

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

May 14, 1984

EVENING SESSION

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 35 — An Act respecting Noxious Weeds

Clause 34 (continued)

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before we broke for dinner, we were discussing the amendment, and the minister tried to make the issue that somehow this amendment had an ulterior motive, Mr. Chairman. I read section 34 into the record, and the last line is that any person who contravenes the act, according to those (a), (b), (c), and (d) that's in the act here," . . . is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than \$500." That applies to everybody.

What we're saying: if an R.M. decides that they want to get some action out of the railway . . . I would like to minister to list some examples of where R.M.s and individuals have been successful in suing railways, and collecting from railways. It just doesn't pay to go to all that effort for a \$500 fine, Mr. Minister. And what we're saying: if they decide to go more than that . . . You're limiting the amount they can fine them for. You're limiting the amount they can sue them for. You're saying, my friends in the railway, don't you dare sue them for more than \$500 if they pollute the whole flat in an R.M. with noxious weeds because of lack of things.

Section 35, Mr. Chairman, section 35 says, "Every fine imposed as a result of a conviction for an offence against this act within a municipality is payable to the municipality." Is payable to the municipality, Mr. Minister. Why are you tying a municipality's hands and saying that if they want to sue these two major offenders — when they're upgrading their lines and when they're spending money on it, or when they're taking a line out — when a municipality wants to sue them, you decide whether they can sue?

And the amendment very expressly said that: ". . . up to \$5,000". If a municipality decides they don't want to sue a railway company for more, they don't have to, Mr. Chairman. It's a maximum that we're raising and increasing, and the minister knows full well that all he's doing is protecting his friends in the railway, and he's afraid that if he votes for this amendment, his election campaign's going to be cut a little bit by his friends in the CPR. That's the only reason you're against us.

You don't care about the farmers and his reeves, if this is what you're saying. I think you're trying to defend your friends, and, Mr. Chairman, I think we should stand up in this House and decide whose side are you on. Whose side are you on? Are you on the side for the user pay and are you on the side that protect the railways so you can't defend them? You can't sue them for it . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You want to put a limit in it. I think the farmers are very unhappy with this situation Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: — Order. It's very nice of the Assembly to come to order without me having to call for it.

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was trying to make a point, and when I raised the issue that the Tories are trying to defend the railways, this House got very noisy and you failed to draw to the attention of this House who was trying to interrupt me and keep me from making my point. And the member from Moosomin isn't too anxious to hear that his R.M.s can sue the railways. The member from Moosomin seems to want to put a limit on what we can sue the railways for — for polluting the R.M.s with the weeds.

And I think it's time you people stand up and tell the people of Saskatchewan, you don't care how much an R.M. decide to sue a municipality for. If they want to sue them for \$500, leave it at that. But if they want to sue them for \$5,000, why put a limit in there and protect your friends in the railway?

I think we should support this motion. It's a good one. It'll put some teeth into the act that will kick the railways. If they get a letter from a R.M., they'll know they should get out there and clean up their weeds, because they know if they don't, they'll have to pay for the clean-up job plus a \$5,000 fine, and I think that makes this act worthwhile.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I don't intend to hold this debate up any longer except to say that I think the majority of the member's comments are irrelevant, and his rhetoric is probably as false and hollow as what we heard prior to the 1982 election.

The reason I say it's irrelevant is because the issue is not whether we have to sue or not sue the railways to get the noxious weeds under control. The point is: you, the R.M.s, can go in there and undertake to clean up those noxious weeds, and it's got nothing to do with whether they sue the railways or not. And what we're interested in, and what the farmers of Saskatchewan are interested in, is controlling those noxious weeds. And certainly, suing the railways or not suing the railways has nothing to do with that. If the railways do not comply after they ordered it to be done, the R.M. moves in, does it, and submits the bill.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Agriculture's overlooking a major point, and the key issue is: has the R.M. any tools at their disposal to say to the railway companies: "Get out there and clean that right-of-way along the track where you're growing weeds."? And if the . . . You are telling me that I, as a taxpayer, and my neighbours and the ratepayers of our R.M., are supposed to get out there and clean it and send the R.M. a bill, and go that route and try and collect the money.

Mr. Minister, that's not where the farmers of Saskatchewan are at. They want to say that if their secretary writes the railways a letter, the railway'll get out there and clean their own yard, and they'll clean up their own backyard. Why should the R.M. have to do it and then, and then get the money?

Mr. Minister, you're afraid to put any teeth into this act in case your friends get a little bit peeved, and decide not to give you the \$50,000 in the next election. That's the only reason you're protecting them. You don't want to put anything in this legislation that they're going to get letters from the 200 R.M.s around the country, and have to get out and clean up their right-of-way. You want the R.M.s to go out and do it. You want the R.M.s to send a bill in, and then you want the R.M.s to fight and see if they can collect their money. And I think that's the wrong approach.

The farmers want you to stand up and put some teeth in this act so the R.M.s can write a letter, and that letter will do the job. And I think that's what this would do if we'd have had the fine of \$5,000.

Amendment negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Blakeney	Engel	Lingenfelter
Koskie	Lusney	

Birkbeck	McLeod	Andrew
Berntson	Taylor	Baker
Hepworth	Schoenhals	Duncan
Currie	Klein	Dutchak
Embury	Dirks	Maxwell
Young	Folk	Bacon
Hodgins	Parker	Smith (Moose Jaw South)
Myers	Rybchuk	Meagher
Glauser	Zazelenchuk	Martens
Weiman	Morin	

Clause 34 agreed to.

Clauses 35 to 41 inclusive agreed to.

Mr. Chairman: — The minister has proposed a House amendment to the schedule as follows: Schedule to the printed bill, (a) by striking out “Clause 2(h),” under the title “Noxious Weeds,” and substituting:

Clause 2(g);

and, (b) by striking out “Round-leaved marlow” in the 12th line on page 16 of the printed bill, and substituting:

Round-leaved mallow.

Amendment agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the bill as amended.

Bill No. 33 — An Act to repeal The Agricultural Research Foundation Act and to Make provision for Related Matters

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2

Mr. Engel: — Well, item 2 still deals with the agricultural research foundation as repealed.

Mr. Minister, I look with interest at what you’re doing with the bill — that you’re introducing a measure here to allow you to transfer these funds. I’m wondering, I’m wondering, Mr. Minister, in a last ditch effort to make it look as though you’ve got some money into research, you’re moving this in as a lump sum. How do you expect the universities to handle this so they know that next year they won’t be getting that amount? Do you understand what I’m saying?

If you put a little surge into research and . . . The backbone of agriculture, the backbone of agriculture in Saskatchewan is built on a decent research, and your record has been very poor in supporting research in Saskatchewan. If there’s any complaints . . . If there’s any complaints that we’re getting, it’s that the university is telling us that funds aren’t there . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I met with the minister; that’s who I talked to, Mr. Chairman . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Chairman, I have a right as an agriculture critic to speak on this bill without being interrupted by the minister. I don’t interrupt you.

I met with some of the professors that are involved in research, yesterday, just yesterday, in Saskatoon. We went up for a Mother's Day dinner and we had a good meeting afterwards with a couple of people at the university. And their major complaint was that we can't count on research.

They like, they like the idea . . . They like the idea of moving this money in there, but they're saying that they could swell research a little bit and swell the expectation. And have you some definite plan that you expect this will be used for, this quarter of a million dollars, or where it's going to go, or what's going to happen? Or what do you expect them to do with this; that it's not going to have a ongoing type of a thought to it; that this is a one shot thing, and that after you get that you're done?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, what we are doing here is first of all, quite simply, some regulatory reform; and secondly, something that just makes a lot of sense. What has been in place is that the Minister of Agriculture, the dean of the college of agriculture, and the chairman of the board of governors, administered the fund.

Now, what we are saying is, since in fact, the dean of the college of agriculture and the chairman of the board of governors were the major players, at any rate, in deciding how this fund should be administered; and since we believe that the university and people like the dean of the agriculture college have a pretty good feel for agriculture research in this province ; and because they are, in fact, supportive of this move, we've decided to have a little less government involvement and turn the fund over to them for administration. And so they can take the interest on that fund and spend it on a yearly basis if they so desire, and then they, in fact, decide to take a larger bolus some year, or, in fact, all at once.

But I'm certain, and I have a great deal of confidence in their ability to make those kinds of decisions. So, in so far as what's changed, well, there's a little less government involvement, is what's changed, and a little more autonomy for the university or college of agriculture and some of those people in whom I have a great deal of respect for.

Mr. Engel: — We have a great deal of respect for them as well on this side of the House, and that's why funds were available through FarmLab, which in your first term of office, you saw fit to cut — and in this budget, you saw fit to freeze, and you're really . . . Where the universities and the farmers are involved, you haven't put your wallet where your mouths are. You've been eager to talk about agricultural research, but in your very first budget you actually cut the funds for the FarmLab Program, and now in this budget, you've closed them at where they were cut to last year.

And you're saying you're so interested in agricultural research, and the point I'm still making is that if there is some research projects that are necessary enough — researchers in the university program are anxious to go ahead with — They could move the entire fund, and not just the interest, into research, and could inflate their research budget, but in actual fact, they have no assurance that there'll be more funds coming from your government.

The other question I suppose I'd ask, in light of that, is that the Saskatchewan agricultural research fund that was established in 1979 would have been a good fund — and has an excellent record of research — would have been a good fund to administer this. There are all kinds of ways of going. The Agricultural research fund that was set up in 1979: that fund's still there and that program's still operating. It's been doing some excellent research. I have an annual report that they published, and some of the activities they've been involved in '81-82 and '82-83 are expert. We could have referred to them, and I'm not going to take a lot of time, but I'm saying there are other options that would have left it established as a fund, like it was originally set up.

If there were instructions with this movement to say that it will stay as a fund, and use the

interest off it, then it wouldn't be research. But if the fund is given to the universities with the idea that, "We're giving you this because we just don't have enough money for researchers — here, use this one," it could search it and then leave them in the middle of a project with no funds to carry on, and most research projects, as the minister knows . . . Most research projects take more than one year to complete and get involved in.

Some of the excellent grains that we have in Saskatchewan, that we're growing today, are a process of research and development that have been carried on over a number of years, and the minister knows full well that those kinds of projects cost a lot of money. And I think this is just a niggardly way that you have of saying, "We have some money for research — here, use this fund," where your budget has actually been too cheap to increase and implement the kind of fund that would have done some good for Saskatchewan.

Another example of too little, too late. The need to . . . The Minister of Agriculture just has failed, the one more time, to provide some funds that could do some good and that they could count on.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — With leave, I'd like to introduce some guests that are in the Chamber. On behalf of my seat mate, the Hon. Mr. Lane, the Attorney General and member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, I'd like to welcome seven members of the McLean Wolf Cub pack here, along with their leaders, Larry Couse and Glenda Ashdown. I hope you'll enjoy the proceedings of the House, tonight, and I will be down to meet you in a few minutes in the members' dining room, to answer any questions you may have, boys, and also to share a drink with you. So welcome to the Assembly this evening.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 33 — An Act to repeal The Agricultural Research Foundation Act and to Make provisions for Related Matters

Clause 2 (continued)

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Chairman, hon. member, the first thing that I would like to clear up — and in fact I would hope that you would acknowledge that in fact you were in error on this point — is that it relates to this government's contributions to the university FarmLab program since we took office. You erroneously said that it was cut when our government took office. That is not true; in fact it was increased.

