

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

May 25, 1984

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

CLERK: — I beg to advise the Assembly that Mr. Speaker will not be present this morning to open this sitting.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. TUSA: — Mr. Minister, it's my pleasure this morning to introduce to the House on behalf of my friend and colleague, the MLA from Redberry, Mr. John Gerich, who is unable to be here this morning — it's my pleasure to introduce a group of students, 40 students from Hafford High School, who have come from a considerable distance. They are accompanied by their teacher, Dennis Taylor, and chaperon, Mrs. Mary Werzak. The students will be visiting the Assembly for question period and then having a tour of the legislative building following.

I will be meeting with the students at 11 o'clock for pictures, and at that time I'll be more than pleased to answer any questions they may have. I wish them a very pleasant stay here in Regina, and I hope that they enjoy the other points of interest which they will be visiting.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members of the House to welcome the students from Hafford High School.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce 21 members of the grade 4 class from Grenfell that are in the west gallery, accompanied by their teachers, Carol Piller and Gordon Warman. I hope you enjoy the proceedings this morning, and I will be meeting with you for some pictures and questions about today's procedure, or the operation of the legislature, a little later on.

Have a safe trip home. Thanks for coming in.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BAKER: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to introduce 25 students from Swanson Christian School. They are accompanied by their teacher, Ron Lowen. I'd ask my colleagues to give them a hardy welcome.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Loan to Char Industries by Sedco

MR. ENGEL: — I have a question for the Minister of Small Business and Tourism. Sedco . . . I've dealt with this question when I asked you about a month ago. It's about a fire that destroyed Char Industries in Estevan. Sedco provided the loan, just to give a little background, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of \$220,000, a term loan, \$145,000 in bridge financing. I asked you a number of questions about this arrangement last month, Mr. Minister, and you didn't have any answers.

I'm wondering if you've had time to learn something over the past month. At the time of the fire, what amount was still owing to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan through Sedco, and have you

and your officials determined whether the full amount owing will be recovered by insurance?

HON. MR. KLEIN: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't know offhand what the total amount left owing with that account was at the time of the fire. I suppose that, if you'd like, I could supply that information to you. Sedco's interests were, however, protected by the insurance policy, and I don't believe that we have a particular problem.

MR. ENGEL: — Have you determined, Mr. Minister, whether the plant will be rebuilt in Estevan or relocated in another site in the near future, or is this industry a loss to Estevan as a result of the fire?

HON. MR. KLEIN: — Mr. Deputy, a lot of that determines on the adjustment of the insurance policy and, depending on how that adjustment works out, it would then be up to the owners to determine whether or not they're going to rebuild or not. If not, then they would have to repay the balance of the financing due to Sedco, and we would have to start over so that our officials are in touch with them, just to see exactly what they prefer to do at this point in time.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Tourism and Small Business with respect to the Char industries fire. The minister has indicated that he believes that Sedco is fully covered and will not incur any loss because of the Char Industries fire. Is the minister aware that the final payroll cheques issued to 18 or so employees by Char Industries have bounced? And I ask the minister whether he or his colleague, the Minister of Labour, is going to take any steps to see that these people are paid; or is he going to be dilatory, as was the Minister of Labour, and allow many employees of another out-of-province firm to lose? Is he going to see that that happens in Char, or is he going to take action and see that the employees are paid?

HON. MR. KLEIN: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't know where the Leader of the Opposition gets his information from, but nobody has contacted me about any cheques bouncing, and I suppose if that problem occurred, they would certainly bring that to my attention. To date it has not been brought to my attention.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary to the minister. This is the same minister who told us that nobody came to him with respect to Raymond industries, and he's now in court. But I'll ask him again: are you not aware, are you not aware that employees of Char Industries have not been paid, that their cheques have bounced? Are you not aware of that?

HON. MR. KLEIN: — Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what I said. I'm not aware of any problem that exists with Char Industries in their payroll.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When the minister becomes aware, when the minister becomes aware that the payroll cheques were not honoured in due course, will he take steps to see that the employees are protected in the same way that you have told us that Sedco is protected as a result of this fire?

HON. MR. KLEIN: — When and if problems arise, we will deal with them at that time. I think for me to speculate right now is totally facetious, and we'll wait to see if there's a problem, and if there is, we'll deal with it accordingly.

Raymond Contractors Ltd.

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like also to direct a question to the Minister of Tourism and Small Business. And a number of small Saskatchewan companies have now had to take Sedco to court in order to try to collect nearly \$200,000 in payments for work that was done in Innovation Mall project in Saskatoon. The minister will know that the transplanted B.C. company was paid in excess of \$200,000. None of the subcontractors were, indeed, paid. A few

weeks ago the minister claimed that Sedco was reviewing all its legal options with respect to recovering the money from the general contractor, Raymond Contractors Ltd. of British Columbia. I want to ask you whether you have completed the review, and has the RCMP been involved in the review.

HON. MR. KLEIN: — Mr. Deputy, I'd like to correct one of his assertions that no subs have been paid. That's false. Now . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You have to understand how this works, but the sub-contractors have their own rights and their own responsibilities.

They have several remedies other than public criticism of Sedco and its officials, and we have helped them co-ordinate that role to ensure that they take the remedies that are available to them.

And until that's done, Sedco just has to go along with the legal situation that we are obligated with, because we are bound by a legal document. So what we are doing is simply assisting the subs in every way possible.

MR. KOSKIE: — I'd like to ask as a supplement, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Can the minister indicate what action, if any, that Sedco has decided to take against Raymond Contractors, the planted company from British Columbia which came in, took on, and refused to pay any of the sub-contractors? Any action been taken to recover this money?

HON. MR. KLEIN: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sedco doesn't recover the money, because they paid it out in accordance with the terms of their documentation. However, those funds are clearly trust funds, and trust funds belonging to the sub-contractors — not to Sedco. So let's understand that.

Now if the subs feel that they are entitled, or have been unjustly dealt with, they have to take their legal steps and get access to those trust funds in whatever method is available to them. Now we are co-operating to the fullest extend possible. Obviously it takes legal work. The subs now have got their legal resources behind them, and Sedco is co-operating fully to try to assist these sub-contractors obtain these trust funds.

MR. KOSKIE: — A further supplement. I'd like to ask the minister whether he will guarantee here today that legitimate and outstanding local sub-contractors, Saskatchewan based, whether he will give the commitment that, in fact, as alleged in your originating notice, a sum of \$198,740.20, which is outstanding to them — will he give the commitment that none of the Saskatchewan subcontractors, in fact, will lose money as a result of the actions of the transplanted company from British Columbia under the open for business philosophy of this government?

HON. MR. KLEIN: — Mr. Deputy, let's clear something up. This B.C. company has been doing business in Saskatchewan for a long time. These subtrades have dealt with them in the past. That's why the subtrades bid with that contractor in the first place. So as I said previously before, although we are here to assist with small business in every way, including subcontractors, we can't be expected to be their guardian angel. We can't be with them every moment of the day as they're bidding on their jobs, and as they're making and entering into contracts.

And surely, surely the member opposite is not suggesting for one moment that we have a separate set of rules that apply to government projects, and a separate set of rules that apply to the free enterprise system. That surely won't work out. So all these contractors and subtrades are in the same situation, and they're smart business people. Every now and then, if they get caught trapped, they have remedies, and we assist them with those remedies. Now simply because they were involved in a project for Sedco doesn't cloud the issue that it's different than if they were working for Sears or Eaton's or somebody.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, a supplementary. Would the minister give any explanation as to why Sedco would not take steps to see that the \$198,740 paid out and, as the minister admits, to be kept in trust, why they would not take steps to see that that trust money was deposited somewhere in Saskatchewan and not with the Bank of Nova Scotia at Abbotsford, British Columbia, as is the fact? Were steps taken to see that the money was at least in Saskatchewan where it could be attached?

HON. MR. KLEIN: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm surprised that the Leader of the Opposition misleads the House with what you say, sir, are facts. That is not factual — plain and simple. The money was paid out in accordance with the terms of our contract. The proper documentation was in place. There was never, ever a notice served by the subcontractors to Sedco. We had no recourse but to go along with our legal process. And your facts are not correct.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, supplementary. I'm making a mistake reading from the court documents. I ask you again, sir: did you take any steps to see that these subcontractors were protected by a materials bond, as opposed to a straight performance bond, in a circumstance where the work was being done on property owned either by the University of Saskatchewan or the Crown, and accordingly, where the ability to file a mechanics' lien was very drastically reduced?

This is not an ordinary commercial contract, as you're asserting. This is a contract on land where mechanics' liens are not able to be filed in the ordinary way.

HON. MR. KLEIN: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, this contract was about \$500,000. Clearly in terms of Sedco operations in the past — very, very small, when you consider the projects that your administration became involved in. I don't believe that we have found but perhaps one, maybe two instances where Sedco has ever, ever entered into materials and labour bond because, as you know, it adds dramatically to the cost of any project, and in most instances is not required, and is very, very seldom asked for.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Are you saying, Mr. Minister, that it is not the policy of Sedco to require a materials and labour bond — a payment for materials and labour bond — when the project is on Crown land and accordingly, where The Mechanics' Lien Act does not apply in the ordinary way?

We're not asking that this be done in ordinary commercial contracts. People can put a lien on the property. You can't put a lien on the university of Saskatchewan. That's when you needed the bond. Is it not your policy to provide it?

HON. MR. KLEIN: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, Innovation Mall was a much larger project. This was just simply an interior of completion of that mall. When that mall went up, there wasn't even a labour and materials bond put in place for the mall, let alone for this simple little installation inside.

Employment of Legislative Guide

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have a question for the Premier. My question has to do with fairness in your government. You present yourself as one of having a fair government. The case has to do with a constituent of mine who was told in March that he could return for a summer job as a guide in the Legislative Building. He was told that he would be called in early May, and that the job would last until he returned to university classes this fall.

When May came along, Mr. Premier, he began calling Supply and Services Department to find out what was happening. Finally, on the 14th, he was telephoned that he didn't have a summer job. The middle of May isn't the time for a university student to be looking for a job, Mr. Premier. The jobs are gone by that time.

But my question has to do why my constituent wasn't called back. That's why I said this is a job that relates to fairness, Mr. Premier. It was to make ways for the son of your Minister of Small Business, your smallest minister. That's why he didn't get a summer job. Is this the way your government operates — going back on your offer of employment to a student so that . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Order! The member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg is making a very long statement to the question.

MR. ENGEL: — My short question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is: is this fair? Is this how your government operates — going back on your offer to offer employment to a student in the middle of May, so that you can hire the son of a cabinet minister?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no idea of who called this particular individual. I will take notice and respond to the member opposite when . . . If he can tell me who called him, who talked to him, etc., I'd be glad to respond, but I will take notice.

MR. ENGEL: — I imagine . . . New question, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He received a letter from a Vern Hoyt, personnel administrator for the personnel administration branch, fourth floor, Regina, Saskatchewan on February the 27th. My constituent, Mr. Premier, was well-qualified for the position: has a B.A.; two years experience teaching French; going on to further his education; has worked two years before in this very same job, worked for it, well-qualified, did a good job, was liked, was asked — he was asked! He received a letter and said, "We would appreciate it if you could respond at your earliest convenience, not later than March the 7th." He replied immediately. By phone he was awarded, had the job, knew he had it, knew he had the job.

