lawyer who doesn't, you have to be shocked at the contents of this bill. You have to be absolutely shocked at the contents of this bill. It is the grossest violation of civil liberties that I have seen in some time.

Well, I want to say to the hon. member that I have been in this House for seven years. For four years before that I was responsible for getting legislation ready to go to cabinet. It was one of those functions I served when I was in the Attorney General's department. I have never, never in those 11 years, 12 years, laid eyes on anything like this. It's just the grossest violation of civil liberties.

In the party of John Diefenbaker, none the less, in the party of John Diefenbaker, it is so out of keeping with the traditions of the Conservative Party. And I think some of the traditions of the Conservative Party are worth keeping and preserving. It is so out of keeping with your tradition of liberty, defensive individual rights, that I really cannot believe, I really cannot believe that you people actually intent to do what's going on here. I think the bureaucrats have slipped one past you.

AN HON. MEMBER: — You said that on Bill 16.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Yes, I did say it on Bill 16. I did say it on Bill 16 and I say it on this one. I think you people cannot be intending what you're doing. That's why, and I know this is passe now, that's why I think the motion, which was moved earlier, would have made some sense. The motion to have referred this to a special committee.

I want to go on to deal . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'd be delighted to hear the hon. member speak from his feet. It's somewhat hard to hear you speaking from your chair. I want to add as well, there is a process by which you may ask questions. If you do want to ask a question, I would yield to that, if you want to do that in a formal sense. If you want to ask questions from your seat, they are very hard to respond to. If the member for Kinistino wants to ask a question in a formal sense, so that I do not lose my right to speak, I would be delighted to do that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . If you want to ask a question, I hope you know the manner in which to proceed.

I want to deal with section . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I knew the member would have a good deal more courage in speaking from his seat than he would from the floor. I thought I could issue that challenge with some degree of safety.

I want to deal with section 8. I find this to be an unusual provision, to put it mildly, and it is so out of keeping with the principles of parliamentary democracy. I don't want to sound like a history professor, but when King John met the other nobles on the plains of Runnymede, one of the things they sought to establish was the right of the Assembly, as distinct from the executive, to control the public purse. For all the attention given to the Magna Carta, that battle wasn't won on the plains of Runnymede, but it was won with some hundreds of years and many lives shed. That battle was won; the Assembly controls expenditures.

That is not necessarily true of every democratic system. It's a good deal less true of our neighbors to the south. I am not being particularly critical of their system, but they do not have the tight legislative controls over the budgetary process that we have heretofore enjoyed as inheritors of the British parliamentary system.

The system is that this legislature controls and votes on all expenditures. The members opposite may say, "Surely that is just a formality with 55 members pitted against seven or eight, and soon to be nine. Isn't that just a formality?" I think that is not the case. Our role is not necessarily to defeat the budgetary bills and the appropriations. But surely we have a role in drawing to the attention of the public

what the government is doing and what we believe to be the shortcomings of the government. Surely that is our right and proper role . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, you are in this bill. In many ways that's the primary function of a legislature. It is a stage upon which those elected to it may play to the public. I use that not in any derogatory sense. I have been here enough years to respect this institution.

One of the interesting things about the legislature is that the longer you are here, the more you respect it. The more you respect the institution, the more you respect its traditions. Section 8 takes that away, because the money from the sale of the land bank land and the money in the Saskatchewan land bank fund does not go back into the consolidated fund, as is the case with, I'm satisfied, every other fund. I know of no others that wound up and didn't go back into the consolidated revenue. This does not happen here. Here it takes a short cut, not back into the consolidated fund. Presumably, there will not be a vote or subvote hereafter, it will simply go right into this fund. That is contrary to the traditions of our parliamentary system. It smacks of the kind of budgetary system that our neighbors to the south have. They have many funds which are not voted on year to year by the legislature. They have many funds, which are established by taxes, and the taxes go directly into the fund, and the House of Representatives and the state senates never see them; but that has not been our tradition. This seems to be something more of the American influence, the Iowa and Palm Springs influence, creeping into this legislature.

Our traditions have been that the budget and every penny that's spent is voted on each year by this Assembly. The opposition is given the opportunity in estimates and indeed in the appropriations bill, if they care to use it, to debate it, to draw to the attention of the public what they believe to be the shortcomings of the expenditures, and as I understand subsection (2) of section 8 (and I am not sure that I do understand it with great precision) I think we lose that right, because I don't think those moneys go into the consolidated fund and I am not at all sure that they will appear again in the estimates.

Another section that I really can't believe you mean . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. I've been fairly tolerant, and read the citation yesterday about going clause by clause through a bill on second reading, and it's citation 734 on page 224 of Beauchesne's, and I'll read it to you again:

The second reading is the most important stage through which the bill is required to pass; for its whole principle is then at issue and is affirmed or denied by a vote of the House. It is not regular on this occasion, however, to discuss in detail the clauses of the bill.

I think that's about as straightforward as anybody could put a rule, and I would ask you to abide by it.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly respect your ruling, and appreciate the advice. As the Speaker can imagine, I'm having some difficulty separating the principle from the detail because it seems to be part of a seamless web.

But I just want to mention a couple of other problems I'm having with the bill. One is that the provincial auditor will no longer be auditing; he may no longer audit the affairs of this bill, what this bill establishes. And I've got a problem with that. The member for Saskatoon Mayfair read in a previous debate the comment I had made about

accountants, and I expressed some irritation with the member for representing what was a joke to be a factual comment on accountants. It was said in the presence of accountants, and it was just intended to razz them a bit; it was supposedly a joke about their independence, their ability to be independent from the people who hire them.