As well, the member referred to our commitment to agriculture that has been lacking. I'd remind him that it was this government that advanced a grant to the tune of \$400,000 for the soil testing lab; has been very involved in the establishment of the toxicology centre; special crop demonstration programs; the Saskatchewan Agriculture research fund, as you've mentioned.

And as relates to Saskatchewan Agriculture research fund, we could have, we could have, in fact, done that.

But that seems to me that that would have been pulling the rug out from underneath the university, because they have had the assurance of having these funds over the past few years. And if, in fact, there were ongoing projects, as you suggested, all of a sudden to pull the rug on them, I think, would certainly be contra to your logic.

Secondly, we view this as a cost saving measure. Not only is this regulatory reform, but it's a cost

saving measure. Because now we can dispense with The Tabling of Documents Act, the reporting of the corporations, of its business, of financial statements, and auditor's reports, and all those kinds of things.

This fund has got to the point where it was costing more to operate it, with all the red tape and the officialdom, and eating up more and more of the funds every year. And in fact they could have been used to further research.

I guess the real point that I would like to make here is: if your government had been at all interested in common sense, logic, and regulatory reform, when you were in government, it seems to me that you should have looked at the Saskatchewan Agriculture research fund when you were in government, instead of setting up another one, the FarmLab. And I'm very supportive of FarmLab, and I think our government's commitment to that indicates it. But what happened is you've ended up, or we inherited, a research foundation, the agriculture research fund, the FarmLab programs, and there seemed to be a lack of direction, if you like.

And in fact, this act goes back and has its roots, if you like, some 60 years ago. I think you would have to agree with me things aren't the way they were 60 years ago.

The money that was in this fund was from the wind-down of the Canadian Wheat Board, the Kamsack emergency fund, which you may or may not recall; the wind-down of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company Limited.

So not only does this save us money, but it puts it in the hands of those who it has, for the most part, been used by and intended for, even when the act was set up.

We've got a little less government involvement. I know the members opposite have a little trouble with less government involvement. They have always wanted more government involvement.

We've done this with our voluntary cattle deductions act, our horned cattle trust fund, where now we have government sitting on them only as observers, if you like, and not as voting delegates. Less government; not more.

We believe that the people, the people know what they want. And in this case, the people is the dean of the College of Agriculture, the university, and the board of governors; and I would wonder why the hon. member would dispute their judgements.

Mr. Engel: — One simple, short question, Mr. Minister. What was FarmLab for '82-83? How much was budgeted?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — '82-83? I don't have the number off the top of my head. I said it was not . . . You said it was cut; I said it was not.

An Hon. Member: — Well, how do you know?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I have some very good officials that advised me that it was not cut.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Minister, the budget was \$5 million. You cut it to \$4,265,000, and wasted 15 per cent inflation factor. With a 15 per cent inflation factor, you still left it the same, so it's another cut. This is the third cut in a row, and you think inflation into account.

And the minister knows he doesn't have a government who has a commitment. You look at grants under the 4-H program where we're training young researchers — you're cutting back. And young people getting involved — grants are cut. I think this is a typical example of a government, and he states, he says, "You were spreading it around, you had an agriculture

research foundation, you had this grant here, and you had the FarmLab. It's terrible that you spread this research around that everybody in the province could get involved."

I want to tell you we don't believe in centralization. We don't believe in taking it over like you don't think. I'll give the money where it's politically excused. I'll bribe the university and you do this and this, and then we'll give you a little research money.

That's not what this is all about. We are saying it's wide open. You admitted the FarmLab is a good idea. That \$5 million was used extensively by farmers together with the university, and I think the minister is short-changing those people that have research ability in Saskatchewan. This bill . . . It looks as though you're doing more because you're moving your money direct into university. I'm not against that; I'll go along with you on that. But all I'm saying is that it's just a little bit too little; too late.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, the on. member's logic, Mr. Chairman, continues to elude me. In the first place, this has never been, at least in my most recent recollections, a budget items. I don't know how or why you would try and suggest there's some smoke and mirrors involved here. I don't know at all why you would suggest that. And in so far as our commitment to research, I think it's been amply demonstrated by the kinds of things I listed off earlier; our commitment to the soil testing lab; our continuing commitment to the crop development centre; the VIDO (Veterinary Infectious Disease Organization); various research projects through the Saskatchewan Agriculture research fund; through FarmLab.

It was also this government that came up with an additional \$100,000 for soil salinity research. It was also this government that came up and is in the budget with an additional half a million dollars to the Van Vliet chair. So I think your words are, in fact, very hollow, relative to this government's commitment to research, because in fact we are very committed to research.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, there's only one thing that the minister fails to understand. Good research has no strings attached. And just so the minister keeps his strings completely unattached, then this fund will be used by the university. I don't think that you can use and push your political muscle that far, and think that you're going to control the universities in their research as well. You're not going to be able to buy that off, Mr. Minister.

And your failure to improve the agricultural facilities in the new agricultural building — why aren't you moving ahead with it? Why do they have to do research in a bathroom and in the hallways? They haven't got a decent lab. You know the facilities are stripped to the core. And you're not going ahead with spending some money. And now you're dumping a little money in here, and saying, "Here's a quarter of a million dollars you've got, and we're a big, good, wonderful government. We're giving you this . . . (inaudible) . . ."

Mr. Minister, they're going to see through this. They know it's not enough, but it's a move in the right direction. If that's all we can get out of you, that's what we've got to live with.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I think we're getting somewhere. He has suggested that this money should have no strings attached, and that is exactly what we are doing. We are removing the Minister of Agriculture from the jurisdictional body that decides what should be done with this money. So there will be no strings attached. Do you understand that, hon. member? There will be no more government strings. We'll allow all these good people at the university, and the dean of the College of Agriculture, to decide how that money should be spent, and that seems to make eminent good sense.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 4

Clause 4 agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 32

Birkbeck	McLeod	Andrew
Berntson	Taylor	Hardy
Baker	Hepworth	Schoenhals
Duncan	Currie	Dutchak
Maxwell	Young	Folk
Hodgins	Parker	Smith (Moose Jaw South)
Hopfner	Myers	Rybchuk
Meagher	Glauser	Zazelenchuk
Martens	Weiman	Blakeney
Thompson	Engel	Lingenfelter
Koskie	Lusney	

Nays — Nil

Clause 4 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the bill.

Bill No. 34 — An Act to amend The Farm Security Act

Clause 1

Mr. Engel: — I think the issue on farm security, and I could go through this many pages of it, is expressly this, Mr. Minister: do you believe in farm security as it is narrowly defined and has been in place for 40 years by this bill, or do you think that we're in a time of crisis at this time, that things are tougher on the farm than they've ever been?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, I think since this bill was first introduced in the legislature in 1944 — and certainly I wasn't around at that time, and some members that were, if there are any, could perhaps correct me on it — but as I recall, at that time there was some great long debate about this bill, when it was first brought in, relative to whether in fact it was ultra vires or intra vires, which is certainly a legal rhetoric of . . .

Not only do I not understand the terms, particularly, but nor do I understand all the legal machinations that went on. But the view was, at that time, that it may or may not have been, in fact, within the province's jurisdiction.

Be such that as it may, the bill has, in fact, been in place for some good many years, and has been amended as well almost on a regular basis since that time. But certainly to suggest that things haven't changed is not true. Since that time, a number of things have been put in place, especially by our government, to make sure that, in fact, viable farms are not jeopardized. This is one piece of legislation that has been in place, that is part of that process.

But going back just a few years, I suppose, as I referred to in my second reading speech, the crop insurance program has done a lot in terms of perhaps making this bill less important than it was

probably in 1944 to a lot of Saskatchewan farmers. And I could go through a list of things right to the present day, but I won't, unless you desire it. But the most recent one, and the one our government put in place to make sure, in fact, that all the farms are not jeopardized, was the counselling and loan guarantee program for farmers facing temporary financial difficulties, in so far as what's a crisis, or does a crisis exist? I suppose that all depends on how you define a crisis.

Certainly, for the young farmer out there today facing foreclosure, that, to him, is a crisis, and for him, we have put something in place. And I was very happy to see you and your colleagues support that bill.

Mr. Engel: — Well, you really didn't ask, answer, the question, Mr. Minister. I asked if you can cite a time when things have been tougher for a farmer to make ends meet than they are this spring. Has there ever been a time in the history of Saskatchewan farmers when there's been more farmers in trouble than there are today?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, I suppose, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, rather, and hon. member, I don't have the statistics in front of me. And of course, it depends what measure one uses in so far as determining what your definition of crisis is — whether you go by the number of bankruptcies, amounts of land that's listed for sale, or whatever index you might want to use.

But certainly in my most recent recollection, the LIFT years, I suppose as they've been referred to in the early part of the last decade, was certainly a time of severe cash flow problems for Saskatchewan farmers. I suspect one could probably find other examples. I suppose the early '50s — I think rust was fairly widespread that year in southern Saskatchewan, in the grain producing area, probably caused some severe problems — '53, '54, I remember those years well, myself. It looked like a good crop, but certainly there was nothing in it.

So, depending on how one measures it, I suspect there have been times in the past when Saskatchewan farmers have faced difficulty. Certainly now, if you want to get my view as to what's in place to help farmers, relative to 30 years ago or 40 years ago, there's a lot more in place. And so there's a lot more in place under this Tory administration than there ever was under the NDP administration.

Mr. Engel: — I wasn't really asking for that kind of comparison, because I think that's a matter of a value-judgement that the farmers will be attesting to, in a year and a half or two years from now, as to just who was able to cope with the problems that farmers are facing. But I would say, if you could use the office of your staff — Mr. Zilm and some of the other people that are in place — in keeping the records and keeping some stats on how many farmers are in trouble, you would find, Mr. Minister, that there are more farmers that are unable to make their commitments as far as their loans are concerned at the banks and the credit unions and at Farm Credit Corporation.

There's never been a time in our history when there's been as many farmers in arrears on their payments. There's never been a time in history when there's been as many farmers that only filled their fuel tanks half full this spring, because they couldn't afford to pay the expensive fuel costs. I think there are many, many measures you could see. You drive around from one dealer to the next and you look at the amount of equipment that's sitting on their lots, could be another measurement — how many farmers are buying new equipment, how many farmers are spending money. And I think we're in a situation where things are really tough back on the farm.

And your administration is failing to recognize how badly farmers are hurting. You're failing to take into account that things are serious. And with the way the wind is blowing today and the lack of rain, in particular in the southern half of the province, it's nothing like it is up in the Pelly riding, where they're waiting for it to dry off and this wind is a welcome relief. But in our country it's not that welcome when the yard light comes on in the middle of the day. That's pretty serious.