My question is: he was only one of two guides who could speak French. The other one wasn't called back either. How many more cabinet ministers' relatives will be tour guides this summer, and do you find this kind of conduct acceptable practice? And will the Premier at least have the decency to check in and report back to this House?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I told the hon. member that I would take . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Order, order, order. I would ask members on both sides of the House to be quiet when the Premier is on his feet answering a question. Order.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I said that I would take notice, and the hon. member still hasn't provided me with the information as to who offered the individual an employment position. I will take notice, and I will respond to it.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a supplement to the Premier. I wonder, in light of the fact that earlier this week we had a situation where one of the Minister of Health's employees, Mrs. Julie Campbell, was fired and then subsequently his business manager hired in her place; now today we have a serious problem where a tour guide was not rehired and the son of a minister hired in his place; whether or not you will give instructions, whether or not you will give instructions to your cabinet ministers to cease this firing of qualified people, and the political patronage that is going on within the civil service at this time.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's make something very clear to the media and to the press gallery if we want to talk about the size of government and hiring people. That's exactly what we're talking about. Let's start talking about it. Let's talk about 10,000 additional people that were hired by the previous administration — 10,000. Let's take a look . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Order, order. Order! Order. The member from Shaunavon, when the Speaker is on his feet, is supposed to be quiet in the Assembly. And it's very difficult for anyone to hear with all the noise on both sides of the House.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's make it very clear that the policies of this administration are to downsize government, when the policies of the former administration were to increase it — were to increase it. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the former administration increased the size of government by 10,000 people — 10,000 people that weren't my associates, that weren't my relatives — 10,000 people. Let's make sure that it's on the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this administration is 3,000 people smaller than it was when the day we took over — 3,000 smaller.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's make it very clear when we're talking about helping friends of families. Who increased the administration by 10,000 people? The former administration. Who reduced it by 3,000? This administration.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — New question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, you talk about reducing the size of government, and we can debate that. But that isn't what we're debating. What I would like to know is how firing Julie Campbell and hiring the business manager of the Minister of Health, Sandra Hextall; and the dismissal of the individual who we're discussing here today, a tour guide, not hiring him and hiring the minister of Small Business's son, how can you explain to this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan that that is reducing the size of the civil service?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I told the member opposite that I would take notice. I believe that it's true, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the minister's son has been there for over a year. Now if that's true, it has absolutely nothing to do with the allegations that you've brought forward — if that's true. And I'm going to find out if it's true.

Also, let's make it very clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there are people who were employed by the former administration, over 10,000 new ones, that were relatives. I believe the former premier's daughter was employed. Let's make it clear. Was the former premier's daughter employed in the government?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Yes. Yes.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Was she? Was she, or not?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Yes. Yes.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Who hired her? Who hired her? Mr. Deputy Speaker, who hired her? Were there relatives of Mr. Koskie employed? Was that true, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Were there Koskies employed? How may?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rest my case.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — I don't think the people of Saskatchewan will believe the self-righteous attitude of the member from Shaunavon who can stand up and say that there are people employed here when they increased the size by 10,000 with their friends, and we've downsized it 3,000 people.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Final supplementary to the Premier. Will you tell the Assembly and the people of the province whether you agree with the concept where the Minister of Health would

fire Mrs. Julie Campbell and hire his business manager through your cabinet, through your cabinet, where you signed the order in council? You, the Premier of the province, circumvented the Public Service Commission of this province and hired the business manager for the Minister of Health. Do you agree with that kind of a professional civil service?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the hon. member knows that you can hire people through order in council, and any administration in the country can do that. And that's the way the former administration hired — hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people through orders in council. It's absolutely a normal relationship.

MR. ENGEL: — Mr. Premier . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Order. Order. Order! It's very difficult to hear. I can't hear the questions or the answer. I ask the members to keep a little decorum in the House.

MR. ENGEL: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like it quiet enough for the Premier to hear that: is a university student with a B.A. and two years French experience, when you do not have any other French-speaking tour guide — is that person worth letting go, for the same amount of money, as a 17-year-old grade 11 student? That's the comparison. That's the comparison. We're talking about the son of a minister that's 17 years old and in grade 11, in grade 11, and comparing him to a university student with a B.A. degree, working on his advanced education, and a French teacher. That's the comparison. And do you have a French person on staff? We had a group from Quebec that asked for a French guide. You didn't have one. You didn't have one. The day he was phoned not to come back in — the day he was phoned, there was a group up here last week that didn't have a French interpreter. And is that your philosophy of being fair? Is that what you call being good, prudent administrators?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've said already that I will take notice. I've also said, and I believe that it's true and I'll find out, that Mr. Klein has been employed here for more than a year, for more than a year . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . If that's true. If that's true, that's got nothing to do with what the minister's talking about. And if he's talking about French . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with respect to French, we have more people that are bilingual elected; we have more French programs in the province in . . . (inaudible) . . . We have some of the most tops, first class French-speaking people employed in our administration. In fact, the people opposite are complaining about it because we can appoint people who can be bilingual, and they're upset about it now. So when we're speaking of French-speaking people, people going to school, the Minister of Education has more French opportunities in the history of the province.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Order. The member from Quill Lakes and the member from Shaunavon know that when the Speaker is on his feet they are supposed to be quiet in the Assembly.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 78 — An Act respecting Crop Insurance

HON. MR. MUIRHEAD: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's with pleasure I move first reading of a bill respecting Crop Insurance.

Motion agreed to and the bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 79 — An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act (No. 2)

HON. MR. ANDREW: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I give notice I will move first reading of a bill, An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act (No. 2) and, as we all know,

this is, of course, the costs or the increases to the retired civil servants to increase their pension. The amount will be 4 per cent this year.

Motion agreed to and the bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 80 — An Act respecting a Livestock Investment Tax Credit

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move first reading of a bill respecting a Livestock Investment Tax Credit.

Motion agreed to and the bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 71 — An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to move second read of this bill, The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 1984.

As members will recall, The Local Government Election Act was passed in 1982, with strong support from both sides of this house. Before I get to the amendments in the bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me explain briefly the key features of the original Local Government Election Act passed two years ago.

That act contained three main reforms. First, it synchronized school and urban municipal elections throughout the province. It permitted electors to vote for the board of education and the urban municipal council on the same day and in the same polling place. And formerly, this convenient and cost-efficient system was only available to city voters.

Secondly, it extended the vote on money by-laws to renters in urban municipal elections for the first time. And thirdly, it brought in a standardized, three-year term of office for urban councils and boards of education. Formerly, towns and villages had elections every two years, with council members serving four-year terms.

The act provided . . . or proved to be very successful during the local elections held throughout the province in the fall of 1982. It is remarkable, in fact, that in a large and complex act so few problems were encountered throughout the province. And I think that this success stands to the credit of the many municipal and school board people who offered their advice during our extensive consultation on the act.

However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the 1982 round of local elections was the first practical test of the act. We knew that, in the light of this experience, we would identify a number of areas in need of amendment. And let me refer to two of the key amendments.

First, this bill restores the right to vote in urban municipal elections to persons who own property in the municipality and live outside the municipality. SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and many municipalities requested that the non-resident property owners be given back the right to vote in the municipality in which they own property.

We had feedback from many communities telling us that persons who own property in an urban municipality should have some say in electing the council that governs that municipality. This is particularly relevant in our larger resort communities like the town of Regina Beach or the new

village of Buena Vista where a high proportion of property owners live outside the community. This amendment restores the right of property owners enjoyed for generations in urban municipal elections in Saskatchewan.

The second key amendment contained in this bill improves advanced poll procedures. We are amending the act to provide the councils and boards of education in most non-city areas may independently determine if they wish to hold advanced polls. This will maximize local autonomy and foster greater voter turn-out.

A related amendment will permit councils and school boards to hold advanced polls on the Saturday immediately preceding an election. This will permit a large number of travellers and disabled people to vote who would not otherwise do so.

There are other changes designed to clarify and streamline election procedures. For example, this act makes it clear that only electors of separate school divisions may be candidates for separate school boards, and only public school electors may be candidates of public school boards.

Similarly, this bill makes it clear that only a person who is of the same religion as the minority that established a separate school division may vote for that separate school board. This amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, reflects case law with respect to who may be a candidate or an elector for a Catholic or a public school system.

I want to emphasize, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that these amendments respond to requests from local municipal and school representatives from the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association and from the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association. I believe that by making these reforms in the local electoral process, we are strengthening local democracy. Together with my colleague, the Minister of Education, I urge all members to support this bill.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to complain about the process in this Legislative Assembly. The government has known for a minimum of some weeks, and I suspect it's some months, that there was going to be an election tomorrow in the municipality — I believe it's of Buena Vista — and that this legislation was needed. And the need for the legislation has been apparent for a good deal longer than that.

Notwithstanding that, we got notice of this bill yesterday and are asked to pass it today. It's become an increasingly common habit with this government to bring in legislation at the last possible moment and to ask us to pass it immediately. And, given the circumstances, I don't think we have any option to do that. But I want to complain about the incompetence of this government and whoever is running this House from the government benches. I have never seen a legislative program run as badly as this one, and it's getting worse each year.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is resulting in more than just inconvenience to the members of the Assembly. It's resulting in a fair number of screw-ups in the legislation. We are finding an increasing number of mistakes in legislation, and that's happening because we don't have time to consider the legislation properly.

Mr. Speaker, rather, we have a goodly number of bills which we're going to have to pass in a short period of time. That doesn't give us adequate time to consider it, and when we don't get an adequate time to consider it, we get the kind of mistakes we're now asked to deal with.

Members of this Assembly are going to vote in favour of this bill and let it go through, but I'll tell you, members of this caucus are protesting in the strongest possible language about the way this House is being run. It is being run in a discourteous and incompetent fashion, and it's resulting in mistakes in legislation which need not occur.

Motion agreed to, bill read a second time and, by leave of the Assembly, referred to a committee

of the whole later this day.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 71 — An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Is the minister ready to introduce his officials?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have on my right Ken Smith from advisory services, Urban Affairs, and Bill Wells on my left, from the Department of Education.

Clause 1

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, I'd like to ask the question of you directly, which I raised in a more general sense a moment ago. Why wasn't this bill here a month ago?

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, as I think I pointed out to the member during the estimates, this administration puts a great deal of importance on the consultative process with those people that are affected by legislation, and we have been consulting with SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and with the smaller communities basically who have requested this change since the 1982 act came into force, and it has taken this long to negotiate the change that has been requested of us.

And I think that the changes that are outlined in this amendment restore those voting rights that have been in place for a good length of time in this province, as far as local elections are concerned, and I think that this amendment is not lengthy.