Surely the whole function of the provincial auditor and the whole reason for having someone established by legislation, we are promised, is that he will be independent. He will feel free to criticize, to point out shortcomings, without fear of retribution. I think that's an important principle. Members when they were in opposition gave it a good deal of time. I had every respect for the member for Kindersley as he fought a long and sometimes lonely battle for this principle. I admired him. And I had hopes that when he arrived in the treasury benches, indeed arrived as a central figure in the treasury benches, there would be some change. Now, rather than strengthening the position of the provincial auditor, we see a sharp erosion. This is, I am sure, the only occasion in which the provincial auditor does not audit departmental accounts. Indeed, he audits all the crown corporation accounts with the exception of two or three crown corporations. They are the big crown corporations, but in numbers the provincial auditor audits the vast majority of them. Here we see a precedent and a sharp erosion of the provincial auditor's rights.

I want to just mention one other problem I have with this bill. That is the nose of the Tory camel sticking into the tent of the heritage fund (if you can pardon that convoluted expression). The heritage fund, heretofore, has not been a chequing account. I know that members, when they were in opposition, either didn't understand that (notwithstanding all the opportunity they had to acquaint themselves with the facts), or they were not terribly candid with the public during the election. But the heritage fund has never been a chequing account. It has never been something that anyone can run to when you need some money for something.

The heritage fund has been tightly controlled, has not been used for operated expenses. The heritage fund is a patrimony that we are saving for our children and our grandchildren. We realize that the vast majority of the money in the heritage fund comes from oil. Nobody knows what the lifetime of the wells are, but we know they're limited, and in terms of the life of this province they are very limited . . . (inaudible) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Would you check the light for the member for Regina Centre?

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I heard the cries of anguish from members opposite as I was silenced. I know that was heartbreaking. The weeping and gnashing of teeth was a sound harsh to my ears.

What we have in this bill is sharp departure from the idea that the heritage fund is a patrimony that we save for our children and our grandchildren. It's a sharp departure from that, because it says that the minister may run to it whenever need be and it isn't limited to capital projects in any sense . . . (inaudible) . . .

I don't know whether somebody is objecting to the content of what I am saying, or . . . I have accused members opposite of many, many nefarious things, but I will not accuse you of silencing my mike. I don't think that's something you've done. You haven't gone that far in trampling on the democratic principles in this province.

We have in this bill a sharp departure from that idea. I see this as the nose of the camel

peeking into the tent of the heritage fund, and if the Minister of Agriculture can run to it when he needs a bit, I suspect that you will see other ministers as well, and I suspect that this is the beginning of the end of the heritage fund as a patrimony for our grandchildren and our children's children. In fact, that's symbolic of what's wrong with this bill, and that is its very short-sightedness, its very short-sightedness. This is not an attempt to deal with what I believe to be the long-run problems in the industry. And again I recognize that I'm speaking from the vast experience I have had as a farmer. But I did grow up on a farm, and all the farmers in Regina Centre assist me with this bill, as I'm sure they assist the member for Regina North.

But as I said I see a long-run problem with the industry in that it is accumulating into fewer and fewer hands. I'm told in Texas, some of the U.S. states, farms are very, very large. And in substance as distinct from form it is not terribly different than what happened to Europe when the holdings got larger and larger with a different kind of elite, a different kind of nobility. Holdings accumulate in the hands of a few lords and barons.

What is happening is a slow process, but we are losing that small farmer, the farmer of limited assets and of perhaps limited income, but who thinks there is no life like farming and wants to do that. We're losing that person. He is not being replaced, and that's what I define as a problem, and I see that elsewhere. I spent some time in Texas and Oklahoma; I saw that kind of farming and I wasn't terribly attracted to it. I think it is probably efficient. I think it produces a fairly low food cost. I don't think the food costs . . . I don't think the costs of growing food in Texas on the Texas panhandle or in the orange groves of California are a whole lot more expensive there than they are . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I've had the amendment for three-quarters of an hour.

I don't think the costs of growing food there are any more than they are here, but I think they have a different quality of life in those communities. I don't see those communities getting together as we witnessed under the program which is now in its — if it's not finished — in its dying stages in the Department of Culture and Youth, the recreational and cultural facilities grant program.

I was delighted with that program, not for what it did to the province, although the recreational facilities in this province are a good deal better here than they are elsewhere. But I was delighted with that program because of what it told me about Saskatchewan people. Because the money that came out of that recreational and cultural facilities grant program . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — I think the member is straying a considerable distance from the subject. Could you turn to the subject at hand please?

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I am talking about the quality of life in Saskatchewan and how that . . . And I had got somewhat off the subject. I have to be fair and admit I had strayed to the edge of the topic. I wouldn't go any further but I think I have strayed to the edge of the topic, to its further perimeter. I'm getting help from the member for Turtleford.

But we lose that. We lose that. And I am sorry to see that happening. I think this bill is going to exacerbate the destruction of the Saskatchewan way of life. I think it is going to . . . We are going to lose the new entrant into the farming industry. And I think that's unfortunate. As I say I would be delighted to hear members opposite tell me from their feet where they think my experience in farming has left me short of the last word on this bill. I would be delighted in hearing that. The contribution of members opposite

however has been fleeting for that — the member for Rosthern in a vigorous and enjoyable speech and the member for Weyburn in a good speech.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Listen, guys. You can't elect 55 members and go wrong all the time. You have to hit one right sooner or later. I know you people have some severe problems with the make-up of your caucus.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! The member persists in straying and if you continue I will have to rule you out of order.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I am straying. I am testing the Speaker's patience and I should not be doing that. I want to at this point in time move an amendment, seconded by the member for Cumberland, that the motion be amended by striking out all the words after "That" and substituting the following therefor:

this House not now give second reading to Bill 45 because the draft regulations and federal-provincial agreements crucial to the implementation of this legislation have not been made public.