And I think this bill didn't go far enough, because the farmers that are sheltered under this farm security act would be which farmers this year, Mr. Minister? What farmers could qualify or come under the umbrella or the "safety net," as you like to describe it, of this bill? Who would this bill help this spring? You know, as far as The Farm Security Act is concerned, who would come under the umbrella or fall into your safety net, as you like to describe it? What farmers would be involved?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — For example, Mr. Chairman, and hon. member, where a final order of foreclosure is made of a mortgage affecting a homestead, the operation of an order for possession are stayed as long as the homestead continues to be a homestead. So that would be one example right there — where in the event that somebody was being foreclosed — that would in fact be assisted, I suppose, if you like, by this act.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Minister, there's some kind of a feeling in here by the Bobbsey twins that sit there as deputy and House Leader, or Mutt and Jeff — you call them what you want — or the Deputy Premier, that all of a sudden the opposition's role is such that if you criticize a bill, or you criticize a weakness, all of a sudden you're against all the application of that bill.

I want to tell you people that that's not the way I operate. If I see a piece of legislation . . . If I see a piece of legislation that can be improved on, I'll try my best to improve it for the sake of the farmers of Saskatchewan. And just because I can't improve it, and all we've got left is a half a cob of corn instead of a whole load, we'll have to take the half a cob from you people. And that doesn't mean we're against this.

Now, Mr. Minister, maybe the former minister of agriculture got dumped because he couldn't get that through his head, but I'd like you to take some thought. You're saying that the people on the home quarter are secured. I'm saying they are if they bought it, and just if it was an original purchase. But once a loan has been made against it, or they sign a mortgage, they wipe off that security that comes under this bill. Am I right under that point, or is that not right?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I'm not just sure what the last point that you referred to was. This legislation is not new legislation to this House, as I said before. And I know that your view to solving crises out there is not consistent with my view, particularly.

But I suppose, in fact, that one only has to go back to August of 1971 and review, in fact, what the hon. member, Mr. A. Engel, Notukeu-Willowbunch, said in *Hansard*, page 583 at that time, speaking in debate . . . And he was saying that, something about, on a short-term basis we need to ". . . help him hold the fort (and I presume he's talking about farmers) until the really big guns arrive."

There is one program that will put him on his feet without having this big axe hanging over his head. The program I'm speaking about is this land bank commission. It is worth taking some time to set up this program, but the times is worth buying, Mr. Speaker. Now that's the hon. member's answer to solving the farm problems out there — buy up all the farmland, the state farm will take over here, and everything will be well out there. You are sadly out of touch, hon. member.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Minister, I asked you, and I thank you for refreshing my memory, because I can assure you, that you can go around to 2,700 young people farming in Saskatchewan that aren't subject to the pressures of interest and payments, and just are paying their rent. They're still running their farms. And those people are writing me letters, Mr. Minister, and I don't consider that a laughing matter. I don't consider that a laughing matter; I consider that as a good solution.

But what I said as far as a farm security act is concerned, if you want to pass a farm security act, if you want to pass a farm security act, pass one that says we have some confidence. It's going to

rain before it's too late; you're going to get a crop this year; and you'll be able to make a go; we'll give you a chance; pass it.

I'm asking you, I'm asking you, Mr. Minister . . . I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, who will come under this umbrella, and I just ask for a little definition. How many farmers do you consider . . . All you said is, it applies to the home quarter . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . All you said is it applies to the home quarter. When we introduced this bill in '44, I wasn't involved at the time, but I supported it, and I supported it every time it came on the line.

But what we did do, what we did do the last time the likes of you, and with your philosophy, were in power; when people with your kind of attitude ran Saskatchewan for seven lean, hungry years . . . You can call it what you want, but things were tough in '71; just about as tough as they are today. Not quite, not quite, but just about as tough. Give you guys few more years and you'll see more farmers on the ropes than there were back in 1971. But this bill was in place. This bill was in place in 1971. This bill was there, but what we did was we passed a companion piece of legislation. That was some real farm security. That put the bite not only to the home quarter but to any mortgage you had — be it on land, be it on equipment, or whatever loan you had to have to operate. And that kind of security was . . .

Look, mister, my colleague from Athabasca met a young farmer; took his tractor out in the field last week on the farm; and he came back this morning, Monday morning, to farm, and his tractor was gone. Why do you suppose that tractor disappeared? Why do you suppose that tractor disappeared? Well, all I can tell you is, it was magic. A loan company came along with their semi and loaded that tractor up and took it back. What's the farmer supposed to do to finish putting in his crop? Tell me.

And I think if you want to pass some farm security act . . . Or are you as serious about it as you were at getting at the railways with the last bill we just passed? Pass a farm security act that counts and has some teeth. Stand up and blame us for it. Tell the banks to get after those dirty old NDPs that were out there to protect the farmer for one more crop year. That's the kind of farm security you need, Mr. Minister. This isn't going to keep me farming. This isn't going to keep the young fellow on the land that's got some problems. It's going to hold the home quarter. That's it.

And I think you should look at some farm security legislation. You'd know that the farmers in Saskatchewan are in trouble. You're not prepared to introduce some feed freight assistance if it's going to be dry. You tell them, "Look, sell you cattle, get out of it, do something. We're not going to concern . . . " You don't pass some farm security act and say, "Look, you keep your cattle no matter what." You don't tell — you tell a young farmer that's out there, and he puts his tractor on the field two, three miles from home, comes back Monday morning, the tractor's repossessed — you don't tell him, "Look, we've got confidence in you. You're going to make it if you get your crop in."

You don't have the farmer's security in mind. You say the rich and the fit can make it, and we'll support them, and if they want to buy more land, they'll come under this farm security act, but not the guy that's in there to try and make a go of it. You're a big farce, a camouflage.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I'm not sure what points that the hon. member has raised and wants further clarification on. Number one is, this legislation and the amendments have been almost historically brought forward every three years. The legislation was, in fact, written by your party. We've gone along with it. We've updated it, because we still think it might have some useful life in it, if you like. I gave you an example of who might be helped by it — a young person, or for the matter, an older farmer, facing a foreclosure. As well, a vendor or mortgagee cannot seize more than one-third of a producer's crop in any one year. I mean, there's an example that might be applicable this year, and I could go on and recount others.

And you say, you know, how it is going to help you? And I can understand that you're one of those farmers who has a very comfortable net worth. I suppose some of the farming equipment you have on your farm, lots of young farmers would like to have those kinds of things to fly them around and over their fields and to check their cattle and so on, but not all have access to that kind of thing.

What this government does . . . And our track record is impeccable. We've been leaders in the country. We have led; others have followed. And I could go through the litany of interest rate relief programs that we've put in place. I could go through the tax cuts we've put in place for farmers. And in fact, Mr. Chairman, as a government, we could have probably stood up here and said, "All is well in Saskatchewan." We could have pointed to bankruptcy statistics that suggest that the problem is much worse, for example, in Manitoba than it is in Saskatchewan.

We could have pointed to the Agricultural Outlook Conference, which suggested that Saskatchewan's net realizable farm income is going to rise substantively, whereas, for example in Manitoba, once again, nothing of the same was predicted. And so we could have pointed to those kinds of statistics and said, "All is well in Saskatchewan," but we didn't. Because our view was there was some — out there — some young farmers, some even well-established farmers, some very good managers, who were falling upon tough times. And rather than turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to them, we chose to act.

And to complement a good deal of legislation, in fact, that exists in Saskatchewan — and I'm sure the hon. member would know that — but to complement it, we moved to put in place the \$4 million government-funded but farmer-operated fund to assist those farmers who are facing temporary financial difficulty, and certainly I suppose one could argue, and probably with a fair degree of success, that that would do much more than some of this legislation.

But it's all part of a safety net, and I'll share with the hon. member one other thing that I heard when I was at the ministers of agriculture's meeting last summer, and that is that Saskatchewan generally — and it probably is because of our historical makeup — is regarded as one of the provinces with a lot of legislative protection for the farmers. And I would suggest to you that what we've done since we became government is not only add to that, but also we put some money behind our words, some money. We've put some money on the table, not only for farmers in temporary financial trouble, but for all of agriculture in this province. And that was no better exemplified than by the 30 per cent increase that agricultural interests got in the recent budget.

And I thank my hon. colleague, the Minister of Finance, for that commitment to farming. As he's mentioned many times before, Saskatchewan farmers were tired of the kind of lip service that your government paid them for so many years, and that your idea of helping farmers was to take over their farm.

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, you continue to talk about all the good things that you are doing for the farmers of Saskatchewan, and we have to agree that the bill that we're looking at is one that's necessary. However, it would be a lot better if you would have included a little more in that bill that would have protected or given the farmers some protection.

Mr. Minister, how many farmers out there today are going to be in trouble that this bill will not help? There's a good number of farmers that have a lot of difficulties today which will not be assisted by this bill. And you can look at your own department and the department that you now administer, which is land bank, where you are telling farmers that within the next 30 days they will no longer have their land. This bill will not protect those farmers. And some of them have two, three, four quarters of land which they live on and they depend on, and you are saying that they are going to be off the land this year, before they get the crop in.

This will not protect them. There's no security in this bill for them. And yet those farmers should

have some kind of security where they can have at least another year after having the last two years that were bad for them financially. The crops were bad and they were not able to survive.

This is the kind of security we need, and it was mentioned in this House before as to what kind of security we need for the farmers in Saskatchewan. You did not put any of that in, Mr. Minister. You could have put a few amendments to this bill that would have improved it, that would have given some of those farmers an opportunity at least one more year, given that chance. They're not asking for a lifetime of opportunities or chances, but they are saying, "Give us another year at least, so we can get the crop in and we can keep our land and have some protection." But you're not . . . You do not have anything in this bill that is going to save their land or their equipment for this year.

And I think we have to give the farmers some security . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The bill . . . Yes, Mr. Minister, I did read the bill. The bill provides very little in it; it provides very little. All it's going to do is just say how much of a portion of that grain that can be taken from the farmer.

Now, Mr. Minister, the farmers need a little more protection; that's what I'm saying. And if you're going to introduce a bill here, improve the bill where they will get some protection. It may not be needed every year, but this is a year where they do need some assistance, and a bill like this could be the thing that would give them that assistance; to give them at least one more year on the land; and an opportunity for one year to get some manner in which they can reorganize their finances; and have an opportunity to get their crops in and get their crops off; and maybe pay up some of the bills that they owe. Give them that opportunity; improve the bill where this will happen.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, you've raised in your discussion there some points about why we did not improve the bill, and amend the bill — that kind of thing. We went further than that, I would suggest to the hon. member, in that, first of all, we have in fact amended the bill in the typical fashion that has been done in this House, for the most part on a very regular basis, every three years since 1944.