I don't know if the member would need a week to look over the amendment. It, as I pointed out to the member last night . . . There's only basically one significant change from the old act, and it, I don't think, requires a great deal of study by the legislature to understand what's being proposed. But it did take some time to consult with those that would be affected by the change, so that we . . . so we were responding to the requests from the public.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Deputy Chairman, consultation is precisely what this process makes . . . short-circuits and makes impossible.

The time-honoured process in the legislature is that when you receive these bills, you take an opportunity to discuss them with those involved. And that's exactly what this process . . . And my complaint is directed more at the House Leader than at yourself. That's exactly what this process makes impossible.

It's impossible to take these bills, send them to the interested parties, give them an opportunity to look at it, consult with the municipal solicitor, and so on, and then call them, and that's the process. And that's impossible when you've got to deal with them in a couple of days.

And this is slightly off the topic, and I won't dwell on it long, Mr. Chairman, but I'll take an even more serious example: The Urban Municipality Act. We're going to deal with that in the space of a few days, and we really should have had an opportunity to send it to the municipal . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Order. We'll deal with The Urban Municipality Act when it comes to the committee.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I know it wasn't strictly relevant, but it did illustrate the complaint I have.

Mr. Minister, I have read through the bill. I don't have any questions on any of the sections, with

one exception, and I may ask it now and it will save it.

Mr. Minister, section 4, in the case of a resort village, a spouse of a resident or an owner may vote for . . . Section 4, the amendment is to (iii)(C). The numbering, the system is complex here. (iii)(C)(1) does not allow the spouse of a resident, or owner to vote; (iii)(C)(3) does allow the spouse of such a person in the case of a resort village. And I wonder why the distinction.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, I can get a clarification of the question. My understanding is that in regards to permanent residency, which would be those that would have property in a city, perhaps, or a town, the spouse would have the right to vote, simply because she has resided there for six months. And perhaps the member, then, could he again ask what section he's looking at here?

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I don't understand the minister's having difficulty. It's section 4 of Bill 71. The amendment to section . . . And that section amends section 23. The amendment to 23, sub (c) does not give the spouse of an owner or a resident the right to vote. The spouse must presumably qualify themselves personally. The spouse must be a resident or an owner to vote.

Now, not so in the case of a resort village. In the case of a resort village, even though a spouse may not reside in the resort village, and may not be an owner in that land, the spouse gets a vote. I wonder why you distinguish between spouses of electors of resort villages, and spouses of electors of any other municipality.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Well, Mr. Chairman, I think the net result in both sections is that both spouses, so to speak, will be allowed to vote in the election, the local election, whether it be at the place of their permanent residence, because of the residency qualification at the place of permanent residence, or in the case of a resort village — because the spouse may not be on the title and because it may not be a permanent residence which, no doubt, it won't be because it's a resort village — that section in the resort village part of it will allow him or her, depending on whose title it is, to also vote.

So the effect of both these sections is that both spouses will be able to vote where one or the other of the spouse owns land. So that if you get the situation which, I suppose, is more prevalent in a place of permanent residency if there's a mortgage or what have you, usually the title is in the name of both the husband and the wife, especially if there's a mortgage. Quite often in the cottage the title is in one name rather than both, but you want them both to be able to vote, so that the section is in there. I think the net effect of both these sections is that, of the two spouses owning property in those two different urban municipalities, they will both be allowed to vote. Because of that ownership by the spouse, one or other, they'll both be able to vote in those two separate municipal local elections.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — I'd love to know what the process is for drafting legislation in this government, because this legislation which comes before us is very poorly drafted, as this section is very poorly drafted.

I don't intend to spend a long time on it, Mr. Minister, but let me give you an example. If I own property in — pick a municipality — in Pilot Butte, and I live in Regina Centre as I do, I can vote in Pilot Butte, but my wife can't. She can't vote in Pilot Butte. She doesn't own the land; I do.

But if I own land in Katepwa — well, Buena Vista's an example — I own land in Buena Vista, both my wife and I can vote. You have given owners of property, spouses of owners of property in resort villages, rights they don't have in any other village. I don't think any great evil befalls the nation, and I don't intend to pursue the matter any further, except again to suggest that your legislation is not really very well drafted.

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Chairman, in your example you're saying that your permanent

residence is in Pilot Butte . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You're saying that your permanent residence is in Regina. You own a home in Pilot Butte and you own a home in Buena Vista . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, commercial property, of course, has . . . That's right.

In a commercial property under the old act or under the new, the owner, because of the residency, would have the . . . (inaudible) . . . but that doesn't cover the case of the resort village where you have a cottage, with you and your spouse, and you have a permanent residence in the city or in the town.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 12 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 71 — An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act

HON. MR. EMBURY: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and the bill read a third time.

ROYAL ASSENT

At 11:02 a.m. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following bills:

Bill No. 51 — An Act to establish the Industrial Incentive Program

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

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

Bill No. 35 — An Act respecting Noxious Weeds

Bill No. 01 — An Act to incorporate the St. Paul's Cathedral Foundation

Bill No. 03 — An Act respecting Crown Trust Company and Central Trust Company

Bill No. 02 — An Act to amend an Act to Incorporate the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

Bill No. 60 — An Act respecting Venture Capital Corporations

Bill No. 66 — An Act to incorporate the Saskatchewan Water Corporation

Bill No. 71 — An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 11:04 a.m.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 72 — An Act respecting the Practice of Physical Therapy

HON. MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to explain the purpose of the bill respecting the practice of physical therapy. This act constitutes a major revision to the existing Physical Therapists Act. The request for revisions comes from the Saskatchewan Physical Therapists Association, and the association is in agreement with these revisions. The purpose of the revisions is to bring the act in line with other new health professional acts and to reflect the current practice of physical therapy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a major revision to this act removes the existing requirement that a physical

therapist work under the direction of a physician. The revised wording states that a physical therapist must obtain a referral from a physician prior to conducting an assessment or providing treatment. The regulations will allow the minister to approve circumstances under which an assessment can be conducted without a medical referral. The amendment has been included because of changes in the practice of physical therapy across Canada.

However, any regulation dealing with this will require careful consultation with both the Saskatchewan Physical Therapists Association and the medical profession. This has been discussed with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan and with the Saskatchewan Medical Association. Both groups are in agreement with this change.

Another revision of this act will remove the requirements for registration from the act itself. The current act includes a clause specifying that one of the requirements for registration is: "a member in good standing of the Canadian Physical Therapy Association."

The revised act will allow the council to make regulations prescribing the qualifications for registration and licensing of physical therapists. This will allow the Saskatchewan professional association to decide on the appropriate criteria for membership, rather than allowing the national association to make this decision.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, an additional revision to the act will result in a new definition of physical therapy to reflect modern practice.

There are, as well, a number of other revisions to this act to introduce principles included in other recent health professional legislation. These include ministerial approval for policy-making regulations, the power of the Lieutenant Governor in Council to require changes to these regulations, and public representation on the governing council.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are also revisions dealing with a number of administrative matters. They include a change of name from the Saskatchewan Physical Therapists Association to the Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists.

There are also new disciplinary procedures consistent with those in other health profession legislation.

I am confident that this revised act will prove to be significantly flexible to enable the Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists to conduct its affairs in an optimum fashion in the years ahead.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that An Act respecting the Practice of Physical Therapy be given second reading.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Let me say very briefly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we were not going to oppose this legislation.

Motion agreed to, bill read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole at the next sitting.

Bill No. 73 — An Act to establish the Water Appeal Board

HON. MR. HARDY: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It gives me pleasure to be able to give second reading to the bill, The Water Appeal Board Act. This act is basically the drainage appeals board act which will now incorporate the Saskatchewan Water Corporation portion of the water that will be under their management, and allow for residents or people to appeal back through the Department of Environment if they're not satisfied with the decision reached by the department of either the water Crown or Department of Environment. So what it really is is just

an extension of the drainage appeals act and it now will incorporate the water as well.

So I'll be saying a bit more about it on the later bill, but I move second reading of this bill.

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We see nothing wrong with this bill at the present time and we will not be opposing it. If we do have any other questions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will ask them in committee of the whole.

Motion agreed to, bill read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole at the next sitting.

Bill No. 74 — An Act continuing the Department of the Environment

HON. MR. HARDY: — Basically, Mr. Speaker, this just gives legislation authority to enact the following act, which will be an environmental management protection act. I'll be speaking on that, so I would just like to move second reading of the bill: the new Department of the Environment Act.

Motion agreed to, bill read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole at the next sitting.

Bill No. 75 — An Act respecting the Management and Protection of the Environment

HON. MR. HARDY: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It gives me pleasure to move second reading of a new Department of Environment and management and protection act. I'd like to say a few words on it.

Basically, it updates and brings into line the Department of Environment in regards to management of the environment itself. The clarification of the Department of Environment's mandate parallels the government's actions to amalgamate water-related activities under one agency.

This government has promised efficiency in the departments, agencies, and Crown corporations that serve the Saskatchewan people. The water Crown and the Department of the Environment are two clear examples of that effort. The new Department of the Environment will look after the environmental protection of our air, land, and water resources, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Department of the Environment Act will establish a department consistent with government model for all department acts.

The Environmental Management and Protection Act will include the environmental protection matters that deal with the regulation of clean air, clean soil and subsoil, clean surface and ground water.

Saskatchewan Environment will have now the single purpose of managing and protecting the environment for the social and economic benefits of the people of Saskatchewan.

As I stated in my ministerial statement yesterday, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my goal, or the goal of my department, is to take preventive measures now to prevent a problem before it happens, rather than be faced with correcting the problem after it exists. This has certainly exemplified the acid rain issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan doesn't have an acid rain problem. This has been recognized by the Canadian and other provincial governments, as they have drawn up a national plan to deal with the serious problems and, by their suggestion, Saskatchewan has not been included, as we are a receiving province rather than a productive province.

Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have taken preventative measures. We have increased research funding by four times since 1982 to ensure that proper monitoring is done and the data is collected. We are working closely with our neighbouring provinces and states to identify sensitive areas and desired emission controls.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a responsible approach to a problem that faces the rest of Canada. We want to learn by their mistakes and ensure that we don't face a similar problem in this province.

We have also initiated numerous other programs in the past two years. And I'd just like to mention a few of them.

We brought in potash salt dust emission controls; we've done extensive studies rather than routine monitoring of important lakes, streams, such as the North Saskatchewan River, Emma and Christopher Lakes, Wascana Creek and Kenosee Lake. We have been working closely with the federal government and neighbouring provinces and states.

A pesticide container crushing program was started last year.

All active and inactive land fills have been identified and investigations started into sites concerned.

An exhaustive inventory of chemical industrial waste was completed.

Legislation was passed to allow for the regulation of hazardous waste storage, transport, and disposal.

Guide-lines for the operation and close-out of gravel pits have been issued.

Operation recycle, which is a program to collect and recycle scrap vehicles, has been transferred to the Department of Environment to provide a focus for government recycling initiatives.

And lastly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the water management function of the Department of Environment has been transferred to the new water Crown, in order that the government's water responsibilities can be amalgamated for the public's benefit.

This act, Mr. Speaker, will enable my department to fulfil its mandate of managing and protecting the environment.