MR. YEW: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to enter into debate regarding this bill, namely Bill 45. One might wonder why a trapper like myself from remote northern Saskatchewan is entering into debate regarding Bill 45 related to the agricultural community. I feel, personally and for the people of my constituency, that we have just as much at stake as the farmers in southern Saskatchewan have with regard to Bill 45.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. YEW: — I proudly enter into debate and I also unanimously seconded my colleague's amendment. I was pleased to provide any support I could give to my colleague with regard to the debate and with regard to the amendment to this bill.

Now as I was saying earlier, you may wonder why a trapper from northern remote Saskatchewan is entering into debate with regard to an issue that is not prevalent in that constituency that he represents. Well, I want to say otherwise because I feel not only are we concerned about the agricultural sector and economy of our province, but we also contribute to that sector of our community.

We have in northern Saskatchewan an industry called wild rice harvesting. That is an important source of income. That is an important source of livelihood for many of our people in northern Saskatchewan. And that is very relevant to the issue that is in question here.

We also have training farms in the fringe areas of our constituencies. We have training farms in our constituencies, namely in the Cumberland House, we have seven farmers who are training to get involved in the agricultural sector. And in Green Lake, we have the Silver Lake farm and the Central farm. Now we have quite a number of people, local people from northern Saskatchewan who are seriously and sincerely interested in the farming community. In Ile-a-la-Crosse we have a training farm as well, with livestock for

people who have entered into a mixed-farm type of economic activity.

I feel that elsewhere as well we have others that are interested in the farming and ranching aspects of our economy. We have people in Beauval that have a fair number of livestock. At Canoe Lake and Jans Bay, we have people in the reserves, people in the Metis settlements, who are interested in mixed farming. My colleague for Athabasca has suggested that we have from Dillon and La Loche people who are just as interested in farming.

Now with regard to bill 45, as I've mentioned earlier, we have just as much at stake as the people in the farming communities. And I question some areas of that bill. They talk and jeer at the members of the opposition party about socialism, yet that bill spells complete dictatorship, complete dictatorship for that one minister. That one minister will control the investment by that small farmer who is desperately trying to make a living, desperately trying to earn a living for the family. And yet this one minister will have the power to do what he wants with that farm, with that section of land, with that farmer's mortgage, with whatever that farmer has worked all his life to get. And I feel that is grossly unfair.

But I have a question regarding Bill 45 and the lack of public input, the lack of public involvement, the lack of public information out in the rural communities. I question the members in government on their sincerity, their seriousness and the commitment they have for the people of his province. Are you, or aren't you, afraid to meet with the people of this province, the residents of our province, and discuss with them the implications, the guts of that Bill No. 45? Do you feel embarrassed? Do you feel guilty in some way about Bill No. 45? Why? I question, why are you trying to ram it down through this legislature, and ram it as well through the throats of all the people in the farming community? Why not meet with the public, meet with the rural communities, meet with the farming community, and discuss Bill 45, discuss Bill 46, and have a thorough review?

What are the benefits to the farmer? What are the possible implications to the farmer? I say we have just as much at stake because what has happened in northern Saskatchewan is a good example. They dismantled the ministry that's responsible for the northern administration district. The minister that should be advocating on behalf of northern residents actually implemented a program called something like the unification plan, or mainstreaming northern Saskatchewan, or the dismantling of northern Saskatchewan, without consultation with Northerners.

No one in northern Saskatchewan had any specific information, guidelines, whatever, from the minister or from this government, indicating to him or to her, or that council, or to that school board, that there was a program that was going to be implemented referred to as, "the dismantling of DNS." No one really knew what the objective was and no one had the opportunity to provide recommendations, to provide a submission, formal submission, indicating to the minister and to this government what it meant to the people of northern Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh yes, that's another area that we are interested in. It's related again to the farming community . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I say we have just as much at stake because what has happened in northern Saskatchewan is grossly unfair to the residents of northern Saskatchewan. It is very unfair.

Since the Tory budget presented here on November 24, our constituency offices,

particularly the member for Athabasca and myself, the member for Cumberland, have had numerous, numerous representations from various local councils, local advisory councils, local community authorities, the northern school board, people from AMNSIS, the native organizations, people from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, people for the Saskatchewan . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Order. I think the member is straying quite a ways off Bill 45. I would like him to stay on the subject please.

MR. YEW: — Pardon me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but as I stated yesterday I'm not all that well versed on the procedures of the House, the parliamentary procedures. I will try to stick as closely as possible to Bill 45, but you will have to excuse me once in a while, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but thank you very much.

As I was saying, with regard to the dismantling of DNS, we had no local public involvement, no local consultations. And I refer back to Bill 45. I question: has there been any real serious discussion held with the farming community? Have you had any public information meetings? Have you had any public inquiries . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The response was quite obvious on that one. I wish members opposite would enter the debate and let this poor trapper know just what they have done to have public involvement and information meetings.

As I referred just awhile earlier, I would suggest maybe we should go to the extent we did in northern Saskatchewan regarding uranium development. Why not have public inquiries? Maybe this is what is needed: public inquiry on Bill 45.

I gladly seconded the motion of my colleague. Again here we have an example of lack of information to the farmer, lack of information regarding Bill 45. And I want to read again the motion that I seconded:

That the motion be amended by striking out all the words after "That" and substituting the following therefor:

this House not now give second reading to Bill 45 because the draft regulations (and I repeat, the draft regulations) and the federal-provincial agreements crucial to the implementation of this piece of legislation have not been made public.

And now this is a fact. This is a fact. These two areas are very crucial. With regard to the draft regulations of that piece of legislation and with regard to the federal-provincial program, these are very serious areas that should be made public and that should receive public input by the farming community. That is why I rise today to enter into debate regarding Bill 45.