But more than that, we recognized that there were some out there facing a cost-price squeeze, we brought in an additional piece of legislation in this House, one which I would think the hon. members support. I don't recall particularly that day whether you were in the House or not, but certainly we brought in an additional piece of legislation, so that farmers, even before they were facing foreclosure, simply if they'd been turned down by their lending institution, could go and get a second opinion from their peers, perhaps have access to a government guaranteed operating loan.

So I would suggest to you that we've got everything that's been in place before and we've added to it, put something more on the table. And certainly our track record, as I've mentioned before, is a good one in this province in so far as not only helping farmers who are in trouble; but secondly, in so far as getting the young farmers established on the land and giving them the kinds of breaks they need in those first few years, when times perhaps are a little more difficult. And, in fact, it's probably worth-while at this point in time to mention — since the land bank commission, and the hon. member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg's view that that was the be-all and the end-all to farm problems out there — it might be a good time to update the hon. members on the success of one of our interest rate relief programs.

In that his idea of the be-all and the end-all for solving the farm problem, the farm financial crunch out there, was the land bank program, and in its 10 years of operation . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. I've allowed a lot of leeway here, but we're not going to go into an explanation of the land bank again. So thank you very much. Unless the minister has something relevant to the bill, I will cut off the answer.

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, this bill talks about farm security. Now when you talk about farm security, that would mean that we will be trying to make sure that those farmers are not put off that land, or lose some of their equipment, or lose their crops unduly. We want to give them some protection where they could have some time to get their finances in order.

Mr. Minister, are you aware of how many farmers may be in trouble right now through farm credit, or through financial institutions where they may be facing repossessions?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Hon. member, Mr. Chairman, no.

Mr. Lusney: — Well, Mr. Minister, you're introducing a farm security bill here, and yet you're not even aware if it's going to help anybody at all, or whether anyone has a problem in this province. And you say you're not aware of how many farmers may need a bill like The Farm Security Act, or one that would be amended to where it could provide some assistance, or some help, to these farmers. You're saying you're not aware of any of that.

Well, Mr. Minister, what is the sense of putting in a bill if you're not sure if it's even going to help anybody at all? Why not put in a bill that's going to help some of the people that it's supposed to help, and that's the farmers of Saskatchewan?

Have you checked with any of the banks then? Have you had any calls whatsoever as to the problems that exist in this province?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, the reason that I cannot give you a definitive number as to how many farmers are in trouble is because it depends what your definition of trouble is.

Certainly we could point to the statistics of the numbers of bankruptcies, farm bankruptcies, and say that is all that's in trouble. And if you believe that that's all that are in trouble, then I would suggest to you, you're sadly mistaken.

Secondly, we could point to some other farmers out there whose definition of trouble is that for the first time in their lives they're having to take out an operating loan. And that's their definition of trouble.

Thirdly, we could point to others out there who for the first time in their lives can't get additional operating funds. And they view that as being in trouble. And I could go on and on and on and use different definitions too, that different farmers use and report as their definition of trouble.

But I suppose the most sensitive indication of those who feel they're facing a terminal case of cost-price squeeze has a number of applicants for the counselling and assistance for farmers program. And it's into something over 130, I believe at this point in time, a program that's running smoothly — a program of action. Rather than just talk about the problem, we've done something about it.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Minister, I won't even get into your program that you do have in place right now, because it has very little to do with the bill that we're discussing. We're discussing some security for farmers.

And, Mr. Minister, have you discussed with the farmers' union, or Palliser's, or the Canadian Agricultural Movement, or the Pools . . . Have you discussed what problems exist in agriculture today, and what you could do, or what bill you can bring in that would give those farmers some security for one or two years, where they wouldn't lose their equipment, or wouldn't lose the crops, or wouldn't lose their land? Have you discussed some of the problems that are out there, where you could provide some security through a bill that would make sure they would be able

to keep on operating for another year or two, and give them the opportunity to be able to get out of the problems that they're in?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, yes. In fact, we've talked to both the groups you referred to, who have only been part of numerous groups and individuals that I have met over the past several months. And interestingly enough, and certainly for the edification of the hon. member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, not one of them — and I have been in public meetings, I think, and met something or talked with something probably in the order of 4,000 people over the last four or five weeks — interestingly enough, not one time, not one time, not one person out there at any of these meetings ever raised with me this farm protection act, or whatever it is that you are reporting to use to solve all the farmers' problems out there. Not one person; not one person. But certainly I've had good comments, and I know some of my government colleagues have had good comments, on the counselling and assistance program that has been put in place just recently.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Minister, that raises a very, very interesting point. This aspect of "not one comment". How many questions did you allow, or did you accept, when you were at a public meeting in my riding just recently? How many questions did you allow? I went down to that same area. I went to a meeting at Scout Lake, and some 200 people were there, and I was bombarded with questions. Three of them were counsellors that said they were stonewalled, and the minute the meeting was over, the minister ducked out and he wouldn't take one question.

Why would you go down to an R.M. meeting and now answer any questions? When you say that you haven't had one person talk to you about farm security legislation, you haven't given them a chance. The people there came out to hear you and say, "Here's a minister of agriculture that's going to talk about farm security." And what did you do when it was all over? You ducked out the back door and you wouldn't allow one question. That's the kind of Minister of Agriculture we've got. He stands up in this House and said, "I haven't had one guy talk to me about your legislation or what your proposals are." That's because you're out of touch, Mr. Minister.

After two short years, you go to a meeting and there's over a hundred people there and want to raise some questions, and you won't accept a single question. Mr. Minister, that's an example of an arrogant minister of agriculture that doesn't want to listen to the problems of farmers. The farmers have problems. The number of bankruptcies is just the tip of the iceberg.

Tom Nunn in a recent issue, on the 11th, in the *Leader-Post*, says:

While 14 farmers in this province declared bankruptcy, another 200 or more are advertising their farms for sale. And 150 or so have already applied for government guarantees under a new provincial program so they can get money to put this year's crop in the ground.

Bankruptcy is the last straw, a legal move once your back is against the wall and no escape route is left. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture estimates 10 farmers are in financial trouble for every official bankruptcy. Events here this spring suggest they are right.

Keeping the problem in perspective is tough. Farmers, like any other group, span a wide spectrum of wealth, poverty, and everything in between. While hundreds of farmers struggle to keep on Saskatchewan's soil, a similar number have nothing to worry about . . .

And this is the point we're trying to make, Mr. Minister. If you would pass some legislation, the banks maybe wouldn't like you that much, but you could put some security legislation in place, similar to what happened in 1971 when this bill was standing. This bill was standing in 1971, but a

companion piece of farm security, that was really farm security, was in place for one year. We don't know how many people qualified under it, but we know that the buffer was there and they weren't being sued.

And I think you're very negligent when you don't accept your responsibility, Mr. Minister, and realize that farmers have a problem. Why didn't you stay long enough to listen to them to see what they really have to say and to find out how tough it really is on the farm? You're just listening to your banker friends and the fellows that are in between, that group that don't have a problem. There are those. There's a guy sitting in front of you that hasn't got a problem on his farm. But there's a lot of people around that have some problems, Mr. Minister, and you better start listening to everybody.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, first of all, I resent very much your comments that, in fact, I ducked out the back door or the side door and that I didn't take questions. Because, to my recollection, there's not one ratepayers' meeting that I attended that I didn't take questions. And if I didn't take questions, it was strictly because the chairman chose not to have questions — strictly. And as far as I can recall, there was not one meeting, not one ratepayers' meeting, where I didn't take questions. And I'm going to check into my books, and I'm going to find out. And I want to tell you what: the reason I was in your seat so often is because they're looking for somebody down there to represent them. They never see their MLA.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — In fact, I'm getting a little upset at the way you represent me at my farm in your constituency. I'm not even happy having you represent me over there. I don't like the way you represent me over there. You're out of touch and you're irrelevant.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Your example and your idea of what should be done to solve farmers' ills out there . . . I've already read into the record, as you mentioned, you had The Farm Security Act that year; you brought in companion legislation; and thirdly, your answer was the big guns, the land bank commission.

Well, I want to tell you what ours is. Ours is to act, and you can call it companion legislation or you can call it what you want, but we have put in a program in this session of the legislature to help those farmers out there who are facing problems. And, in fact, that program is running very smoothly and probably the reason it is running very smoothly is because it's run by farmers. And you've tried to tar them in a very irresponsible way as being totally political, and that, I would suggest to you, is a very much an affront on the integrity of every Saskatchewan farmer. And I would suggest to you that that's a very irresponsible statement, and you should probably look at rethinking what you have said there in this House.

And we'll continue, Mr. Chairman, to put in place whatever it takes to make sure that family farms and family ranches in this province are not jeopardized. We'll do it the way that we think is best, and in fact, the way the majority of the people think is best out there. And I think we've proven ourselves at this point in time.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Minister, you can blame it on the chairman or on the reeve. You can blame it on the chairman or on the reeve, but you were at one meeting in my riding, which happens to be near your home, and you admit it, you were near your home. You maybe forget to recognize some winners in Weyburn, but when it comes to a meeting you had, I had councillors from that group tell me that they weren't allowed to ask you a question.

Mr. Chairman: — Order. Sooner or later tonight we have to get back to the bill. And I'm ruling that we are now going to get back to the bill, so do you have any debate either for or

against this particular bill?

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will get off the wonderful aspects of the land bank and we'll get back onto The Farm Security Act.

The minister stood up and said he hasn't had one person come and tell him they have to strengthen The Farm Security Act. All I said is that when he was in my riding he didn't allow the people to ask him; that's all I said.

Mr. Chairman: — I caution the member from Assiniboia not to be repetitive. I just asked him to get on with debate and he repeated what I have just ruled is not relevant. Does the member have any relevant questions, or we'll go to another member?

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, I want to relate the relevance of this: that there are hundreds and hundreds of farmers that need some farm security if we want to keep into farming. And a suggestion that what farm security legislation should be all about is . . . This bill was in place in 1971 when a government that listened.

And let me just quote from some aspects of a speech when some real farm security act was passed; when some legislation was put in place that was farm security legislation; and this was said, according to the Saskatchewan Legislative Library, and material supplied by them dates back to August 4, 1971. This is the time that is very similar, like I said earlier, and I don't want to be repetitive, Mr. Chairman.

But in 1971 when this farm security act that we're dealing with tonight and making the same kind of amendments were passed, a piece of legislation was introduced that was really farm security act. And this is what Roy Romanow said at that time. He said, ". . . that the members will well know that during the last 20 years . . ." And I'm just going to quote one little paragraph, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order! You've already given us this portion of your speech, and I rule that to repeat the 1971 bill . . . Order! To repeat the 1971 Bill would be repetitive, even with the amount of leeway I've allowed on this debate, so could you please proceed.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to have you draw to my attention when I repeated what Roy Romanow said were the conditions in 1971, and may I not so refer and compare the conditions in '71 to '84? Is this what you're trying to tell me?