I've announced a number of numerous initiatives we intend to introduce over the year ahead, dealing with those issues such as hazardous waste, air emission guide-lines, litter control, recycling, new uranium regulations, coal-mine regulations, water quality standards, and ecological reserves. I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan is a beautiful province, of which we can all be proud, and I intend to see it stay that way.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We will not be opposing this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We most certainly feel that good management of our environment is very important, and we also fully agree that to protect the air, the land, and the water in this province is a priority — a priority not only with the government, but with us here in the opposition. And we will not be opposing this bill, but if there are any more questions to be asked, we will do that in committee, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Motion agreed to, bill read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole at the next sitting.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

AGRICULTURE

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 1

Item 1 (continued)

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, in the past couple of weeks you will have become aware of a severe problem that many farmers are facing in southern Saskatchewan, and I think it goes pretty well right across the province south of the Trans-Canada Highway. I think your constituency would be included in that drought area.

It's a interesting problem that we have in Saskatchewan this year, where not only are farmers facing the traditional high cost of farm inputs and low prices for grain, but we are, supposedly — and having been in Prince Albert yesterday — being flooded out in the North and Hudson Bay area while, at the same time, the South is experiencing probably the worst drought that we have seen in a good number of years.

My question deals more with the drought in our area — and I'm sure the minister has many of the same concerns as I have — where much of the topsoil and some of the land has been blown away, where the seed is sitting on top of the ground. But what I would like to know, in particular with the cattle producers and the ranchers in my area and your area, is the minister now in a position to say whether or not a drought relief program, which would include the subsidization of the transportation of feed and . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Well, the member from Saskatoon talks about crop insurance, but if he knew anything about agriculture, which he should, he would know that crop insurance doesn't cover cattle producers. And what we are talking about is the feed freight assistance and the transportation of cattle assistance to areas in northern Saskatchewan where there may be feed available later in the year. Have you got a program in place that we can announce at this time?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, before I get into responding to the hon. member's question, I'd like to introduce my officials, if I could.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — I believe they had been introduced at . . . Is this a continuation of your estimates? Is this continuation? Because this is a continuation, I didn't call for their introduction, but you may introduce them if you wish.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And the only reason I would raise it is that there are some here who were not here the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Could you then please introduce the officials that have not yet been introduced? Order, order. There's too much noise in the Assembly for anyone to hear. Does the minister wish to introduce those officials who have not yet been introduced?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has become a larger task than I thought it would be. First of all, over to my right is Stu Kramer, assistant deputy minister, who was not with us the time previous; Ross Johnson, sitting at the back; on the left side of the three back there, John Hoffort, our — and Ross Johnson is administration officer — John Hoffort, sitting in the middle, director of farm purchase program; and Jim Webster, to his left, the executive

director of lands.

And now to get back to the question about the drought and transportation and assistance programs. Relative to addressing the drought problem, I agree that there is a serious problem in a good part of southern Saskatchewan. It's unfortunate that we can't take some of the water and snow in the midlands of Saskatchewan, if you like, and transplant it down to the southern part of Saskatchewan, and similarly take some of the dryness and put it up there. That would be the ideal solution.

However, the warm and, for the most part, dry winter over much of the province was a concern to us very early on, and I would suspect, if my memory serves me correctly, that it was probably along about the first part of April when I directed my department, through my deputy, to look at putting contingency plans and assessing what could be done if, in fact, drought did materialize into a serious situation. So they have, in fact, been working on it for something nearly approaching two months now. And given that the situation is serious out there, we have over and above — and recognizing that the very critical problems facing ranchers and farmers today are water supplies and pasture — and to address those relative to the water, we have the pumping program, of course.

To address the pasture problem, what we have done is expanded our feed and forage listing service to make available every scrap of . . . or make possibly available every scrap of pasture land wherever it may be in this province, because the first and most immediate consequence of the drought are pasture land and water. And we have undertaken to at least assist in making that available to farmers and make it available to where . . . then know where pasture land is available.

Over and above that, we have . . . I have personally written to the Minister of Agriculture for Canada, Eugene Whelan, asking him to look at what he might be prepared to do, at least get started in a preliminary way if, in fact, this drought persists.

So a short answer to the hon. member's question is: yes, we recognize the drought; yes, we recognize that it's serious; yes, we have added to our programs to deal with it; and, finally, we are prepared to look at more if and when it's necessary. And as well, we have invited the federal minister to participate in those programs.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, you seem to avoid the problem of dealing with the drought that exists. You say that you're studying it, and that you're going to have more paper going out, and that you're going to blame the federal government.

But my question to you was: have you got a plan ready to announce today that would help with feed freight assistance for the farmers and ranchers of southern Saskatchewan? And I'll ask you again, because you avoided answering it. Are you in a position today to announce a relief program for the farmers who are having to, today, not study the problem, but sell off their herds?

CBC radio this morning carried a story from a farmer from the Assiniboia area who is having to get rid of his cattle because he doesn't have enough feed. Mr. Minister, they simply don't have time for the government to study further what is a very serious problem. They are losing their cattle. They are having to sell off assets. And you're saying you're going to study it further.

I think the time has come where the studying time should be over, where you should dust off the program that you cancelled. I don't think you have to study very long, a program, to set it in place. There was a relief program the last time we had a drought, two or three years ago, that paid an assistance for farmers to haul their feed. It was a strategy that moved cattle either into an area where there was grass, or brought grass to where the cattle were.

And I wonder what you're studying. Are you saying then that you don't think the drought is serious enough yet?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, first of all, I have said the problem is serious. I did not once use the word study. And thirdly, we have acted and we will continue to act, in addition to what we have done, if and when we deem that we should move on that.

Obviously, you believe that we should introduce programs that were used in the past. I have looked; my staff is looking at those. We may well be prepared to go with some of those if, in fact, the situation deteriorates further. We may well want to introduce other programs. Right now what I would like to have happen is to at least wait and see what the federal minister is prepared to do relative to this.

I don't think the hon. member would want to suggest that we have done nothing, because we have, recognizing that the first things that you have to address is pasture and water.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, Mr. Minister, we saw with the grain farmers, where you waited and waited, and you didn't bring in a fuel rebate program, and you didn't cut the fuel prices, and you didn't bring in a meaningful operating loan interest rebate program. And now we see you bringing in a program where, in emergency situation, \$4 million is going out to try to salvage farmers who are up against the wall.

What I'm saying is: why do you always wait until the time is past before you bring in programs to help farmers? The farmer who's selling his herd at today's auction sale is not going to be helped by your program. You know there's a problem. You know that farmers are selling off parts of their herds in order to avoid disaster. What more evidence do you need?

I wonder if you can outline what things have to happen before you will move in with some assistance for the ranchers in the south-west part of the province.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Well, first of all, I'd want a little more substantive proof than one report in the media, and if it's the same one I saw, I think you may well be misinterpreting it. And I'm not saying the problem isn't serious. I've already said that. But I would want a little more substantive evidence that we are into a massive sell-off and, in fact, that pasture isn't available there through the listing program . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . How do you know that, hon. member? We are doing the monitoring, we are doing the monitoring through our department, watching the auction marts, and seeing what cows are going to market in excess to what we might normally expect at this time of year. As well, I have instituted a program of weekly regional, on a district-by-district basis, of the situation relative to moisture conditions, fodder availability, pasture conditions, etc., etc., etc.

Se we are very much on top of it. We've expanded our programs to date. We will expand more if we need to.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, Mr. Minister, I last weekend talked to a number of farmers who have lease land, and who have pasture land. This is where I'm getting my information from. I talked to people like Herb Wallis, who is the reeve of the R.M. at Admiral. I talked to a rancher, Gus Balas, who ranches along the Frenchman River valley. I talked to a number of ranchers out in the Cypress Hills, down in the Consul area, and every one, to a man, says that there isn't any grass; it didn't even come up. They say that the hills are brown from one end to the other, and there isn't a spear of grass on them, and they have no feed to feed their cattle.

This is where I get my reports from, and if you are getting different reports from your field staff, then I think that maybe you're getting bad reports, because it's a disaster down there in terms of not having feed for the cattle. They simply aren't turning their cattle out because there's nothing for them to graze on, and they're worried about killing the grass off. If you're grazing it when there's very little there, you risk not only the problem of losing your herd, you lose the problem of killing the grass, and then even if it does rain, nothing comes up, and I just wonder whether or

not you're not aware of that.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — I think we both agreed, hon. member, Mr. Chairman, that the situation is serious. I think that we are both agreed on. I am telling you that we are doing things and we will do, as needed, additional things. I've already pointed out that we are monitoring cow marketings. We are monitoring that, and you can talk to, and I've talked to lots of farmers as well.

But secondly, and most importantly, any of those people that you have indicated to me who are having trouble with feed supplies, I would be happy to supply to you and to them our feed grain, forage, and pasture listings, and there are feed grains and forages on those. So we could help them that way as well. That is the program we've expanded to date. As relates to water, there is the pumping program available. That's still very much in gear.

So I am telling you: we have addressed it to date, we have invited others to help address it, and we will continue to address it as need be. You know, as well, that if you had asked this question in this House one week ago, the situation at that point in time was even very much more serious than it is today, because since then we have had a substantial amount of moisture in a good part of the province. And I accept what you're saying. In your area, where I farm — I don't farm all that far from where you farm — we're as dry as you are. And we are monitoring it, we've added to our programs. I'm saying to you: let's utilize what we've done.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, I think that it's folly to think that you're going to monitor the marketing of cattle, and when people have sold off a bunch of their cattle, then . . . That seems to be not a very adequate way to solve the problem.

Why would you wait until the farmers and ranchers are selling their cattle and they're going through the auction ring before you would step in and help them? Once they've sold their cattle, then it's a little late. And why would you use that as a criteria, of farmers selling off their herd? Because they don't need feed freight assistance once they've sold their cattle. I just can't for the life of me believe you, Mr. Minister, that you're going to allow farmers to sell off their herds, then they don't have any cattle, and then you're going to say, now we'll step in and help you out to haul feed to your cattle that you sold last week. It just doesn't make much sense.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — What I am saying to the hon. member, Mr. Chairman, is that we have expanded the program to make feed, forage, and pasture, that might not maybe normally be known to these people, available. And if that isn't working, it will be reflected in the marketings, I suspect. Okay? But I am telling you, as well, I'm telling you, well, there's a program there, and if cow marketings aren't going up, then it probably is working.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well, Mr. Minister, again you say that we're going to wait till the farmers sell their cattle, and we'll monitor the auction rings, and then when they're selling their cattle, when the number of cattle that they're selling goes way up, and we have evidence that they've sold their herds off, then we'll go in and make a decision on whether we're going to help them.

I say that's going to be too late. We brought up the issue of a fuel rebate program last spring, for example, and you said, "No, we can't help them because we don't think they need help." Then you come in in the fall with an emergency save-the-farmer program, where you go out where the more wealthy farmers who may have had a farm left to them, go out and advise a young, struggling farmer what he has done wrong.