I find that the farming community is in need of information by the present administration, by the Conservative government. They need to know what Bill 45 means to them. They need to know what the implications will be 10 years, 15 years, 30 years down the line. The farming sector is important to the economy of this province and it's very important to the individual farmer. It is important to his family. It is a way of life for these people, and I unanimously support them in their deliberations, in their discussions, and in their concerns. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment placed here by my colleague, and I now adjourn the debate.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Is the Assembly ready for the question? The question is debate adjournment. The adjournment is defeated. The adjournment of the debate is defeated.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to address a few words to the House and I'm speaking to the amendment. The amendment deals with the fact that we do not have before us any regulations which we would expect to contain the framework of the broad scheme. The bill before us is a skeleton bill from which one cannot even devise what the government has in mind. There is no way anyone reading the bill could know what the government had in mind. You would not know whether interest rebates were going to be paid in any given amount to anybody for loans taken up from any particular source. None of that is in the bill.

We are calling for regulations to be promulgated. We are not saying that the bill should be defeated. We are saying that the bill should be delayed until we can assess whether or not it makes sense. That's what the amendment says: that the bill be now read a second time but that the regulations be promulgated in draft form so that people will know what we're voting on. That strikes me as being a perfectly reasonable thing for this House to ask for.

The House ought to have before it, in some form other than a press release, what the government has in mind. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we ought to have it in some form other than statements on the record of this House by the minister, which are not in any sense enforceable by anybody or binding on anybody. What we ought to have are some rights for the citizen in the bill, and if the government is unwilling to do that, as appears to be the case, then at least in the draft regulations. Members opposite suggest that some definition of rights is there. I invited any of them to participate in this bill and say to me what provision of the bill gives their constituent the right to get 5 cents. The right to get 5 cents is not there and it should be there. It should be there. There is nothing there now and we ought to have some broad scheme in order for us to vote.

No one asks that the whole thing be fleshed out. Everyone realizes that there must be regulations which flesh this out, but there ought to be something that we can touch and say, yes, we understand what they're saying. It is simply not there, except in press releases and speeches. It is not there in the bill, and we do not know what the regulations are.

But to come back particularly to the point I was making. It seems to me the scheme should be there. If it's not in the bill, it should be in the regulations. It's not there. I think I understand what the government is saying judging from their press releases, but I ought not to be asked to vote on the basis of the press releases, I ought not to be asked to explain this bill to my constituents on the basis of press releases. I ought to be able to say I've read the bill and I understand what the scheme is. I can't say that. Alternatively, I ought to be able to say, well I read the bill and I can't tell you what they mean, but they at least tell me they're going to pass these regulations. And I can't do that. I can't say what I think the regulations might say.

Let's turn to what the broad scheme of the act should be. It is my view that the farming in Saskatchewan, and particularly generational roll-over problems with respect to farming, ought to be dealt with on a few simple principles. A new farmer getting into farming who has enough money to have full title to all his land — by all means and we wish him well, everybody does. Where a farmer does not have enough for that, but

needs to have mortgage money, we wish him well as well. But we also say that farmers who only have a quarter of land, for example, ought to have something available to them to get an economic unit. Now the bill may provide for that, for all I know.

The members opposite say, "Where can anyone farm a quarter of land?" And of course, the members are entirely right. Nobody can farm a quarter of land. They must therefore have some other land. They must probably have at least two more quarters. Probably there's nowhere in Saskatchewan that you can have an economic farm of less than three quarters, unless you have an intensive livestock or an intensive agricultural operation of some kind. And members are quite right in saying that maybe three quarters is too small, and maybe we're looking at four or five.

I am saying that I would like to see a scheme which permits a person with one quarter to have four or five at his disposal while he's buying the rest. I don't know whether this bill does this. I can't tell from that bill and no one else can. I can't tell from the regulations because I don't have any before me. And therefore I feel that we are being asked to vote on something which is so devoid of content, except in press releases, that it's really unfair to ask us to vote for or against it.

I approve of the principle of the bill. I approve of the idea that mortgage money ought to be available. Our government in our time believed that there ought to be mortgage money available and it was through the farm credit corporation, and that there were another group of people who couldn't qualify for farm credit, who ought to be able to enter farming. That was our scheme. And that was through the land bank.

Now I think that those circumstances still prevail. I think that there are people who cannot qualify for farm credit corporation who should be permitted to enter farming. Now it may be that this bill will permit it, because maybe, for all I now, they're going to lower interest rates to 5 per cent. Because certainly the bill permits it, and how am I to know what's in the regulations? Except for the press releases. Maybe, therefore, my concerns are unfounded. But from what I know, which is scant, except for press releases which I have come to distrust, I don't know whether this group of farmers are catered to by this bill.

I have no quarrel whatever with the idea of providing mortgage money for young farmers. I just don't want it to be the only assistance available if, in order to get it, you've got to own two or three quarters for starters. Clear. If that's the minimum, if that's the threshold, then this bill, while desirable, is simply not doing the job. And I simply don't know.

Members opposite talk about net worth. There's nothing about net worth in the bill. I'm looking at it and there's not a shred about net worth in the bill. For all I know, the net worth can be a million dollars or five dollars. I simply don't understand it. And I'm not now asserting . . . I'd like to see these in the bill, but that's not my current argument.

Members opposite are suggesting that provision should have been in The Land Bank Act. But I'm saying that they were in regulations. Well all right, these people now propose to put them in the regulations, but they won't even show us the draft regulations. That's our point. That's our point.

Mr. Speaker, some hon. members are suggesting that we should be asking these questions in committee. Mr. Deputy Speaker, committee is not the place to get the provisions of draft regulations. Committee is for dealing with the provisions of a bill, in

the bill. And therefore, I come back to what I'm saying about regulations and the desirability of having them. We simply don't have them. I agree. I see no quarrel with the mortgage program, and therefore I will probably find myself voting for this bill, and voting against Bill 46. I want to make that clear.

But that is far from being fair to members of the House, asking them to vote for something which says, "The minister wants to make some mortgage loans. Do you agree? To whomever he says so?" No suggestions of what the interest rate shall be, no suggestion of who should qualify, none of the real guts of the program. In any mortgage program, as we all know, the guts of it is who qualifies and what rate of interest, and that, of course, by the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was what was promised in the election campaign.