Mr. Chairman: — You may compare this year to any year you wish, but you've already made this point three times, and now you're going to read speeches from a former member's . . . And I would think that you should be original and quote your own speeches, or make up your own speech. If you want to continue with your debate, I will see if it's relevant or not.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, on a point of privilege, or a point of order, I'll start with. The Minister of Agriculture stood up in this House and read a quote that I said in the land bank legislation that wasn't related to farm security. He quoted from me, and you tell me I can't read one paragraph from some other member that supports my argument. Is this what you're saying? Are you trying to steamroll me into saying that I can't even relate an argument?

Mr. Chairman: — Order! If it's so important to the member, go ahead and read your one paragraph.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order! Would you please come to order? Would you please come to order, or I will have to take other measures.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — The hon. member rose and moved a point of privilege, moved a point of privilege, Mr. Chairman.

Then he stands up in his motion for privilege, which I don't know where it was founded, and says what are you, and he . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order. He may have used the term loosely, but I didn't see any point of order or privilege raised, and we're continuing the debate. I don't think he's making an issue of the point.

The member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg has the floor. he's going to read his paragraph that he wishes to read.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — The point I wish to make, Mr. Chairman, is this: for a member to stand up in the House, and ask the Chairman, it's like asking the Speaker, "What are you trying to do, steamroll me?" And that was the quotes he used. Surely, I suggest that that is unparliamentary language for any person to refer to the Chair. That is the point I wish to make, and that is the issue I would like to bring to the attention of the Chair.

Mr. Chairman: — I do acknowledge that his wording was borderline, but I'm going to let him read his paragraph and we'll continue.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, if the House Leader is so . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order! I've ruled that you're to read your paragraph. If you wish to, please proceed. Then we'll continue with the debate.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, in third reading debate, my understanding is that I can argue the points of the farm security under Clause I in detail. I am trying to do that.

Now, all I was saying before I read my article is that the House Leader seems to be very sensitive about referring to situations as they were present in 1971, because of the parallel.

In 1971, conditions were parallel to what they are today. Conditions were parallel to what they are today. I asked you earlier, Mr. Minister, how many people were in trouble and what the conditions are. I wanted to read one paragraph from the *Hansard* that indicates that conditions . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order! Order! I've ruled you can read your paragraph.

Mr. Engel: — I'm not ready to read it right now.

Mr. Chairman: — Well, if you're not ready to read it, we'll go on with another member.

Are you ready to read your paragraph, or aren't you?

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, I want to get into some free-wheeling debate about the principles of The Farm Security Act. I was going to use a paragraph from Roy Romanow's speech, that compared 1971 to 1984.

We had a little problem with the Minister of Finance about that. He didn't want to hear that comparison. So I was going to just give a little background information saying how important that was.

Mr. Chairman: — Order! I don't understand why the member is so upset when I've ruled in his favour.

Now, does he wish to read his paragraph or doesn't he? is the question.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, you're being very difficult. I'm sorry, but if I'm in the middle of a speech and I'm trying to make a point, and you rule my . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . My chain of thought has been mixed up by all the interruptions that have been around here. And the Tory members seem to think it's great and it's entertaining, and you're enjoying it. That's good, but the paragraph that I was going to read now becomes irrelevant.

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order! Will the government members please come to order? The member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg has finally decided he wishes to read his paragraph. Would you please come to order and let him read his paragraph?

The member for Quill Lakes asked for the floor, and would you please let him speak?

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Chairman, you have given the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg the right to read the paragraph. I want to ask you, Mr. Chairman, will you extend that same privilege to another member?

Mr. Chairman: — Any member of the opposition may read the paragraph.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Chairman, in the roar of the House, I didn't hear your reply. Would you give it again, please?

Mr. Chairman: — Any member of the opposition may read the paragraph, so we can get on with the debate.

Mr. Koskie: — Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to move on to a slightly different point, and I want to address a very serious point, and that is an article which appeared in the *Leader-Post*, and it says, "Farm Debt Is No Joking Matter." And here we sit, and the members opposite make a joke out of the very serious presentation by the agricultural critic for our caucus.

And I want to ask the minister: how can you possibly be addressing the problem of farm debt when you cannot stand up in this legislature and indicate whether you have checked with the Farm Credit Corporation, when you cannot in fact stand up and tell us how many farmers are in arrears for one year, two years, or more years?

I am going to ask you again, Mr. Minister: have you done an analysis of the magnitude of the farm debt in this province before bringing in this here consequential amendment, which we have been bringing in each year, and whether or not you should be expanding it? So I ask you specifically: will you give us the statistics, as provided by the Farm Credit Corporation, of the number of farmers that are in serious arrears in this province?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, certainly, as I mentioned earlier tonight, I could have pointed to all kinds of statistics — bankruptcies, arrears rates at farm credit, and in so far as what I have, is what you could get. It's a federal Crown corporation, and what they make public is what I look at. And in fact Saskatchewan has had a relatively good arrears rate there, largely due, I would suggest to you, because of the farm purchase program.

As I mentioned earlier, I could have pointed to these statistics and said all is well in

Saskatchewan, but we chose to act instead. And I could have analysed, and analysed, and analysed, and if I'd have said I was going to do a study, then you would have come back and said, "Oh yes, analysis by paralysis." Instead, we chose to act, and act we have done, and we will continue to act on behalf of Saskatchewan farmers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Surprising statement — the minister said he could have looked up the statistics and he could have come into this legislature and demonstrated that all is well in Saskatchewan. Well, I want to point out to the minister some of the statistics that Farm Credit Corporation have made public, and I'm going to ask you whether you think that everything is well in the farming community.

And let me read what is the statistics. It has, "300 Saskatchewan farmers who haven't made a loan payment in more than two years." More than two years they haven't made a payment . . . Another 2,000 loans, up to two years in arrears," he said. "The federal lending agency is also moving on 35 properties in the province to secure payment on defaulted loans."

I ask you, Mr. Minister, do you feel that these individual farmers, as cited here under the Farm Credit Corporation of having very substantial arrears in their loans, two years in arrears, and some 300 more than two years — do you not agree that this is a very, very serious problem? And why wouldn't you do an analysis and come into this legislature as a Minister of Agriculture should and put before this legislature the facts, so that we can deal on it on an intelligent basis?

And I'm asking you, do you not agree that this is a problem of some magnitude, when the Farm Credit Corporation says some 3,000 or more farmers are in serious financial problems and arrears; that 35 are moving on to secure the land for the security of the loans?

I ask you: is this not statistics which is of concern to you? And how can you possibly indicate that the amendments to The Farm Security Act which you are bringing in will save many of these farmers?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, and hon. member, I would suggest to you that I think any young or established farmer who is facing foreclosure or who is in arrears position probably considers that serious, and so do I.

And I suspect the logical next step would be: "Well then, Mr. Minister, if it's serious, why don't you do something about it?" And that's exactly what I've been trying to explain all night, is that because we did recognize there were some young farmers out there, and others, facing what they thought was a terminal case of cost-price squeeze, we did move to act. Act we have done.

We have put in place, in addition to the many other things we have done, the counselling and assistance program for farmers. And as I mentioned earlier, people's definitions . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . If the hon. member from Shaunavon would like to raise that point from his desk, then I could perhaps reply to it.

Mr. Koskie: — I want to go on to another financial institution that's quoted here, as to the seriousness in the farming community with debt:

The story from the Royal Bank is much the same. John Murphy, the Royal Bank manager of agricultural services, said the bank told 84 Saskatchewan farmers last year that they should get out of farming.

Eighty-four, not considering those that are bankrupt. But the financial institution, the Royal Bank, the political friend of the Tory party, you know, Mr. Boyd Robertson, the vice-president of the Royal Bank — he is saying here that 84 individual farmers have been told to discontinue farming.

And you say you could come into this House and you could bring statistics, you indicate that all is well in Saskatchewan agricultural community. I ask you if you can do it? Stand up and put forward the statistics that all is well; I dare you to stand up in this House. I have the floor yet.

We have asked you in estimates whether you have done an analysis. We have asked you if you had communications with the agricultural community, the wheat pools, the NFU, the Palliser Wheat Growers, all of the farm community associations, and you indicated when you were putting in this miserable \$4 million emergency help that, no, you couldn't, in fact, stand up and indicate the condition in rural Saskatchewan. That's what you told us.

Tonight you said, "No. I don't know any of the statistics. I can't tell you how the agricultural community is." Well, I have placed before you some statistics from the Farm Credit Corporation. I've put forward some statistics from your friends, the Royal Bank, and there are a number of other financial institutions that I think that you should be checking.

If there are 3,000 farmers in serious problems with the Farm Credit Corporation, another 85 that've told to get out of farming by the Royal Bank of Canada, then I say, Mr. Minister, that either you should have done an analysis and come into this House and disclosed it, or else I think we have a justified request from you to categorically stand up here and indicate why the farmers never had it so good. Do it.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I'm not sure whether you were here earlier tonight in the debate . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well then, I would like to repeat, if you weren't listening to what I said, is: I could have pointed to statistics. I said I could have pointed statistics; statistics like: in Saskatchewan we have one bankruptcy, one farm bankruptcy, roughly, for every 600 farmers; whereas in Manitoba, they have one farm bankruptcy for every 1,400 farmers.

I could have pointed to statistics that suggest, like, what came out of the Agricultural Outlook Conference that suggested that Saskatchewan's net realizable farm income for '84 is going to go up, whereas, in provinces like Manitoba, there's going to be not the same picture. I could have pointed to those statistics, I said, and said all is well. But I didn't.

What, in fact, we did is, we acted. We acted because we believe there is a problem out there. You and I are on the same wave length, if you would just try and understand that. I believe there is a problem; you believe there is a problem. So what we have done is act. And The Farm Security Act is only one small part of that.

If I had wanted to rely on statistics totally . . . If I had wanted to rely on statistics totally, I could have relied on the most recent farm bankruptcy statistics for Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan recorded two farm bankruptcies for March, down from the March, 1983 figure of five. I could point here and say we've had a 250 per cent decrease in farm bankruptcies. Are you trying to tell me that that would make the problem go away? Certainly not. You can go ahead and do your analysis through a paralysis, as is a favourite phrase over there, and nothing would get done. We chose to do something.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Minister, I find it curious that you would choose to totally avoid the whole question of the difficulty that farmers find themselves in at the present time. Even though every indication is, is that not since the late '60s and possibly not even then, have farmers been in such a desperate condition in the province of Saskatchewan.

You mentioned earlier another program that you had put into place, one of individuals going to committees to be consulted. And you can question whether or not a plan that is similar to one in place in Manitoba and Ontario, which you copied and put into place here, will work or not.

But I think the simple fact that you have no money in that program would indicate that what you're attempting to do is lay the responsibility for refusing these farmers on the backs of their neighbours and friends. And I say that, as well, is unfortunate.

And I want to just quote to you again from this article of last Friday, by Tom Nunn, which talks about that program, seeing as you referred to it.

It says:

One measure of distress is the growing rush to the new provincial government program shaped after similar programs in Ontario and Manitoba.

This is the new and exciting, innovative program that you thought up, Mr. Minister. Under . . .