And on that issue, I think it's hard for a farmer who has had 15 quarters left to him, go to a farmer who has gone to a bank and struggled along for five years and say that, "Here's what you should do. You should have a father who can leave you 15 quarters of land." And what else are they going to say?

Mr. Minister, that is the ultimate in stupidity, what you are trying to do. And in this case where you're saying, "We're going to watch the cattle be sold, and then after they're sold we're going to help them haul their feed to them," again shows how little you know about farming, because when you need the program is before you sell off the herd.

And what I would like to know is: in your program of listing feed — and it's true that there may be feed in northern Alberta or in Manitoba, or northern Saskatchewan, but many of the farmers in my area can't afford the feed, and can't afford the transportation to haul it down.

Therefore they're asking you to reinstate an assistance program of 24 or \$30 a tonne, whatever it might be, to help them get this feed down. And I would ask you if you would today announce that a program to help haul feed, a feed freight assistance, if you can announce that today.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, no, I cannot announce that today. I'm cognizant of the seriousness of the situation. We've added to programs, programs that we, at this point in time, think have some merit. And I'll leave it at that.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, can you explain to me why you wouldn't announce a program today when there's farmers today making arrangements to haul their cattle to the auction? You know it; I know it. And you say you're going to wait. Can you explain to me why you don't have a program ready?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Well I think, Mr. Chairman, hon. member, you should also point out that — and I don't have the substantive numbers that you seem to think you have in so far as . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I have, but as far as the numbers of cattle that are going to auction markets. What I'm finding out is, in fact, that cattle are being placed, for example, in PFRA pastures in Manitoba that have extra space. And that is a fact.

As well, we have mobilized, if you like, pasture availability across the province. And you're trying to tell the farmers and the ranchers out there that that isn't working. I'm trying to say to you that I think, first of all, there are concrete instances where it has worked. And I'm hopeful that the uptake will continue, and that it will relieve some of the pressures from where there is no pasture capacity and put them in places where there is some pasture capacity.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Well can the minister tell me why he won't introduce as feed freight assistance that would help farmers haul feed to south-west Saskatchewan? Why won't you do that now? Does it have to get drier? What has to happen before you'll introduce a feed freight assistance program? Why are you waiting till the cattle are auctioned off?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — When the option that we've put before them isn't working because there isn't enough available, that would seem to me to be the ideal time to look at something else. We're trying to make the option available of grazing land that might be available and vacant at this point in time in other areas of the province where it's growing very well. Let's get that filled up. Let's make every . . . Let's mobilize it, if you like. And if and when that doesn't look like it's working, or possible, or it becomes full, or there's no more vacant land available, then we'll have to pursue perhaps other programs. We can belabour this point for a good long time.

I'm telling you today, you know full well that a minister of agriculture will not make a decision relative to that without consulting his cabinet colleagues and without getting some approval at treasury board. And preferably I would like to see, as has been historically the case, the federal government assist us in this program. And that would seem to me to make a lot of good sense.

And I suppose I could pick up the debates from the 1981 and '80 *Hansard* when this very same questions were being asked of the minister of the day then. And I think at one point in time he said, "Well, May is a little premature to do anything." And I could use that same kind of hollow

rhetoric. I'm telling you we have done something. We've been on top of this since early spring, and we'll stay on top of it.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, at one point you say you haven't taken it to cabinet, that you haven't taken a proposal to treasury board. That is what you said. You said you haven't even gone to the point where you have represented the farmers to take a proposal through treasury board into cabinet. And I find that unfortunate. Because what you're admitting is that now, if you make the decision that you want to do it, it's going to take at least three or four weeks, or knowing how your government operates — months — to get something in place.

I want you to clarify whether or not you have taken a proposal to cabinet that would allow for a payment of freight on feed. You say that you have a program in place where you list the feed. I agree with you. You do. You have an agreement that where there's pasture available in Manitoba, I agree with you there is such agreements. But the point is, Mr. Minister, that those ranchers and farmers can't afford to haul the feed. They can't afford to haul their cattle to Manitoba and back.

And what they're asking you for is similar to a program that was in place in 1981 that you cancelled when you came to office in 1982, and that is a program, not only to list the feed, but give assistance when it's being hauled. And that's what I'm asking you today. Are you in a position to add to your program to put in place a freight assistance program which you don't have to study, or anything. You simply have to hold a cabinet meeting and decide — that could be done this afternoon — whether or not that could be set in place.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, today — no.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — The member for Kelvington-Wadena says: why not haul the cattle to where the feed is. I agree with him. But what we did in '81 when we hauled the cattle was pay the farmers for the feed that was being moved. And I wonder if he disagrees with a program that would subsidize the farmers and ranchers, and maybe he can become involved in this in a meaningful way. Because I think, in some ways maybe, that member from Kelvington-Wadena would be a legitimate replacement for the veterinary from Weyburn, because he seems not to understand that the farmers of the province need some freight assistance on hauling feed. Why don't you announce that today?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I mentioned just moments ago that I was not prepared to make that kind of announcement today.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — And why aren't you?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — There is a program, a new program that's been put in place. It's been expanded. I have no reason at this point in time to believe that it won't help alleviate some of the pressure, and that is why . . . if I see that it is not helping alleviate some of the pressure . . . and I don't want you ever once to suggest to anybody that I don't think the situation's serious. I'm farming in the middle of it, no different than you are, and I'm not about to see the livestock industry jeopardized.

We have done something, we will continue to do things as needed.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, you have admitted earlier that you're going to wait, you're going to wait until the auction rings are full of brood cows coming through, before you have evidence that there's a problem. And what I say is, it's a little late, once the farmer has sold his herd, to then say, "I'm going to introduce a freight assistance." And the member who is in charge of energy and mines, sitting beside you, continually talks about why we don't have to. And I can agree that he would do that, because if you're going to get money for the farmers, you'll have to take it out of the tax holidays that he gets for his oil companies.

And politically . . . and the minister laughs . . . where else would you get the money? Where else would you get the money? And why wouldn't you look at the oil companies who are announcing record profits? Why wouldn't you look at that area as an area of shifting the priority? Where you have oil companies with record profits, why wouldn't you look at that area as an area of shifting the onus of this province from the oil companies who are doing very well? And I think everyone will admit . . . I'll admit the oil companies are doing very well . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right. They are doing very well, and I think that they don't need a holiday. they did very well in 1908. The revenue from oil was as high as it is now, maybe not on land sales, but in terms of royalties they were. And we weren't having the give-away.

But what I'm saying to you, Mr. Minister of Agriculture: why don't you take a proposal to cabinet, and is it because you know you don't have the strength in cabinet to take some of that oil money and give it to farmers? Is that not the real reason you haven't taken such a proposal to cabinet?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, no. And secondly, in fact, as it relates to your comments about the oil industry and what my hon. colleague has done there, to not only help farmers and small businesses in the oil industry, but what he's done for the province is to be commended. And because it was such a good program and so imaginative and so innovative, but most importantly, because it worked so well, we thought we'd take a page out of his book. And that's why we introduced the tax holidays for feeding out livestock in this province.

Another example of tax holidays. Get the government out of the farmers' pockets. Just like we've seen the success with the oil royalty program, I think we'll see that same kind of success with the Livestock Investment Tax Credit. And so I can see why you are concerned about our approach because it's been so successful, and you don't like Tory successes.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, I wonder if you realize how a rancher who's going broke would laugh at your solution that the solution to his problem is a tax write-off. You will know that the people who cannot afford to haul their feed from northern Saskatchewan to feed their cows are not terribly interested in a tax holiday, because very simply there are large numbers of them today who aren't worried about income tax, aren't worried about tax loopholes.

What I'm interested in is the fact that you have given away \$150 million a year to oil companies, who are now announcing record profits. Why don't you shift some of that tax holiday or assistance to the farmers? You haven't given a tax holiday to the farmers of the province. You haven't given them freight on — assistance on their feed. You haven't given them assistance on their fuel. Why is it that if the oil companies are making so much money, and we live in a free enterprise world, why hasn't the price of fuel gone down? Why aren't they sharing that with the farmers who use the fuel that comes from under their farms? Why are they continually paying more and more and more for fuel to run their farms if the oil companies are making so much money?

Mr. Minister, when you talk about tax holidays for the ranchers or for the farmers who can't afford to haul their feed to feed their cattle, and you admit that it's going to mean that more are going to be sold through the auction rings, your solution of a tax holiday seems to ring rather strange to them because they simply don't believe that that is going to be an assistance to their problem.

I'll ask you one more time before we leave this issue. Why is it, what more proof do you need that the farmers and ranchers need a feed freight assistance before you'll move on this issue?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, right today what more proof I would need is that the option we have put in place is not adequate. Secondly, as it relates to tax breaks

that you suggest we haven't put in place for farmers, then I would like to just point out to you that we have probably given farmers in this province the biggest tax breaks in the history of this province. Your view very much was to tax and tax and tax to death.

But I could start with: probably the \$120 million removal of the tax on gas alone has probably put something like 50 or \$60 million into the farm and rural economy.

But over and above that, Mr. Chairman, even in this last budget, what did we do in terms of tax relief for farmers? We wiped out the school taxes on the home quarter. How's that for a tax break? Probably something in the order of \$11 million. Or how about the removal of the E&H tax off the farm electricity bills? How about that for tax relief? And it goes right back to 1982. We froze utility rates the first year we were in government. That's the kind of tax breaks we're giving to farmers, and they amount to the hundreds of millions of dollars I would suggest to you.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, if you were to go out to a farm meeting right now and give that speech, I can tell you what they would do. Not only would you have a red neck from rope burn, and I think they'd leave you hanging there. Because there's a good number of farmers out there that if you were to go give a speech like that down in Climax or in Eastend, would not only not clap for you, but I think they would come up on the stage and give you a little necktie party, because they don't like people telling them how great the government is when they're going broke.

I think the ultimate insult of a minister of agriculture when he's admitted that there is a severe drought on, a depression in the farming situation in southern Saskatchewan, to then stand up and say how great things are and how well he has done as a minister.

And I think, Mr. Minister, when you talk about the E&H tax off power bills, when you raised them 18 per cent at one position in the year and then take 5 per cent off, leaving a 13 per cent increase, doesn't make them very happy. And they don't applaud and say, "Well that is a great government." Or when you talk about the gas tax being taken off the car that they may drive 5,000 miles, but the price of diesel fuel, which they may burn 4 or 5,000 gallons of, has gone up by 20 per cent, they simply aren't saying what a great minister you are.

And you may in here be able to get some of your cronies to pound their desks when you make a statement about how great you are. But I'll tell you, it's a little harder for the farmers of this province to say what a great government this is, because they haven't noticed these hundreds of millions of dollars of various tax cuts and incentives you have given to them.

I can tell you very clearly that the farmers in my area have not been in such financial straits since the 1960s and, in fact, 1969, and before that, in the 1930s. And I would like to know, Mr. Minister, if you really believe, if you really believe the statement that the farmers of this province are in good shape by comparison to what they were in the 1970s.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Well, Mr. Chairman, hon. member, certainly as you and I both know and can appreciate, agriculture, farming, in Saskatchewan is sensitive to the cycles as it relates to the price for commodities. It's sensitive to the weather. Probably hence the debate we're having today.