You didn't promise a bill which said, "The minister will decide who gets the money and what rate of interest, and all decisions will be made by the minister." You said there would be a law, a law. You said there would be law which gave a farmer a right to get a mortgage at 8 per cent for five years. Well, you're not giving us that law. You promised a law which said that the interest rate thereafter would be 12 per cent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no suggestion in this bill that there is 8 per cent money available to anybody for five years or 50 years or five minutes. No suggestion that there is mortgage money available to anybody for 12 per cent for five years or thereafter or at all . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Members are suggesting that this will be in the regulations, and if they are unwilling to put it in the bill, as they clearly are, then our simple plea is: show us what the regulations are. They don't have to be passed, but show us what you have in mind, and then we can make an intelligent judgment as to whether your scheme is going to do the job that we think should be done.

We are, or at least on my part I am, in favor of a mortgage program. If members opposite think it is a good idea, I'm not going to stand in the way of some farmers getting mortgage money. I would like to know what farmers qualify, because it is my suspicion, not for anything I've got on paper except press releases, but it's my suspicion that the proposal they're putting forward is going to leave out a large group of young farmers because they simply won't be able to qualify.

It is reported to me in press releases, not in any bill or regulations, that money is going to come from the farm credit corporation. I don't know whether this is true. There's certainly nothing in the bill which . . . You won't find the words "farm credit corporation" in here. No. You certainly won't find that. You certainly won't find it in any draft regulations because there haven't been any. All you'll find is in press releases.

Some members opposite are even going farther and saying I should telephone someone. That's an interesting proposition. I'm presumably to advise a young farmer, "Yes, indeed. You go in there, and you start bargaining for some land, because I've made a phone call. And your banker will be very happy with the security of a phone call that I've made." I think probably the young person's banker would like a little something more. He would like the provisions in the act. Alternatively he would like to know what the regulations are.

It is my view that the proper procedure for the government is to explain what they have in mind, to tell us how they are going to set it up. Admittedly they can change it in regulations if circumstances change and if something comes up during the summer

when we are not sitting. But at least give us the benefit of knowing what your proposals are in the form of draft regulations. Then we would be able to make our arguments much more effectively. If members opposite think we don't seem to be focusing in as they would like, it's difficult to focus in.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to come back to the simple resolution which refers to whether or not we should have the draft regulations. I want to emphasize again that, as will be well known, I will not support Bill 46. I certainly would like to support a loan program because I have no objection to that principle. I would like to have just some glimmer of what I'm supporting based upon something other than a press release, some glimmer of that. I don't have it in the bill and I'm being deprived of the draft regulations. I don't have it in the bill and I am being deprived of the draft regulations. I think that that puts a member in a very difficult position who would like to support in principle a program which is not outlined in anything before this House.

AN HON. MEMBER: — You will have to decide one day to come off that fence. You are going to have to say yes or no.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, hon. members are suggesting that somehow to be for a bill means that one should stand up and say, "Aye, aye, I don't care what's in it. He says it makes mortgages; you like mortgages, therefore you should support the bill and never mind the terms of the act and never mind the terms of the regulations." I don't think that that is a responsible position for any legislator to take and I think that I ought not to be asked to take it. If forced, obviously I will have to make up my mind whether I can support a piece of totally inadequate legislation to do something I want done . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — A blank cheque . . .

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — . . . a blank cheque to do something I want done, or whether I will have to vote the other way, not because I oppose the idea of mortgages, but because I have no idea of what they are proposing.

I am asking the government to give us as members of this legislature some better opportunity to know what they have in mind. Therefore, I am asking that draft regulations be made available before we are asked to vote. That strikes me as being an absolute minimum that I ought to ask for if I am to do the job that the people of this province are paying me to do as a member of this legislature.

I am not here to cast my vote. I am here to bring such intelligence, as I may have, to bear on the programs, whether I am on the government side or the opposition side, and make some comments on them. I cannot in conscience do that with this bill because I have nothing to comment on except press releases. I think there is therefore a heavy obligation on the part of the government to make available the draft regulations.

AN HON. MEMBER: — The press prints the truth, don't they?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, members opposite suggest that the press prints the truth. The press prints what the ministers give them, and therefore I cannot possibly indicate what the level of truth is in that. And, I certainly wouldn't want to lay at the door of the press any responsibility for the accuracy of the statements given by ministers opposite. But I don't want to get led astray, Mr. Deputy Speaker; I want to get right down to the issue which I am raising.

I want to see those regulations. I believe that reasonable legislators have a right to see

the regulations or at least some outline of the regulations, even though the minister may say that they are subject to change. I think we ought to know all the sorts of things which would be in the regulations: who qualifies, what the interest rate is, and all the rest. I have nothing to go on, absolutely nothing except the press release of the minister. I think when I am called upon to vote, unfortunately I am not voting upon the press release of the minister, but I'm voting on the provisions of Bill 45.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I think that the amendment calling for the tabling of draft regulations is a reasonable one. I intent to support the amendment, because I think it is the sort of thing which everyone in the House ought to support, and I intend to press for as many details as I can of the program which is allegedly being introduced by Bill 45, but which is in no sense outlined by that bill.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I support the motion moved by my colleague, the member for Regina Centre, and seconded by my colleague, the member for Cumberland.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have before us a decision for this House to make to show the farmers of Saskatchewan whether the Tories are ready to lead them down a blind path, or whether they are ready to disclose what they plan on doing. I'm sorry that the minister isn't in, because I really would like to put a proposition to him or make a deal with him.

Why doesn't the minister stand up before this motion is voted on, because none of his colleagues dare stand up. They're not allowed to say anything, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They don't want to go to P.A. Because he won't be closing the debates, why doesn't the minister stand up and give the farmers of Saskatchewan and the rest of us an opportunity to know if they have some regulations ready to go — if they have regulations ready to go.