An Hon. Member: — First in North America.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — First in North America. Let me remind you, following the NDP in Manitoba. Under the plan, farmers in financial trouble can get government guarantees for operating loans from banks. In three weeks, 150 farmers have applied for guarantees so they can seed their crop this year.

Mr. Minister, in that short time, 150 farmers have applied — not got any money remind you, not got any money out of your program — but are saying they can't seed their crop unless you help them out.

We have talked about ways of helping the farmers. My friend and colleague from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg talked about a six-point program which would have included a moratorium on farm debt for 18 months; talked about a fuel rebate.

But, Mr. Minister, I want to suggest one other thing. What about you insisting on the oil companies who are benefiting from \$150 million tax write-off passing a little bit of that onto the farmers who are attempting to fill their fuel tank at the present time?

Mr. Chairman, when I talk about the farm debt moratorium and other things the government can do to help out, I think it's unfortunate that your gift to the oil companies of \$150 million a year has not been passed on — has not been passed on in any way to the farmers of this province.

Your whole strategy, even of trickle down economics, where you pour a \$150 million of our tax money into the oil companies so that it would help out the farmers, is simply not working.

Farm fuel costs at the present time in my area are 20 per cent higher than they were when you took office under a promise, a promise made to the farmers that fuel costs would be less.

And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that every indication is, is that farmers in this province are in desperate shape, and you are doing nothing to help them out.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, first of all, I'm very interested by your comment that farm costs are up by 20 per cent since we took over.

And I wish on farm fuel . . . I wish you'd provide that information for the House, here. Perhaps you could table it. Could you perhaps table it for us, is what I'm saying, because I'd be interested in seeing those numbers? Because, in fact, on my own farm, I can tell you, in fact, that my fuel costs are down this year over last, and they're down substantively. Well, the hon. member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, I'm certain, could set you straight on that, and in fact, that fuel prices are lower and I'm paying less this year than I did last year.

An Hon. Member: — Where are you getting it?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — That's my business, quite frankly. Mr. Chairman, I am getting the farm fuel to do the farming on my farm from the same place that we have got it, probably for the last 25 years there. And I would suspect that the hon. member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg can tell you where we get our fuel, because he knows. And, frankly, it's nothing to do with it. The point I wanted to make is that it's lower this year substantively than last year.

Secondly, your points are relative to oil companies — are in fact, as usual, distortions of the facts. And in fact my hon. colleague here has set the record straight on more than one occasion, so far as what the oil programs have done in this province. And especially what they're doing around the rural countryside to help young farmers, because there's many in my area, and I suspect in your area, and I suspect in the area of the Minister of Finance, and in several other areas of the province . . . It's the kind of oil activity that's allowing the young farmers out there to gain some additional income by working on the rigs during the winter, for example, and all the spin-off benefits that go with it in the community. So it's been very good for rural communities in this province, I would suggest to you.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Minister, you mentioned that you are able to get your fuel for a great deal less, and I can guarantee you that you're not getting it at your local bulk station, whether that's Esso or Co-op or Gulf. It's very obvious that you are involved in the fuel war that's going on, where the large multinationals are coming in and undercutting the local bulk dealers. And you, Mr. Minister, if you're playing that game on your farm . . . Well, you may not believe in the local community, but I can tell you that's why the local businessmen, the small businessmen, are in trouble. And you have stood up in this Assembly and said, "I'm taking part of that, doing in at my local Co-op, and Gulf station, and Esso station, and I'm bringing in my fuel by the tanker and I'm going by those small businessmen in my community." That's unfortunate, Mr. Minister.

But what the question was is: how can you indicate to us how the oil companies, who are getting \$150 million tax write-off holiday — how that is being passed on to the farmers? You're the one who is saying how great your policies are. I would like you to tell me that?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I would just like to, for the record, know for certain if in fact you are calling me a liar when I say I am not getting my fuel from the same place I got it for, that the farmers had it from, from the last several years. Are you trying to say that that's not true?

And secondly, are you trying to suggest that in fact I'm doing something different relative to the black market, whatever that is? I'm telling you that I am getting it cheaper, I'm getting it from the same place we've always got it. And if you are suggesting that I'm lying, I wish you would speak that clear on the record.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, the minister is very sensitive about where he is getting his fuel. He is getting off on a bit of a tangent here and becoming very defensive. But I know that there is a war going on, where the multinationals are delivering direct to the farmers, going by the small co-ops in the rural communities, and apparently he's part of that.

But I would like to know, Mr. Minister, what I would like to is whether or not, in your talking to farm groups, the NFU or the Palliser Wheat Growers, whether they've given you any indication of the number of farmers who are in desperate situations this spring in putting in their crop, and buying fuel, and that sort of thing.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, no, they have not given me any definite indication of numbers, and in fact, as I recall the NFU brief, I'm not even so sure the subject was discussed in there, to be quite honest with you. I am working from memory.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Chairman, thank you. Now that we have a new chairman, we can maybe get into the point I wanted to make without me being interrupted. I'm suggesting that I was interrupted, and I couldn't read this paragraph, so I intend to read it into the record, like I was given permission to before.

And the former attorney general, who wasn't a farmer; was a lawyer, but knew what the plights that the farmers were in; did something about; said this when he was introducing the bill.

I should like to beg the indulgence of the House to make a few general comments respecting some of the circumstances and history which has led this Government to introduce this Bill today . . . during the last 20 years or so, Saskatchewan has witnessed some considerable changes in its economic life with the discovery of oil and gas, potash and minerals in the province. These have resulted in some new industries coming to this Province. For that we are all thankful. But notwithstanding the development of these industries, I'm sure that the people of Saskatchewan will all agree with me that still the most basic and most important industry in this Province, the prime industry of this Province, has always been and will continue to be that of agriculture. (Mr. Chairman — agriculture.)

This important industry of our province has in its history been buffeted and beaten pretty badly from time to time. It has been the victim of changing weather, changing economics, changing market conditions . . . yes, even the victim of the Liberal Party opposite, yet it survives.

And I'd say today we are in a situation that is similar to that. The only difference is this party doesn't recognize the problems that farmers are in. This party doesn't appreciate that, like the minister of agriculture said, and this one's very short, Mr. Chairman.

We are not saying (and Jack Messer said on April 4, 1971; we are not saying) . . . that this Bill will solve all the problems that farmers are confronted with in the province today.

Nobody said that. Nobody said that the farm security bill will solve all the problems.

. . . but it will give a year's grace or relief to those who are committed to pay debts that they cannot now pay. We hope that during that year's time, the province and the federal government will not only recognize, but will have enacted legislation assisting farmers, and also have established markets providing for better returns to them.

And I think the same situation exists today, Mr. Deputy Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, for allowing me to get that comment on the record.

We have a situation that the Minister says he agrees with us. He says he's on the same wavelength. The only difference is he has \$30 million for Hunter if Hunter wants a loan. He's got \$300 million for the oil companies when they want it.

But what has he got for farmers? What has he got for farmers? He won't even pass security legislation that will protect farmers. I'm ready, Mr. Chairman, I know my colleagues are, to move on with the bills clause by clause till we get to clause 5, section 5 of the printed bill, where I intend to move an amendment. Okay, Mr. Chairman.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2 agreed 2.

Clauses 3 and 4 as amended agreed to.

Clause 5

Mr. Engel: — I would like to move, seconded by my colleague, the member from Pelly, that section 5 of the printed bill be renumbered as section 6, and that section 5 read as follows, section 5:

Notwithstanding anything in any other Act,

(a) all actions and proceedings commenced against a farmer prior to the coming into force of this Act to recover debt or to enforce payment of a debt, and hereby stay until October 31, 1985; and

(b) no action or proceeding shall be commenced against a farmer to recover a debt or to enforce payment of a debt, until October 31, 1985.

I so move.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I understand that the hon. member has a bill, presently before the House, that's very similar to that, and this would in anticipation of that, and I understand you can't move, and I understand the motion or the amendment would be out of order as it would be, as it's virtually the same as Bill No. 30.

An Hon. Member: — It's in anticipation of Bill No. 30.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — It's the same as Bill No. 30 presently before the House.

Mr. Chairman: — Order. As the members can see, I've given this considerable thought, and even some research here before the Assembly. There are two points raised. First of all the question of . . . there are two issues here. The first question is the admissibility of the amendment. And I find that the amendment is not in order for the following reason: the bill before us, Bill 34, An amendment to the Farm Security Act, is an amendment to a bill that has been in place in this province for 44 years.

On page 233 of *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, 773 (1) — "An amendment is out of order if it is irrelevant to the bill." I do not rule that it is irrelevant, but it is also out of order. "If it is beyond its scope or governed by or dependent upon amendments already negated." So it's beyond the scope of this bill, it's an entirely different matter.

The second reason I also rule against the amendment is the rule of anticipation. "The rule against anticipation is that a matter must not be anticipated if it is contained in a more effective form of proceeding than the proceeding by which it is sought to be anticipated." The entire bill . . . the amendment is already contained in an entire bill which is Bill 30 before this Assembly.

An Hon. Member: — Did you check the bill?

Mr. Chairman: — Order. But I will answer the question for the member from Quill Lakes. Bill 30 is a public document before this Assembly, so that it is open to the whole world to see what's in that bill.

I rule that on the basis of Bill 30 being before this Assembly, and this amendment being the lesser form of Bill 30 that this is a rule against anticipation, and the amendment is out of order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: — I think I have one here that anticipates. It's weaker, Mr. Chairman, and isn't going to be quite as effective as you. But this will be closer to being in order because of the argument you made in the past. And this bill very simply says that:

Section 5 of the printed bill be renumbered as Section 6 and that 5 reads as follows (under 5 which is not a quote from another bill that's in place):

For the period up to December 31st 1985 a total moratorium be placed on all foreclosures on farm land and machinery.

And I think you'll find that that straightforward amendment will meet with your approval because of the nature that is not going against Bill 30.

An Hon. Member: — Now why would you be against that?

Mr. Chairman: — That section 5 of the printed bill be renumbered as section 6 and that 5 read as follows:

5. For the period up to December 31, 1985 a total moratorium be placed on all foreclosure on farmland and machinery.

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Chairman, for the same reason advanced before on the rule of anticipation, they've simply changed . . . The only material change is to move October 31 to December 31 of the same year. Two months hardly makes that any significant kind of change. That's not a substantive change. It still prevents foreclosures, the same thing with the legislation proposes in section 30, the Bill presently before the House.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure on what grounds the House Leader was speaking to the bill, but I would like to say that it is our opinion that at a time when farmers of this province — I think we have established very clearly tonight — are in a crisis situation, and we have listed out any number of people who will agree with that position, the Royal Bank, farm groups, farm leaders . . . Mr. Chairman, I think that it's very important that this Assembly deal with the most important issue, probably, that we will deal with during this session. And that is protecting farmers.

Mr. Chairman: — Order! We are speaking to the point of order. Do you have any specific argument on the point of order?