I could probably and you could probably find years in the '70s when net realizable farm income was either lower or higher or whatever than it is today. I don't know, but you may well be able to find that.

What I'm telling you is that in Saskatchewan, relative to, for example, your NDP counterparts in Manitoba and how they managed the affairs for farmers out there, Saskatchewan farmers here are very happy under a Tory government. The bankruptcy statistics over there, if my memory serves me well, are something like one in 600 farmers going bankrupt over there — one in 600.

Comparable figures for Saskatchewan are something in the order of one in 1,400. So certainly the hon. member can say that things may or may not be better than they are in the '70s. I'm telling you they could be a lot worse.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, I asked you whether you thought the farmers were relatively in better position today than they were in the 1970s, and I would like to ask you again. You're talking about how well off they are, and how they don't need assistance. Are you saying that the farmers do not need a feed freight assistance program at this time? I would very much like to know your own personal opinion. Do you believe that the farmers in southern Saskatchewan need a feed freight assistance at this time?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — As I said earlier today, no, I am not prepared to announce that kind of program at this very point in time.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — That's what I was afraid that you would say. Because I think for the farmers of Saskatchewan, it would indicate what type of a minister of agriculture we have. At a time when farmers are going bankrupt at record numbers, when your own communities are going around recommending farmers to sell out, at the same time as oil companies are announcing record profits, I think it gives an indication to the farmers of this province where the priority of this government lies.

I would like to say as well to you, Mr. Minister: do you think there's any relationship between the cycles of right-wing governments, let's say the 1929 to '34 era, the 1964 to '71, and the era we're in right now where farmers in all of those periods of right-wing governments in Saskatchewan did very, very poorly? Do you think there's any indication that there's a relationship between farmers doing poorly in the province and the existence of right-wing governments?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, and hon. member, it looks like I'm going to have to get into a bit of a longer response on an issue that we've been going around the horn on for some good, long time.

First of all, any suggestion by the hon. member that this government, this Minister of Agriculture, and my colleagues, don't think that farming and agriculture is important in this province are sadly . . . (inaudible) . . . by the hon. member.

I want to ask you and I ask everybody in the Assembly: what government was it in power that gave Agriculture for the first time in who knows how many years, a 30 per cent increase in their budget — a 30 per cent increase. But they didn't give us a 30 per cent increase to go out and buy land and increase the land bank budget. They gave us 30 per cent more money to do all kinds of good things for farmers in this province, all kinds of good things.

I'm asking you, you want to know whether farmers today are happier and in better shape today with a Tory government than they were with the NDP. I ask you, I ask my colleagues: could the farmers of Saskatchewan — the young farmers, the beginning farmers of Saskatchewan — enjoy the luxury of owning and buying their own land under the NDP? No. No. The NDP bought up land for state farms.

And I ask you and I ask my hon. colleagues: do the young farmers of Saskatchewan like that kind of program? The answer is: yes, they like it. And how do we know they like it? Because in short 18 months, roughly over 3,000 young farmers have had applications approved, received, whatever stage in the hoops, 30,000 young farmers are enjoying rebates in the order of \$5,000.

And how does that compare with your schemes? Land bank — do the people, does the farmer, want to go back with land bank? No. In the first place, only 151 were ever allowed to own their land in the land bank — 151. But you say, "Yes, but look at all the leases we had and how we set them up through leases." How many did you help in 10 years? How many? Did you help 3,000?

No. Less than 3,000, Mr. Deputy Chairman, less than 3,000 — 2,750, 2,780, whatever the number is. In 18 months, we've helped far more than that. And they own their own land; they control their own destiny.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — And were they better off under Tories or under the NDP? When the NDP were in power, did they have a rural natural gas program for Saskatchewan farmers? No, they did not. No, they did not.

When the NDP were in power, did they have a program where the school taxes on the home quarter were going to be rebated? No, they did not. Did they freeze their utility rates? Did they take E&H tax off their electricity bills? No. Will you tell me who the farmers of this province would rather have in power today, us or you? And I think the answer is clear by the indications of my colleagues.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I would expect the minister to at least have a good audience in here. I would be sad, personally, for him if he couldn't get a little bit of applause out of his colleagues. But, Mr. Minister, I want to say that I know a good number of people here who started farming in the 1970s. I know a good number. I know the member from Kinistino farmed in the 1970s, and I know he did very well under Allan Blakeney's government.

I started farming, Mr. Minister, when the Liberals left office in 1970. I started farming in 1970 when Ross Thatcher was the premier of this province. A right-wing government, and I can tell you, I started farming in the middle of a depression in rural Saskatchewan. And I can tell you that since then, I have bought land and started farming during the '70s without any assistance from the land bank program or lease land but through purchasing land in a province where there is a future in agriculture. And I can tell you that I did very well in the 1970s under the provincial government administered by Allan Blakeney, and I know that a number of other people . . . the member who represents a constituency in Saskatoon, a member from the Vanguard area, Kim Young, who has done very well in the 1970s under the Blakeney government.

I know a number of other people who are here today from the Hudson Bay area who farmed in the 1970s, and if people want to look at the record of their farms, they will find that they did very well during the 1970s. And there is any other number of farmers — the Speaker of the Assembly who farmed during the 1970s — and I'm sure that their income tax forms would indicate that they did very well in the 1970s.

But I would challenge each one of them to look at their income tax forms this year to find out whether or not, if they are truthful to themselves, whether or not they are doing better or worse.

It's easy to stand in this Assembly and get involved in the political rhetoric. But I know each member of the farming community, whether it's the member from Kinistino or the member from Kelvington-Wadena, if they are honest with themselves, if they are honest with themselves . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Well, you're saying . . . Now they're saying, "What has it got to do with the government?" What's it got to do with the government that they did better in the '70s than the '80s? The Minister of Agriculture just told you. The minister of Agriculture just told you how it's the government's responsibility that they're doing so much better today. Now the member from Regina Victoria says it has nothing to do with the government. Which story are we to believe?

But I can tell you that if you are honest with yourself, any farmer in this Assembly will know very well that they did excellent during the 1970s. I know that every one of them, every one of them, if they are honest with themselves, will know that the period from 1975, from 1975 to 1982 in

April, was an era of unexpected growth and of happiness for the farmers in terms of what they were getting for their product, programs, feed freight assistance when there was a drought, a gas tax relief program when the prices were down . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, in the '70s. Very clearly in the '70s. As there will be in the 1980s when we take office again" that we will have feed freight assistance programs for farmers when there's a drought; we will have a fuel rebate program when things get tough for farmers.

And I'll tell you where we'll get the money from. We will not have tax holidays for oil companies from the United States and from Alberta. We may have tax holidays for Saskatchewan companies. We may have tax holidays for Saskatchewan companies, but I can tell you that the oil companies who are announcing record profits in Denver and Houston and Calgary will not be letting the money out of this province at the expense of my farmers in my constituency. I can tell you very clearly that there is money in this province, and it should stay here. It should not be shipped out to Denver and Houston to take care of the oil companies who are very popular with this government. But it will go to the farmers of this province, and you, Mr. Minister, in saying that you don't have a feed freight assistance program ready, which would cost a small amount of money, have failed the farmers of this province who expected more from you today.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, the hon. member has raised the issue of: were farmers better off in the '70s — under the NDP, I presume he's talking about — than they are today? And so the questions one would ask himself: well, let's ask those 10,000 farmers — and these aren't my statistics. These are StatsCanada census farms. Let's ask those 10,000 farmers who disappeared from Saskatchewan's landscape between 1971 and 1981 in this country. How good do they think it was to be here in those years? Ten thousand family farms down the tube during the 10 years that you were at the helm in this government. Now ask those people how good they think that is. How good were things in the '70s when the NDP were in power? How good were they? They were so good they introduced debt moratorium legislation, things were so good down on the farm. That's how good things were. That's how good things were in the '70s. That's how good things were.

But the final point, but the final point that the hon. member made was that there is money in Saskatchewan leaving and going to Houston and Calgary and wherever, and I'm glad he has finally realized the fundamental point that was the basis for our tax credit programs in this province, whether it be venture capital credit, or the livestock investment tax credit. And he's exact the point, why have this money, why have this money leaving the province, investment dollars, why have it leave the province? Why not put a scheme where it could be invested in agriculture or in small business, tourism, resource development, manufacturing, processing? That is what those tax credit programs are all about, and it's for that very reason that you suggested. There is a fair amount of money in this province in savings accounts. In fact, I think Saskatchewan per capita has some of the highest, has one of the highest rates of savings in the world; and I'm glad to see that you have acknowledged that point, and that is the fundamental base, the fundamental theorem behind tax credits.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, the 64,000 people who are on welfare in our province, 64,000 on welfare, will not be very interested in your tax loopholes. The farmers who are going broke in my constituency because they don't have any feed to feed their cattle and the minister says he's going to monitor that as they sell their cattle through the auction rings. He is going to be watching that to see whether or not there is anything he can do. They will not find a great deal of interest in your tax loopholes, because the 64,000 on welfare, and the farmers who are bankrupt, are not going to be terribly interested in tax loopholes, because they don't pay tax.

And I want to say to you, Mr. Minister, that there were a number of farmers who sold out during the 1970s. My father was one of them. He is one of the sad statistics. He retired at 65, sold his farm to my brother and I, who were farming at the same time, so that's one of the statistics. There's one less farmer on our farm — my father who is 65, and was able to put a couple of hundred thousand dollars in the bank, and he thought the 1960s were good years. He thought

the 1970s, when the farm economy was booming and he could sell out to his sons, and put 100 or 200,000 in the bank, that that was a pretty good time to be farming. And he's one of the sad statistics, he's one of the sad statistics that you mention, and there's hundreds of others in my area, of older farmers who sold out in the '70s, put a good chunk of money in the bank, and retired.

And I suppose you can say that that's unfortunate, but I can tell you the older farmers who are selling today don't have that option. They don't have the option because the young farmers can't start on their own.

Your own committees are going around and telling these young farmers that they can't start on their own. You know what they are recommending to them? They are recommending, my friend, the Royal Bank and your farm committees are recommending that these young farmers sell out. They're not saying that the provincial government should bring in a fuel rebate program or feed freight assistance. Your committees are recommending that these young farmers sell out. And I'll tell you, the statistics we are talking about leaving the farm today are not my father, the retiring farmer, but are the 25-year-olds who you should be helping, and refuse to.

And I say that it's a sad example of where the government priorities are when the foreign and national oil companies are getting hundreds of millions of dollars in tax relief and you, Mr. Minister, do not have the courage to take the proposal to cabinet to put \$6 million or \$4 million, even, into a feed freight assistance program to help the farmers.

You have admitted you haven't done that. The minister in charge of Energy and Mines shouts from his desk that he doesn't think you should, and I understand why. I understand that his politics in the oil patch are very good. And I agree. The oil companies are doing well, as well they should with a year's tax holiday. In my area the oil companies are doing very well.