Yesterday in the hall one of the colleagues of the minister told me, "We can't put that into legislation. We can't write into legislation what the interest is. What if the interest goes to 35 per cent? The poor province is going to have that big, big load to bear." But they don't give a rip about the farmer; the farmer can pay the interest. The constituents of Weyburn can pay 35 per cent, but the province won't accept the risk.

So, what are you really saying in your legislation? Are you saying that you have some regulations ready to go or don't you?

AN HON. MEMBER: — . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . listen to that.

MR. ENGEL: — That's okay. We can listen to him and it sounds good.

Look at the bill for just a little bit, Mr. Speaker, to see what we're asking in the motion. We're saying that this House not give second reading now to Bill 45 because the draft regulations and the federal-provincial agreements crucial to the implementation of this legislation have not been made public. If you look at section 3(1), this is what they're expecting the farmer and the people of Saskatchewan to swallow. They're going to put into draft regulation 3(1) "Where a bona fide farmer", so they're going to tell us what a

farmer is . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Good, I'm glad he's here. I might have to repeat that challenge because if his half-baked colleagues are going to relay it to him he isn't going to get the deal straight, Mr. Speaker. So if you'll just bear with me while I tell him again the kind of deal I was going to make with him. The minister can stand up in his seat in this House without closing debate and just take three minutes to tell us whether or not he has some draft regulations ready to go, whether he has a deal . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Yes. And he can tell us whether he has some draft regulations ready to go, or whether his colleagues or the people in his caucus agriculture committee are right when they say that maybe the interest rates in the country will got to 35 per cent. He asks, "How much do you think the province can afford?" What he's saying is that the farmer's supposed to take the risk. The farmer's supposed to get in there and he's supposed to borrow the money and take that risk.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Well, he asked me to get up and close debate and I thought I would just . . .

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Speaker, the minister has just given us very clear evidence of how much we can trust him. I never asked him to close debate. I asked him to speak on this motion that's before this House and tell us what the regulations are. You maybe think it's funny. My constituents don't. My constituents don't think this is a laughing matter. My constituents don't think it's a laughing matter whether their interest rates are going to be . . . (inaudible) . . . intends to purchase farmland . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

I am not attacking the minister. I am just questioning how seriously you're taking this legislation. Section 3(1) says: "Where a bona fide farmer (they haven't told us in legislation or regulation or anything what a bona fide farmer is) intends to (so there's two words there that we can live with) purchase farmland (so he didn't say what they're talking about there) and meets the prescribed qualifications." We'd really like to know what that is. What are prescribed qualifications?

Let's just skip ahead and leave that one for a little bit and go over to section 5 and maybe one of the prescribed qualifications, Mr. Speaker, can be found in section 5(1): "The minister may acquire an applicant to forward to him . . ."

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! The hon. member is speaking to the amendment and has spoken to the bill. But I have cited on two different occasions that in second reading you're not allowed to deal with specific points of the bill but rather the principle of the bill and I would ask the member to stay on track.

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But the amendment that is accepted here says that we want some draft regulations. We want to see what the draft regulations are. Further on I'll get to federal-provincial agreements that are crucial to the implementation of this legislation.

Now what I'm trying to point out, Mr. Speaker, without getting into the details of the bill, is to see what he is going to say in draft regulation according to . . . And the basic principle is, who is going to qualify? Who is going to qualify for this legislation? Would you give me permission to just a read a little bit because I can't make any point any other way. The minister can authorize anybody at any time any place and in any manner and

then the minister will consider if it's appropriate or not, to see if that person qualifies. Now, that could say to me that if I have a young farmer down home and he doesn't please the local Tory canvasser when he's out canvassing for Tory memberships, if he doesn't please that Tory canvasser that's not going to be appropriate and the minister isn't going to give him the interest. That's exactly here. And we want some regulations to see if this is going to be a political bill that will buy the young farmers off with interest abatement. And if they don't agree to that, if they agree to that they won't qualify for his interest rates.

And I can't point that point out, Mr. Speaker, any other way than drawing definite attention to this clause. It's a blatant disregard for the legislation process, and I don't like it. Mr. Speaker, if you'll remember in the budget debate, I said that they are going to design a program that is so small that nobody can get into it, except he doesn't go to his MLA, gets some political pressure, and they'll get the interest rebate. And that's what this legislation says. That's what this legislation says. And I'm not prepared to buy that unless they give us some draft copies of what the regulations are. Stand up, any one of you. Be bold enough to stand up and tell us what it is.

I'd like to see the member for Morse stand up in this debate and tell me what he thinks is going to be in there, and tell me that I'm not right, that he hasn't got the power to do that is the political process, and I think that is disregarding the legislation.

Look at section 6, Mr. Speaker. Look at section 6 just for a minute . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes. In this next section, Mr. Speaker, and the point I am trying to make is: when the farmers' rights are concerned you wait for legislation, but when his rights are concerned, what happens? Let's say they make an overpayment. Why didn't you put that into regulations? Why didn't you put that into regulations? They didn't put that into regulations, they spelled it out line by line what's going to happen if he gets a nickel too much. If he gets five cents too much they know what to do with him, but they don't tell us where he's going to get his first nickel.

I think this is the most dastardly bill I ever saw. It's a terrible piece of legislation. I support the principle of an 8 per cent rebate, but it doesn't say 8 per cent in this legislation . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It will? Okay. Let's have a vote on this motion and see where it's there.

Mr. Speaker, I recommend that all the members of this House, for the reasons I've outlined, support this motion that we take a look at what the regulations are.