Mr. Lingenfelter: — What I am speaking to, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that you're trying to explain to us that this has nothing to do with the bill, and I am attempting to talk about the issue that is at hand here, that being the plight of farmers which we have talked . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order! I take it that you do have no argument on the point then.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — I certainly do.

Mr. Chairman: — Okay, would you proceed with the argument on the allegation that this is contrary to the rule against anticipation?

Mr. Lingenfelter: — The point that I am bringing up here in dealing with the point of order raised by the House Leader of anticipation, Mr. Chairman, is the very simple fact that we have an issue here before us that we believe is of a crisis situation that the government is attempting to avoid, and we believe that we should bring it forward at this time. And any attempt to put it off or to put it to the bottom of the order paper would indicate one thing to this Assembly and . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order! The issue here is not really a question of politics. The issue is a

question of procedure, and I'm asking for argument on procedure. If you have no argument then I will call for other members to give us argument on that point, or I will rule. So do you have any argument on the procedure that whether I should rule in favour of this motion or opposed to it?

Mr. Koskie: — Just on the principle that you put forward on the previous amendment, that is anticipation. What I'm indicating there, and I think truly what was considered there is the fact that that which was put forward in the original amendment which you ruled out of order was, in fact, an extraction from a bill that is before the House.

But what we are dealing with here, if you carried to the logical conclusion what the House Leader is saying, then no amendments could be really provided which would really address the major problems of the farming communities in this bill here. And what I'm saying is that what we have done is move away from the rule of anticipation which is the duplication of the previous legislation that the minister from Assiniboia . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I have the floor, you spoke.

And therefore what I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is that this here does not breach the rule of anticipation which you so clearly put forward by the very fact that it was an extraction — the previous amendment was an extraction. This indeed is completely new, it's a resolution or amendment to the act which really brings into effect a broadening of the protection of farmers.

Mr. Chairman: — If there's anyone else that wishes to speak . . . If not, I will then give my ruling. I will give it a brief moment of consideration. I will rule on the point.

I've considered the current amendment before the committee. I rule that under admissibility of an amendment, that this is not beyond the scope of the bill.

However, I do find that in its form, it is still contrary to the rule of anticipation.

The rule against anticipation is that a matter must not be anticipated if it is contained in a more effective form of proceeding than the proceeding by which it is sought to be anticipated.

My ruling is that Bill 30 is now before the Assembly, and for that reason it is before the Assembly in a more effective form, and I rule against the motion.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Chairman, we would like to challenge that ruling.

Mr. Chairman: — The ruling of the chairman of the committee has been challenged. I do now leave the chair. The Speaker will return.

The committee reported progress.

Mr. Schmidt: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, during consideration of an amendment to Bill 34 by the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, I, as chairman of the committee, ruled that the amendment was out of order on the grounds of anticipation, the matter already being before the House on another bill. The member for Quill Lakes challenged my ruling.

Mr. Speaker: — Shall the ruling of the chairman be sustained?

Agreed.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 34 — An Act to amend the Farm Security Act

Clause 5 (continued)

Clause 5 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 35 — An Act respecting Noxious Weeds

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

Motion agreed.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move that the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 33 — An Act to repeal The Agricultural Research Foundation Act and to Make provision for Related Matters

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

Bill No. 34 — An Act to amend The Farm Security Act

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and bill read a third time.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 19

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, I would just like to introduce the officials here with me. On my right is Don Moroz, deputy minister. Next to him, Denise Perret, special assistant to the deputy minister. Behind the deputy minister is Harvey Murchison, director of administration, Tourism and Small Business. And I would point out that administration for our department is under the same roof as Tourism and Small Business. And immediately behind me, Bob Volk, director of policy and planning. And other officials, I will introduce as necessary, if needed.

Item 1

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I want to first of all ask you some specific questions of detail and then get into the more general. And can you . . . what are the names and the monthly salaries of each of the ministerial assistants and advisers and other political personnel surrounding this important office? Can you provide that list of names and salaries?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Sure. My question to the hon. member is: do you want me to read it into the record or do you want me to send it over?

Mr. Koskie: — Bring that over. I note, Mr. Minister, that the deputy minister has a special assistant. I wonder if you could provide us with the qualifications and salary of the special assistant to the deputy minister.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Okay. For the hon. member I'd like to do both. I'd like to read this into the record and provide you with the sheet as well, something of Miss Denise Perret's background. She got her B.A. in political science in 1978 at the University of Alberta, her masters of public administration, 1979, Queen's University in Kingston. Her work history is: from November '79 to April, 1981, she was an administrative analyst, bureau of management improvement, Department of Finance, Saskatchewan government; May '81 to '83, administrative analyst, budget bureau, Department of Finance, Saskatchewan government; January of '84 to present, special assistant to the deputy minister, Department of Economic Development and Trade, Government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, in respect to any of your personal staff, have any of them an assigned government vehicle?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — No, nor have they ever been.

Mr. Koskie: — Are any of them authorized to have expense accounts in respect to the operation as ministerial assistant or advisor?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — No, they don't have expense accounts. From time to time they may put in a claim for picking up the coffee bill at a seminar or something like that. But no, they don't have expense accounts.

Mr. Koskie: — I was wondering whether the minister could provide any of the expense accounts which you indicated that they may have picked up during the current course of the year? Whether you could provide the expenses that were paid by any of the minister's staff?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I'm prepared to go along with the tradition of the House. I understand that these questions are on the order paper, on the blues, and I'm prepared to deal with the question that's on the blues and debate it, get it in its proper format; and that also will give the hon. member some opportunity to express with some degree of precision just exactly what it is that he wants.

Mr. Koskie: — Well you indicated, Mr. Minister, that I asked you in respect to whether they're authorized to have expense accounts. You indicated that they were not. However you indicated further that they may in fact be picking up some of the accounts and that way incurring some expenses.

And what I'm asking you, since you indicated that they do that in fact — what I'm asking you is if you can provide a record of the expense accounts in which the minister's personnel staff, in fact, has paid?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — As I've said, I'm prepared to go along with the tradition of the House. I remember when I was sitting on that side, it was handled the same way and the stock answer from the then House Leader, Roy Romanow, that was being quoted extensively earlier this evening, was that we will deal with it by way of written question, or order for return, or whatever. Or if you're not satisfied with what you get in that route, all of these things show up in public accounts in any event, so you know you have that vehicle open to you as well.

Mr. Koskie: — Well, Mr. Minister, we have been attempting to get the expense accounts in some detail, as you know. It has been the House Leader's position, and the Minister of Finance, to curtail the detail of information. And I would have thought that you, as Deputy Premier, would clearly have nothing to hide, and that therefore we could expect better things from you in so far as a full disclosure of the expense account.

I find it very strange that on one hand you indicate here that you are such open government that is a new era in the history of Saskatchewan; that this information is going to be provided unfettered to the public because public spending is, indeed, something that the public are entitled to know in detail.

And whether or not what happened in the past is not the question and issue, the question and issue is: what, in fact, — why are you so ill-prepared to provide the details of the expenses which you indicate that your political staff picks up? I can't understand, if you have a political staff, a personal staff, and you authorize them to pick up certain expenses, why you would not provide that information to the legislature. Can you be more specific?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Again Mr. Chairman, in keeping with the long-standing tradition of the House, and I don't claim authorship for this — I was sitting right about where the Leader of the Opposition is sitting today when I heard the then House Leader, the Hon. Roy Romanow, expound at length on the vehicles that are available for you to seek that information, one being the order paper, the other one being *Public Accounts*, Mr. Chairman. And I don't think it's a question of being ill-prepared at all. I think it's just a matter of using the proper vehicle to get that information — to access that information.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, in giving full details of the expenses of your department and who made the expenditures, how can you stand up in this House and say that it's not in the public interest to divulge that information? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I want to ask you: how can you stand up in this House and indicate that it's not in the public interest for them to know the details of the expenses of your personal staff which you indicate that they have, in fact, made some expenditures? Why, in fact? I'm not asking in respect to trips yet, I'll come to that.

You indicated here in the House . . . I asked you whether the personal staff, in fact, had an expense account, and you indicated no, not per se, but that they, indeed, did pick up the various tabs for coffee and what other entertainment or whatever other item that may be of interest to the particular minister. And so I'm asking you: how can you stand up here and indicate that that is not, in fact, in the public interest, the amounts of money that's being expended by the personal staff in their capacity?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I don't think, Mr. Chairman, anyone suggested that it wasn't in the public interest in any way, shape, or form. I think what I said was our proper vehicles for access to that kind of information. One is the order paper. either it's a written question or order for return. The other one, of course, is *Public Accounts*. When the public account's filed, those things are filed in it. And, Mr. Chairman, that's nothing startling or new as it relates to how this House has functioned. It's functioned that way for years, ever since I've been here, and, I'm sure, long before that.

Mr. Koskie: — I'd like to ask the Minister — and I'll come back to expenses in more detail, and some considerable detail — I want to ask whether or not this minister has one or more or none legislative secretaries, because there's a large number of them that have been appointed — some 12 — and I'm wondering whether you have also attached to your department a Legislative Secretary. Could you indicate who that person is if indeed you have one?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I'm one of the more fortunate ministers in government benches in that I am responsible for one of the more important departments of government and, in fact, the Premier has decided that my department is important enough that I should have two legislative

secretaries. And that shouldn't startle anyone because it's a matter of public record and has been since the appointments were made, one being the member for North Battleford, the other one being the member for Regina North East; one of them being largely responsible for the area dealing with trade, the other one dealing largely in the area of economic development.

Mr. Koskie: — Can you indicate whether, during the current year, there were any expenses that were incurred by the individual legislative secretaries in their capacity of serving you as minister?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Yes. In the administration responsible for this department we wouldn't know, because those expenses are paid by Executive Council. And you know, I just can't answer the question.

Mr. Koskie: — Are you indicating that all expenses incurred by the legislative secretaries in your department are, in fact, all paid by the Executive Council? Is that, in fact, what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — That's my understanding, yes.

Mr. Koskie: — Do the legislative secretaries have any prerequisites like automobiles at their disposal? And do they have an expense account?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — They don't have a car assigned to them. They have access to pool cars when they're doing specifically ministerially-related jobs; you know, if you know what I'm saying. If they're actively representing the minister at a particular function or in a particular exercise, they do have access to the pool car or, I expect, other forms of public transportation — if they're representing the minister on behalf of, or the government on behalf of the minister.

Mr. Koskie: — When you indicate other forms of transportation, I'd ask you whether it, in fact, includes executive aircraft in the performance of their duties.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well I think that it wouldn't be excluded, but I . . . I'm sure that they wouldn't be excluded from riding on executive aircraft no more than I have excluded members opposite when the government aircraft was going some place, and members opposite have reason to be there. I can recall on at least one occasion inviting the Leader of the opposition to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I'm telling you the truth. That's exactly the way it is and as it should be. I see no point in an aircraft going from A to B with one full seat, when there are other people that are trying to get to the same destination.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, if, in fact, you give a particular assignment to the Legislative Secretary, are there any occasions in which they have had the right to book the executive aircraft and to use the executive aircraft for the purposes of transportation?