But I can tell you the farmers aren't . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm doing very well. I can tell you that. All oil companies are doing very well. I happen to get a salary out of this operation, the same as you do. And I can tell you that if other farmers were earning as much as you are, Mr. Minister, they too could sit here and smile and say how well they're doing. But they don't.

So we know that you, Mr. Minister, as a politician, are doing well, and the oil companies are doing well. That's right. But what about the farmers in my area who need some freight assistance to haul feed in so they don't have to liquidate their herds?

Your solution, Mr. Minister, of monitoring the auction rings to see how many herds are being auctioned off, is a sad consolation for those farmers who are watching today and expecting some relief from you.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, hon. member, you've raised the point of why haven't we put in place a fuel rebate for the farmers out there, and we've debated this a number of times in this House previously. And I think that even . . . You are probably almost isolated in your call for that in Saskatchewan here today, because what I hear almost everyone saying — and I think, in fact, we've debated, in fact, a resolution in this House to that effect — is that the federal government should remove the taxes off of farm fuels.

In fact the call for that is so unanimous . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I want to get this clearly on the record without interruption. The call for this . . . The call for the removal of the federal taxes off farm fuels is so widespread out there, is so widespread — and just to show you the kind of consensus and unanimity that this Minister of Agriculture could get in the farm community — not only am I in favour of it, but get this, get this: the NFU and Pallisers are in favour of it at the same time. Now how's that for getting all the farm organizations rallied?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — You are the only ones sitting there in isolation wanting a fuel rebate. And what was the fuel rebate when they had it in place? What was the farm cost reduction program when they had it in place? What was the farm cost reduction program and the fuel rebate when they had it in place? Well, one year it paid, on average, \$89 per farmer. Now how does that help a farmer with a \$10,000 fuel bill, or \$15,000? I rest my case.

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, you talk about all the things that you think the federal government should be doing for the farmers. You're talking about the removal of the federal . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order, order. I'm sure the member from Pelly can't be heard over the din here, so would you please give him a chance to ask his question.

MR. LUSNEY: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I'm sure that everybody does agree that the federal government should take the tax off gasoline. But, Mr. Minister, the farmers of this province are having about as much successes with the Liberals in Ottawa as they're having with the Conservatives in Saskatchewan — neither one of them is doing anything for the farmers. We all talk about what they should be doing, but neither government is doing anything. What we are saying, Mr. Minister, that you have an opportunity here in this province to do something for the farmer, and yet you refuse to really do anything that's going to benefit the farmer to any great extent.

We have a problem, as my colleague has mentioned, in the South where there is a drought. There is a problem in the North where it is just the opposite. It's not dry; it's too wet. And many farmers up there, along with the problems they've had for the last two or three years, are faced with another one this year where they are going to need some assistance. They will be needing some help if we're going to keep some of these farmers in agriculture. And yet this government has refused, time after time, to come up with some program that is going to provide assistance for the farmers that need it.

We always talk about providing assistance for the oil companies and giving them tax holidays. We talk about providing some assistance for GM or for Chrysler or for Massey-Ferguson or anyone else that needs it — all the big industries. But why don't we provide some assistance for the small farmer out in Saskatchewan? Why don't you come up with a program that is going to see these farmers surviving?

We have farmers all across the North — P.A., Hudson Bay, the Hudson Bay area, Canora area, my area. They're all facing problems right now because they can't get their crops in; it's been too wet. And that's not their only problem. A lot of those farmers have been depending on your farm loan guarantee program, a program that you had to pass within two days in this House because you introduced it at the eleventh hour, and you had to get it passed immediately so the farmers can get some help — a program that you knew would be needed, long before it was introduced.

And when that program did come into force, what happens? How many farmers are being benefited by that program? Mr. Minister, I know you're going to tell me that there's a lot of farmers that are taking advantage of this program. I think maybe what I will do is allow you to answer that one question before I go on further. How many of those farmers at this point are benefiting from the loan guarantee program that you have introduced?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, you raised a number of points, and I'll deal with them in chronological order. First of all, you raised the issue of the Liberals in Ottawa failing to respond to the demands of western Canadian farmers. I agree with you. I think everyone in this House grieves, still to this day, the fact that we were betrayed by the five NDP MPs from Saskatchewan who put those Liberals in power down there. We still, to this very day, grieve that decision by your colleagues in cahoots with the Liberals in Ottawa. It has done endless damage to this province.

But be that such as it may, the issue of Saskatchewan farm numbers declining and us helping with the Farm Purchase Program — you know, your record in government was 10,000 census farms were wiped out. What's our record? In the first 18 months, we've helped 3,000 with our Farm Purchase Program. The significant point is that approximately one-half, one-half of that 3,000 are first-time owners of land. We've set up farming in this province, while everywhere else land transactions were going down; bankruptcies were higher in other parts of the province. We're setting up farmers out there. Family farms are flourishing, given tough times.

But over and above that, we did recognize there was a cost-price squeeze out there. And because of that, we set up the counselling and assistance program for farmers. And to date, approximately 300 have submitted applications for that program.

MR. LUSNEY: — Well, Mr. Minister, you talk about all these family farms that are flourishing. I have never found in my area that many farmers that are flourishing today — family farms. I find many farmers that are facing some serious problems, and not only in my constituency, but many other constituencies.

Mr. Minister, you also try to put the blame on the NDPers for what happened in Ottawa. Five NDP members, or how many you stated, did not elect the Liberal government in Ottawa. The people elected the government in Ottawa. And much like what's happening in Ottawa, with a right-wing government there, we see the same thing happening with a right-wing government in Saskatchewan. Nothing, Mr. Minister, nothing for the majority of the people. Everything for the oil companies and the large multinationals, but not much for the average individual of this province, Mr. Minister.

You state that there are 300 applications under your loan guarantee program. How many of these have been guaranteed to date — have been approved to date?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, to date 46 have been recommended for guarantees. And I want to go on further to explain that. There's applications come. Farm panels have to be put together, including the designation for a chairman, and there are many more that are pending and very close, I would suspect, because of the serial nature of the process, if you like. But to date 46 have been recommended.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, are you aware of how many of those 46 have, at this point, received money from the bank that have been recommended?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — At this very moment in time, none have had an official guarantee.

MR. LUSNEY: — Well, Mr. Minister, it's getting — what is it? — the 25th of May. Crops should be in. Farmers are facing difficulty financially. They need that money to get the crop in. You can produce the program that's supposed to help them. Out of 300 applications you say 46 have been recommended. None have received the money. How long can these farmers continue to wait to be able to get their crop in this year? Are they going to wait till the middle of June before they get some money from this government to be able to get that crop in? And, if they wait that long, is it any sense for them to even put that crop in?

What you are saying, with your delays, is that those farmers may as well as sell out today because you are not going to give them any assistance, any immediate assistance that's going to allow them to continue in agriculture. And that's what you're saying with all the programs you've put into place. Why is it taking you so long, Mr. Minister.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to say that an application could be received today, and it would have gone through the hearings and the recommendation procedure and the crossing of the t's and dotting of the i's. I'd like to say it would happen in 24

hours, but I can't. But I have no reason to suspect that it won't happen very quickly.

And the other point I would make is that I think that the credit unions and the banks, knowing that the program exists out there and knowing that some of their clients have gone before it, have taken that into consideration over the past month. And on one hand, I think the hon. member somewhat unfairly criticizes us for bringing the legislation in and getting it through the hoops very quickly, and on the other hand, he criticizes us for being slow. So, you know, you can't have it both ways.

And if you and I — and I know you as a good and honest legislator who have the best interest of the farmer at heart, as do I — are hopeful that this thing will continue to go as smoothly as it has gone, and all the technical stuff gets completed, whether it's relative to forms or whatever. I am, for the most part, happy. I think that the indications are that the farmers out there are happy; that they have someone to go to get a second opinion. Certainly they consider that a reasonable alternative, given that some of them are facing temporary financial difficulties.

I would point out, I think, that the credit unions and the banks (and I thank them for that) have taken the fact that a farmer may be going before a review committee into consideration, I would suggest, somewhat. And I can't be definitive about that, but I would suggest that that may well be what's happening out there.

MR. LUSNEY: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'm pleased to see that you feel very confident that this is helping a lot of farmers out there, and you're sure that the farmers are very pleased with it.

But I think that when you have no farmers that have been helped to date, I don't think there are too many farmers out of that — zero that have received any help — that are all that pleased. If you've got 300 farmers that have difficulties and have been hoping that your program would somehow help them, and to date, zero have received anything, well, Mr. Minister, how can you say that this is a real good program, and that somehow what you're doing for them is going to please them all that much?

Because I can't see those farmers being all that pleased when they're waiting till the 25th of May, and still not being able to receive any money, not having approval from your department to get that money, and wondering if they're going to get it before some time in June. How can you say that this is a good program, and it has helped very many farmers? What are you going to do in the immediate future — and I mean within the next few days — to ensure that this moves ahead a lot faster, and that those farmers will get the money that they are looking for, and will be able to get the crop in this spring?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — You know, I think that your strategy here would be to focus on the fact that zero have the official piece of paper with the loan guarantee in their hands. I think . . . let's just review. You know, what I'm saying here is — and I think any thinking person would accept a certain procedure that's being followed here — number one is we've had 300 applications. Of those applications, roughly 130 have met and heard the farmer's case. of those, 46 have been recommended for loan guarantee.

I mean, if I were standing here tomorrow I might be standing here and saying that 50 of them have had guarantees and have got the funds in their hands, but it's a process like this, and it's been going, I would suggest for the most part, very smoothly. I wouldn't be surprised, however, if there have been odd instances where it hasn't gone as smooth as we'd like, because as with any new program, the potential is there for little quirks to have to get ironed out. But for the most part, things have been going pretty smoothly in a very step-like and orderly fashion. And if we were doing these estimates next week, the answers I would give you might be substantively different.

MR. LUSNEY: — Well, Mr. Minister, I'll just ask you one quick question right now. How long has

this program been in place?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Applications were going out and being made available, and farmers who had expressed an interest when the program was announced budget night, started virtually within hours of when the legislation was passed in this House. And that's the first step in the process, of course.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, if you were talking about when this was announced in the budget, we're talking about last, what, two or three months ago, that you would be looking at that being in place then, that farmers could have started putting their applications in. Is this what you're saying, Mr. Minister: in the past three months that you've introduced this program, that to this point zero farmers have received any money at all? And if you're saying that some farmers have received some notification that they have been approved, but none have received any money, a piece of paper that they have been approved isn't going to help them any. What they need is some money to be able to pay for the fuel, to pay for their fertilizer, and to get that tractor out on the field. When are you, Mr. Minister, going to see that this moves ahead a lot faster than what you're saying, to make sure that these farmers can get some money within the next few days? This is what they need.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — I agree. Everything possible is being done to get everything done as described in legislation and regulations. I think it's been going as smoothly as one might have expected, and certainly the hon. member, and certainly the hon. member knows, as well, that there are some areas of the province, unfortunately, just like we have some that are very dry, some that are very wet, and seeding is held up. And I think some of the members here can testify to that. But your interests and my interests are the same. We are prepared to help those farmers out there. We were happy to have your support in the legislation, and I think that things are going as good as one might have expected.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, how many committees have you got out there taking the farmers' applications right now and approving those loans, or rejecting them? How many committees have you got looking at these programs at this time?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — My most recent numbers indicate that there's 128 panels have sat. Is that the number you're looking for?