There's the other area I could talk about that's a really big one for me, and that's the federal-provincial agreement. I've been talking to people. I've been talking to people at farm credit corporation, and I think that agreement should be tabled. I really do. I made my points very clearly on first reading debate, but I think it's crucial to the implementation of this legislation to prove if they are going to ride with the heavy political hand, and if they designed a cute little piece of legislation here that's going to ride on the backs of land bank, and it's going to be financed by land bank, and given expressly to their dear little friends that the minister approves of. If that isn't the case, stand up like a man and vote and show us what the regulations are. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Speaker, it's with a great deal of displeasure, I suppose you would say, that I rise to speak on the motion. The fact that we need a motion like this in

the Assembly dealing with what was to be one of the crown jewels of the Tory election plan, the fact that Bill 45 is so vague and so uncertain that we would have to bring in a motion of this type that asks for the Bill 45 regulations to be tabled so that we could see who is going to apply for the loan, who will be eligible, what kind of interest rates will be in our place, and how many people will be involved in it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think the members opposite have a difficult time understanding what the legislative process is all about by introducing a bill like this without any regulations being applied to it. Mr. Speaker, I would challenge the members in the back benches to tell us whether or not in fact they have seen the regulations. Mr. Speaker, you will have noticed that a number of members held up papers and claim they are the regulations dealing with Bill 45. I would like the press to note that the members in this Assembly have the regulations to Bill 45 at their desks and are unwilling to share them with the opposition.

I find this even more disturbing, Mr. Speaker, to know that the regulations which apply to this bill are here in the House, according to the members' own words, and they are unwilling to share them with the opposition so that we can make a value judgement on Bill 45, and the lack of information in it.

Mr. Speaker, the reason for bringing in a bill this vague and this loose is very obvious. What it does is not only give the minister of the department the power to change at will the regulations and the whole idea of what the bill is all about, but also to decide who is eligible to cancel agreements, because the regulations do not specify who has what rights. But it gives the right, Mr. Speaker, to bureaucrats in the department and takes the power away from this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the very principle of a democratic system means that bills of this type and major disbursements of money for a major program should be debated in this Assembly, and not in a department and certainly not by the bureaucrats who the Conservative Party bring in. Mr. Speaker, this is the message that we will be taking to the far movement in the province of Saskatchewan today that the Tory Party is not willing to bring the regulations into this Assembly, is not willing to flesh out a bill. We will see through amendments in committee whether they are willing to accept any of those, but at this point it doesn't look like it. But whether they are ready to abrogate the power of this Assembly, not only to the cabinet but to the bureaucrats, and take it out of this forum so they can manipulate and, as the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg so aptly outlined, use political patronage in this program.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell that according to the numbers that have recently come out, there are 300 more bureaucrats in the civil service today than there was on April 26, even though there has been a freeze on hiring. It would lead one to wonder who these people are. I think we do wonder about the capability of many of those bureaucrats.

Mr. Speaker, as has been mentioned a number of times, being left in regulation is even the most fundamental part of it. Who is going to be operating this program? We have seen in news releases that the farm credit corporation is going to be responsible for carrying out that mandate. I would just like to read into the record some statistics on farm credit corporation that have happened in the last 10 years.

Back in 1972, 1,694 farmers borrowed money from the farm credit corporation. In 1981 and 1982, 1,152 were eligible for loans and received loans — a decrease of

540-odd farmers receiving loans out of the farm credit corporation in 10 years. Simply what this program does is maybe move the program back to where it was in 1972, a program that has been failing in many senses in the province of Saskatchewan. I say, Mr. Speaker, that the farmers of Saskatchewan will be worse off after this program is introduced by far than they were in 1972 when the farm credit corporation was very active in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's a very neat trick, the fact that the regulations have not been brought in; that the bill is so vague that no one knows what it's about. I think it's a very neat trick, as well, that the Conservative government would use a Liberal plan, the farm credit corporation, to operate what they call a great Tory plan, but also use a New Democratic plan, the land bank program, to fund it. I wonder just how they are going to sell this out in the country where there is no input from this government. They're using the land bank program to finance it, the Liberal government's program of farm credit corporation to administer it, and I'm just wondering what the input has been from the Conservative Party and the Conservative government.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the whole role I believe of the legislature in debating bills and debating programs is at stake in this bill, again as it was in Bill 16, where the power is being taken away from this Assembly and moved to another form. I would challenge, once again, the backbenchers to rise in this debate because we only have been debating a major bill of consequence for the province of Saskatchewan for a couple of days.

I would challenge the members to add up the number of minutes that they have debated on this bill, one of their major bills, in the past two days. And I challenge the press, Mr. Speaker, to do an analysis on how many hours of debate have gone on in this House and how many hours have been spoken by the 54 members of the government, and how many hours have been spoken by the eight members of the opposition. I think that it would be a very interesting debate out in the constituencies at the time of the next election when we hold up these tally sheets to see how much each member has spoken in this Assembly. Because, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the involvement of members in this debate has been very, very little, to say the least.

Mr. Speaker, the motion which we are debating at the present time is very straightforward, and in a very narrow sense says we are not willing to accept the bill at this time, until we have a look at the regulations which will go with it. But I think it's very obvious that without the regulations this bill is wide open to interpretation by the minister for political reasons, or for whatever purpose. And we are simply having a great deal of difficulty with our constituents, the farmers of Assiniboia and Shaunavon constituencies for example, in trying to explain to them how a promise that was made prior to April 26, that every farmer in the province was going to be eligible for \$350,000 at 8 per cent, has now become a program which will include a few hundred farmers.

Mr. Speaker, because of the fact that the regulations are not here, we don't know how many farmers will be eligible. One of the main reasons of this Assembly in spending people's money is to know how many dollars will be involved. It's a very important part that each of us should be very concerned about. I don't believe that any of you here know how many dollars will be spent in this program next year, or the year after. And maybe that's why you're not putting anything in the legislation, and everything is in the regulations, because you're not going to be spending anything, and you're not very proud of that fact that you're going to be using simply the land bank operation to

finance it and the federal government to administer it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude my remarks by saying that it is indeed a sad day when a bill like Bill 45 would be brought into this Assembly and asked to be voted on without any regulations attached to any of the sections so we know what is happening. Therefore, I urge all members, first of all, to become involved in the debate on the motion; secondly to vote in favor of the motion so we have the regulations here.