I see that you're getting a lot of help from other ministers. I ask the minister whose estimates are before us whether or not the executive aircraft have, on any occasion, been used exclusively by a Legislative Secretary for carrying out the duties.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — No, as I understand it, the only person that can authorize executive aircraft is a minister, number one. And number two, I can think of no occasion when either of my executive secretaries used executive aircraft.

Mr. Koskie: — Well you indicate that the policy is that it would have to be authorized by the minister. I can understand that. But what I'm specifically asking you: are there any occasions in which you have authorized, as minister, the use of a plane without accompanying it, for the legislative secretaries in order to carry out their specific duties?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I don't recall a Legislative Secretary having exclusive use to an executive aircraft, ever. That's not to say that I wouldn't authorize the use of an executive aircraft for the Legislative Secretary that was to represent me at some hypothetical situation. Maybe it would be the official opening of a multimillion dollar plant in Quill Lakes constituency. And I see nothing wrong with that.

I think if you know there were problems with time, etc., I would not hesitate. I wouldn't do it in any regular fashion. But by the same token I could visualize the situation where I would authorize executive aircraft for the use of a Legislative Secretary.

Mr. Koskie: — Well I'm certainly pleased with the minister's answer because I take it what we have here is further expansion of the use of the executive aircraft. That may well, in fact, be why they need three aircrafts rather than two. Not only do they have a large cabinet, but they have 12 legislative secretaries. And what the minister has clearly said that the basic policy is, in fact, to authorize, and, in fact, make available the executive aircraft to the legislative secretaries.

Further in respect to the legislative secretaries, and that I'm addressing in respect to yours, Mr. Minister. Can you indicate whether your legislative secretaries are provided with office space on a permanent basis?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Now at least any Legislative Secretary that I have responsibility for has no office space except that ordinary available to MLAs.

Mr. Koskie: — And does the legislative secretaries that you have under your umbrella . . . are they allowed any additional staff to carry out the duties which are assigned on behalf of your department?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — No, no, they are served by the same department that I'm served by. We're working for the same department, and the departmental people support them as they support me.

Mr. Koskie: — I'm interested in the history of your department, Mr. Minister. Can you indicate the number of deputies that this department has had since its inception, and could you explain — or first of all — would you indicate the number of deputies that this department has had since its inception, and would you indicate any particular reason why the number?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Okay, since the birth of this department there have been two deputies. One: Jim Hutch, who is now president, I believe it is, of the Saskatchewan Research Council; and two, Don Moroz, who is currently deputy minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Koskie: — I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, is Jayne Blakely, B-l-a-k-e-l-y, currently a member of the minister's staff?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Did you say Jane Blakeney? I did have a Blakeney employed at SMDC, and she quit. I don't know why. I'm a little disappointed about that, but in answer to your question: the short answer is no.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, one of the apparent duties of your ministry is apparently to do a considerable amount of travelling throughout the world. And I wonder if you could, in fact, detail, and give me a list and the dates and the trips that you have taken out of the country — out-of-province — during the short time that you have been Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. On August 21st, Mr. Speaker, to August 30th, nine days — that's nine days from the time I left Regina until I returned to Regina — and I was hardly

there long enough for jet lag. And in the time that I was there, I think I had in the neighbourhood of 12 speaking engagements and visited with government officials and business people.

And it was what you'd call your working trip, Mr. Chairman, and something that members opposite may not be terribly familiar with. In addition, we attended agricultural equipment shows in support of Saskatchewan manufacturers of dryland farming equipment, and high technology related to the agriculture sector.

An Hon. Member: — August 21st to 30th, where did you go?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — In addition . . . August 21 to 30? That was Australia . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes.

An Hon. Member: — When your guys went there, they stayed for six weeks, boys.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Not true. I should point out that those guys were never there. I was the first minister of the Crown from Saskatchewan ever to visit Australia in an official capacity.

An Hon. Member: — Wes Robbins paid his own way.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — And didn't represent Saskatchewan, in any case. And while I was there, Mr. Speaker, a very . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You forgot to put it in the records. What were you hiding? And nobody that I talked to while I was there would admit having ever talked to you, so . . .

An Hon. Member: — We were talking uranium, and so should you have been.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — We did. I got a quick lesson on how you turn a uranium mine into a copper mine. And in any event, in any event, on November 27th, 1983, not in my capacity as minister of this department, but in my capacity as chairman of Agdevco, I . . .

An Hon. Member: — You went to Bulgaria.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — No, I did not. I went to Bulgaria among other places . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, no, no. The key stop that particular trip was Vienna, and we opened our Agdevco office in Vienna at that time, and he's doing very well in the cattle business. I think I announced the other day in this House that, in fact, we just received a commitment for another shipload of Herefords to Bulgaria.

And we also — I hope I'm not jumping the gun on this one, but we have the Minister of Agriculture for Bulgaria visiting Saskatchewan later this year, and with a view to even more positively cementing the relationships that we have with some of our customers internationally.

And then on December 1st, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, a chamber of commerce led investor seminar in London, in which I participated. And more recently, Mr. Chairman, from March 30th until April 20th — that was about 20 or 21 days — three weeks, three-quarters of a month. That gives you some idea of how long a time it was. In that time we hit three cities in Holland, probably five or six cities in Germany, two in Saudi Arabia. And, Mr. Chairman, that represents the extent of my foreign travel as Minister of Economic Development and Trade, with the possible exception of one or two little trips into United States . . .

An Hon. Member: — Where?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — What did you say, I didn't hear you?

An Hon. Member: — Where are going in the States? Where did you go?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Oh, I've been down to Fargo to visit the King of Norway, and I've been to Minot. And since I live right down there on the border, I often drive, and that's not a matter of record here.

Mr. Koskie: — Well I wonder, starting at the information that you have given on November 27th, '83, a little jaunt into Vienna. I wonder if the minister could indicate who accompanied him, and whether you would give, for the interest for the people of Saskatchewan, the cost of that particular trip?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — There were two people accompanied me on that trip, Mr. Chairman, Dorothy Sollosy of my office, and Gordon Wells, president of Agdevco (agricultural development corporation). The purpose of the trip was to conduct the official opening of the Agdevco office in Vienna. The Agdevco office in Vienna, of course, is strategically located to service the eastern bloc markets, and with some success.

While we were there, of course, we met with government officials, banking officials interested in involving themselves with us in the world of counter-trade. And in addition to that we met with, I would guess, upwards of a hundred of the business community and governmental people while we were in Vienna. In a nutshell — in a broad brush way — there you have it.

Mr. Koskie: — And I wonder if you have the global cost of that earth-shaking expedition on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Yes, well you see this is part of the problem we have. You want a global cost, and part of that cost, Mr. Chairman, was covered by Agdevco as that's what we were there for. And I would expect, although I don't know, I would expect that the cost of Dorothy Sollosy of my office was covered by the department. But my suggestion to you is to seek that advice through a motion for return since I don't have Agdevco people here, and I can't give you a global number. And my advice again is to seek that information through an order for return.

Mr. Koskie: — Well I don't think it's quite going to be that way. I think that your predecessor, the member from Regina South, who was the minister of your department — not very successful I may say — made one of his jaunts into England, and Germany, and another country in Europe — Italy, I believe. And that cost the taxpayers \$30,000 in global figure. And when asked what was the purpose of it, I don't think the minister was able to elaborate any concrete results.

And what I'm asking you, Mr. Minister: surely in your departments you have a record of what moneys was spent by your department in respect to this here particular trip. And you say that we can do it by orders for return, and that's true enough, but the other point is that we also have estimates here, and we are entitled to receive the information up to the current figure without having to wait a year or a year and a half as you delay providing answers to the returns, or waiting for public accounts.

I think it's very important, and I would ask the Minister: certainly other ministers — your predecessor — was not reluctant to provide the global figure of \$30,000 that he paid out of taxpayers' money immediately on being elected on his little jaunt over to Europe which he indicated brought no concrete results. And so what I'm asking is: can you provide a cost of this here extravagant trip to Vienna?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — As I said earlier, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member is asking for global costs. And I've just told him that part of the cost was covered by Agdevco, and part of the cost presumably was covered by my department. And the normal procedure in this House has always been that that kind of information is accessed through order for return. It's been forever thus. And I quite . . .

An Hon. Member: — Ask Rick Volk, he just told us today that he would get it for us.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I don't run his department. If he wants to do it, that's fine with him. I'm not going to do it. There you have it.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister, will you give us the expenses of that trip incurred by your department? Let me be clear; we're not now asking for this global, which you're using as your cover, just asking how much was spent by your department.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — I'll tell you what I'll do, Mr. Chairman, because I can remember. I can remember back in 1981 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And I'll just tell you how fuzzy my memory is, because the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, Mr. Chairman, and one Bailey Dickson, one Dickson Bailey, who at that time was chief electoral officer, went on a junket — a three week junket — around Africa. And we asked . . . I can remember asking for the details, the expenses of that particular trip. Do you know when I got the details of that particular trip? Well, I'll tell you when. May 2, 1984.

Mr. Koskie: — Order, Mr. Chairman. But what I have asked is a specific question. The Leader of the Opposition, rather, asked a specific question of whether he would, in fact, provide the specific amount relative to the trip to Vienna which the minister indicated that he took, and a part of which was paid by his department. And we are asking whether he, in fact, will provide that specific information.

And it seems to me that that's the question that he has to address — whether he will or not provide that, not going off into another time, or another era that has nothing to do with the specific question that I've asked.

Mr. Chairman: — He's entitled to not answer. Order. He's entitled to not answer if he wishes. He's entitled to say why, and I'm inclined to see if he strays any further or not in telling us why.

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Well, what I'm trying to set out for the hon. members, Mr. Chairman, is the procedure, the procedure in the past.

Now Executive Council pays part of my travel, as the Leader of the Opposition well knows. My department may pay travel for Dorothy Sollosy. Agdevco pays for Gordon Wells. And you expect me to come in here tonight with a whole package. Even if I was desirous of coming in here tonight with a whole package and laying it on you — I tell you, I waited for two years to get this information, and . . .

Mr. Chairman, and the other point, the other point: can anyone tell me why this neutral, impartial, non-partisan, completely above all partisan activities, the chief electoral officer of Saskatchewan was trucking around the country, trucking around Africa with the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg? Mr. Chairman . . .

Mr. Chairman: — Order, order, order! The member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg doesn't have to answer that question.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — May I repeat the question which gave rise to this outburst from the minister? Will you tell us how much your department — the department we're now reviewing — paid him for this trip?

You may say that the Department of Labour paid part of it. Just tell us what this department paid. Or is that too much trouble for the minister?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Chairman, I've, I think, four times now said that the normal procedure for accessing that kind of information is through the order paper. And maybe you should ask other ministers for mine while you have them under questioning and see if you are any more successful.

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Chairman, it being near 10 o'clock, I move the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:05 p.m.