Amendment negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 8

Blakeney	Lingenfelter	Shillington
Thompson	Koskie	Yew
Engel	Lusney	

Nays — 41

Muller	Smith (Swift Current)	Martens
Birkbeck	Boutin	Rybchuk
Andrew	Weiman	Caswell
Berntson	Tusa	Young
Lane	Hodgins	Domotor
Sandberg	Sutor	Maxwell
Hardy	Sauder	Embury
McLeod	Petersen	Dirks
McLaren	Glauser	Hepworth
Garner	Meagher	Morin
Klein	Schmidt	Myers
Katzman	Parker	Zazelenchuk
Currie	Smith (Moose Jaw South)	Baker
Schoenhals	Hopfner	

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, just a few brief comments in closing debate on this bill. The reason I want to make these comments is to ask the legislature if in fact they believe that the opposition were sincere in their protestations relative to the regulations, etc. I say that seriously, Mr. Speaker. We saw the opposition critic for agriculture on TV, 15 minutes after the news conference announcing that this program is going to be introduced in the legislature, hailing the virtues of the program. Then all of a sudden they found some new constituency, and they came in here and they started crying and moaning and groaning because the legislation doesn't deal with enough of the specifics dealt with in regulation and that is somehow bad now.

I want to tell you a little bit about the history of the members opposite when they were in power on the question of regulation. I deal with section 11 of The Agricultural Incentives Act, Mr. Speaker. I want you to hear what it says. It says:

Every loan made under section 10 shall bear interest, including interest in respect of any amount of principal or interest of the loan that is in arrears, at

such a rate or rates as may be prescribed by the regulations.

It doesn't say 8 per cent, it doesn't say 12 per cent. It says as prescribed by regulations. Then we go to The Land Bank Act, Mr. Speaker. Section 12 says, and this is lease of land from the commission, qualifications and who may apply, that any person with all these things, one of them being, meets requirements established in the regulations respecting net worth and net income . . . In regulations, Mr. Speaker. Then, Mr. Speaker, again in land bank, section 23:

Every loan made under section 22 shall bear interest as such rate as may be prescribed by the regulations.

You know we saw the flip-flop of hailing the virtues of the program to a vicious attack on the program that's going to help literally thousands of farmers, young farmers, during the time that this program will be in place. Now we see the opposition have in fact committed another flip-flop, for when they were on this side of the House regulation was a fine tool. But now on that side of the House regulation is all of a sudden a dastardly tool. And here's one where the opposition wailed on at length. Section 65 of the land bank legislation, Mr. Speaker, reads as follows:

The commission may at any time require further information or material to be submitted by an applicant for a lease of commission land, by a person applying to purchase commission land or any improvements on commission land or by a person who has submitted material to the commission under this Act or the regulations and may require verification by affidavit or otherwise . . .

Again, calling for any and all information. And that was a dastardly thing today, but back when you brought this in it was a fine piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. And here is the granddaddy of them all, Mr. Speaker. Now this one will just blow your doors off. Mr. Speaker, in the beef stabilization legislation brought forward by members opposite when they were on the side of the House, Mr. Speaker, it says:

For the purposes of carrying out this Act according to its intent, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations:

- (a) defining, enlarging or restricting the meaning of any word or expression used in this Act but not defined in this Act.

So now, by regulation, they write their own bloody dictionary. Well, I think, Mr. Speaker, I've already demonstrated to some degree that the sincerity of the arguments of the members opposite rings just a little bit hollow. And, Mr. Speaker, there was also some concern raised by members opposite as to the entrance of new farmers into farming under this particular program and it doesn't have to be dealt with either in legislation or regulation because it happens to be a matter of policy at farm credit corporation. They have, at farm credit corporation, a thing called section 33. Statutory requirements for standard loans demand that applicants be principally occupied as farmers on economic units or parts thereof when the loan is made. However, there are individuals who have the desire to become farmers and have the ability and the knowledge to operate a farm successfully, but there is a lack of resources to make the transition from

their present occupations to full-time farming. They lack those resources to make that transition in one step. Section 33 opens the door for this type of loan. It's called phase-in, over a five-year period. Under section 33, Mr. Speaker, farm credit may loan up to 100 per cent of appraised value on land, chattels, machinery, with in fact a growth factor built in to the policy as well.

AN HON. MEMBER: — May; they may.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — You bet they may.

AN HON. MEMBER: — But they don't; they don't.

HON. MR. BERNTSON: — I sense that the member for Shaunavon wants that particular section changed to make it mandatory that farm credit shall, in fact, loan \$350,000 to every dude that ever walks in the door. I don't quite follow the logic there either, Mr. Speaker. I know that we will cover the detail on other questions that may arise from members opposite during committee of the whole, and I therefore move second reading of this bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division, bill read a second time and by leave of the Assembly referred to a committee of the whole later this day.

Yeas — 50

Muller	Weiman	Maxwell
Birkbeck	Tusa	Embury
Taylor	Hodgins	Dirks
Andrew	Sutor	Hepworth
Berntson	Sauder	Morin
Lane	Petersen	Myers
Sandberg	Glauser	Zazelenchuk
Hardy	Meagher	Baker
McLeod	Schmidt	Blakeney
McLaren	Parker	Thompson
Garner	Smith (Moose Jaw South)	Engel
Klein	Hopfner	Lingenfelter
Katzman	Martens	Koskie
Currie	Rybchuk	Lusney
Schoenhals	Caswell	Shillington
Smith (Swift Current)	Young	Yew
Boutin	Domotor	

Nays — 00

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.