MR. LUSNEY: — 128 panels have sat. How many individual panels do you have reviewing the applications?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Well they're set up on an ad hoc basis and try to take into consideration geography. For example, if there's five clients, if you like, in one given area, that one panel might go in there and in the course of 24 or 48 hours see five or seven clients. To give you a number that's operating at any given moment in time, I probably can't give you that. But for example, as I recall the statistics, last week I think there was something like 36 review hearings took place.

We have a pool of expertise, as was outlined during the debate on the legislation, that we have available to draw from. A group of individuals — farmers, some actively farming, some recently retired — who are highly respected in their communities, know the ups and the downs in agriculture, and yet, probably who knows better than farmers? Who could judge better than farmers, really?

And I think that's probably part of the success of this program: that it hasn't been run by government, if you like, and officials in our department; it's been run by farmers who, listening to other farmers, who understand other farmers, who can talk to each other at their levels, and who can understand the problems — economic and otherwise.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, can you provide us with the names of all the panels that have sat to this point in the different areas?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, as I said during the debate in the legislation itself during committee of the whole, I am quite prepared to forward the names. And, in fact, I said I would forward them to the hon. member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, if that suffices, and as I have done — panellists as they sit. I made that commitment to him; I have forwarded to him, and I can do the same to you if you like, or at least copy on the letters I send to him. Is that sufficient?

MR. KOSKIE: — I just want to follow up, Mr. Minister, in respect to the assistance . . . (inaudible) . . . the farm loan guarantee program. I think it's absolutely amazing, the information that is provided here by the minister today — he brought in, in a high-profile announcement of going to help farmers who are in emergency need of finances, during the budget. That budget was brought down over three months ago, Mr. Minister. You indicated it was a program to meet the crisis in the farming community. Three months have passed and to date you have not even paid out one single cent, or have you, in fact, approved one application. That is a tremendous record by your government. What you have done here is to betray, you have betrayed the farmers of this province because you announced in the April budget, in the March budget, that you were going to help them out, those who were in very difficult circumstances.

If we look around and look at the records and the announcements that are taking place, if you look at the statistics from the Farm Credit Corporation, and they indicate over 3,000 farmers are in very serious arrears in their payments. If you listen to your friends, the Royal Bank, they are saying that they are moving on 40 or 50 pieces, parcels of land today. If you go to the credit unions across this province, you will find that the credit situation is at a crisis. Farmers cannot, in fact, receive increased operating loans to put their crop in.

The other day, farmers, desperate as they were, associated with the Canada agricultural movement, came to this legislature, sat in on the question period, requested a meeting with the Minister of Agriculture. And they set out how slow and, in fact, how ineffective is the program which you put forward in the budget as being the great saviour of farmers who are in agricultural difficulty.

I want to say, Mr. Minister, that obviously you don't intend to help any of the farmers that are in difficulty, because as my colleagues were questioning you, you said that family farms are flourishing. Well that's not the information that we are receiving. Many farmers today are unable to actually get an operating loan to go ahead and to plant their crops. And you sit idly by with a smile on your face saying this program of helping farmers is indeed working. And you stand up, when we ask you how many have received assistance and he says, "We have a perfect record — none." That's what he has told this legislature. And it's going better than he expected.

That is the attitude of this government. You don't need an update in the program because the executive director of this program was on yesterday. And you know what he said? "We are having real administrative programs, the implementation of the guaranteed program — loans to the farmers." He said, "We had many problems with it." And you know what he said yesterday? "Forty-six," he said, "only 46 applications have been sort of monitored, and they aren't through."

I want to ask the minister if this program, this so-called \$4 million that you set aside, \$4 million to a farm industry, the most important economic unit in our province, agriculture — you set aside \$4 million in a time of financial crisis. That's what you set aside. And, as my colleague has indicated, you had no problems moving fast for the oil companies. Within two months of assuming office, July the 1st, you had a program of royalty holidays to the multinational corporations, the oil companies. And you were able to give them not \$4 million of assistance, but you gave them hundreds of millions of dollars of assistance.

And so what I want to ask you, Mr. Minister: in light of the fact that you announced this program in the budget in the latter part of March, how can you stand here and indicate that you are, in fact, going to help the farmers that are in serious financial trouble, when it's over three months have passed since you announced it in the budget and not one single farmer has received any financial assistance? I think you shouldn't smile. I think you should hang your head in shame. Your record is a disgrace as a minister of agriculture.

And I'll tell you, thousands of farmers are in financial trouble, and you will not move a leg to help them. Why have you delayed in implementation of this program? We on this side saw to it that it was passed immediately, and today, in your own announcement, not one single farmer has been assisted. How can you . . . Do you not realize that there is a financial crisis with many of the farmers in order to at least get their crops planted, with the hope that the weather will give them some return and, as a consequence, a possibility of sustaining their operation?

If we look over again at the Hudson Bay area where farmers are in a major crisis, three years they have had no crops. There are reports that have come out in respect to the Hudson Bay area where thousands of acres of land are now up for sale — farmers whose life earnings and work efforts are being destroyed. And this government has stood by and done nothing. I don't think that many of the farmers in Saskatchewan really recognize that you have done much under the tenure of this government.

They are starting to recognize that this government is indeed, is indeed a big government business. They know, in fact, that what they want to do is to invite in the bankers and the investors from out of the province, but they very backbone of what makes Saskatchewan operate, they have abandoned. I want to ask you, Mr. Minister, why, in fact, if you recognized that farmers were in trouble, why, in fact, have you waited for three months and not provided any assistance?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, first of all, we moved as quickly on this thing as we can, and I think it's a tribute to, in fact, all the farmers who have agreed to sit on those panels and, as well, to my entire staff who have worked and worked feverishly to get this program going — and I might add, you know, not without several meetings with the lending institutions whom we have worked closely with. But just to show you how good this program is: while the hon. member was up on his feet talking, the number of farmers who have been recommended for a loan guarantee rose from 46 to 70 in that short time. That's how good it's going.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well this clearly demonstrates, Mr. Chairman, that here is a minister who makes very lightly of the incompetence of his department. I want to ask the minister: in respect to the crisis that is being felt by the farmers in the Hudson Bay area, have you and your friends, the Liberal Party, the Liberal government in Ottawa, have you been able to agree on any concrete program of coming to their aid in order that they, in fact, will not lose their livelihood?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Well, I have certainly . . . On behalf of the provincial government, I think I can say that, yes, we have addressed the problems up there. I am certainly disappointed at the response of the federal government, the people that you put in government down there. I met with Senator Argue and Minister Whelan in the early part of March and, in fact, with the minister, in fact, it was March 21, and told him at that time that I was prepared to put \$4 million on the table and I would hope that he would do something in return for the farmers' plight. And I said at that time to him that we were going to put our money on the table to deal with problems for farmers all over Saskatchewan, whether they be due to flooding, hail, drought, wheat midge, glume blotch — you name it.

But if the federal minister wanted, we are prepared to work with him. He could top, load, match, whatever, and target his money for the Hudson Bay area farmers, the north-eastern

Saskatchewan farmers, if he so desired. He could put a program in place to address all Saskatchewan farmers, which would be our preferred. And I offered up as well at that time my officials to work with him, and I followed up with a written request in the end of March which, by my figuring — not yours — is two months ago, not three months ago. To this date I have not received any reply to that, and given that I had not received any reply, but I continued to hear rumblings, grunting noises, coming from certain federal politicians that happened to traverse into that area of the province, suggesting that, “We’ve had nothing from the province. We’ve got to see something from them to provide relief.” So, because I found that strange, I followed that up with a letter on May 16th to Minister Whelan where I said:

In my March 27th letter I urged you to ensure that the Government of Canada provide financial assistance to the farmers in the north-east part of Saskatchewan.

And I went on at length, as well, outlining what we were prepared to do, and one of the other paragraphs reads:

Reports circulating in the farming community of this province indicate that I have not asked you for assistance. While I am at a loss to explain this situation, I believe you should be aware it exists.

Now I have had, to my date, at this very moment in time, no reply to this letter as well. Over and above that, I find it strange that the Hon. Minister of Agriculture for Canada would not be aware of the problem up there in the first place, because he’s been in the area, number one. And, number two, in so far as what he could do for federal involvement, my colleague, the minister in charge of crop insurance, has also met with him. And I’m sure the federal minister would know that that is a Canada-Saskatchewan crop insurance program. As well, the disaster assistance program, of which some of those people have drawn on, is a federal-provincial program.

So I am at quite a loss to explain at this very moment in time why we have not . . . given that we have done something, that they have suggested that they would do something, that they have not done something.

MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Minister, besides standing up here and blaming your cousins in Ottawa for not doing something, your friends in Ottawa, because your party has been infiltrated by retreads of the Liberal Party, holding very important offices in the front benches of your government, so don’t start talking about not being cousins of the Liberal Party in Ottawa. Besides blaming the federal government for inactivity, I want to ask you: are you . . . have you in place any program of assisting the farmers of Hudson Bay who are in very serious financial trouble today? What are your plans?

Are you going to wash your hands of that problem by saying that the federal government — you’ve written to them and they won’t react? Are you prepared to see these farmers having to sell their farms and, indeed, as many of them said, to become . . . All they will become is renters for someone else — the doctors and the lawyers who will pick up the land.

Acres and acres are going up for sale in the Hudson Bay area. Besides blaming the federal government, Mr. Minister, what is your department and your government prepared to do to help this crisis in the Hudson Bay area?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Yes, we have; we are. The counselling assistance for farmers program, crop insurance, the federal-provincial disaster assistance program.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, the only thing that you have been promising the farmers of this province so far is counselling assistance and loan guarantees that they can’t get, and everything else that the farmers can’t really realize from this government. You make a lot of promises, but you don’t follow through or deliver on any of those promises. And this is what the farmers are

looking for: a government that will deliver on some of the promises they make.

You've changed your figures within the last 10 minutes as to how many farmers have been approved. I suppose you don't have any changes in the way of how many farmers received any money. It's still zero. So you can say a good number of them have been approved, but none of them still received any money to this point.

Mr. Minister, out of the 300 applications that you say you have, and now 70, the last figure you give us today, you say 70 or so have been approved, how many of those 300, Mr. Minister, have been rejected?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, the member from Quill Lakes waits in eager anticipation for the answer. I can't give you the exact number but I think it's . . . Our best information would suggest that something in the order of about 30 have. The recommendation has been not to receive a guarantee.

MR. LUSNEY: — That would be from your previous figures, I would assume, Mr. Minister, that you had with this 46 that were approved, and about 30 of those of the same time of interviews have not been approved. I would assume now also that there would probably be a lot more than 30 that have been rejected.

Also, what you are saying then, Mr. Minister, is there's going to be at least 30 farmers and maybe a lot more, that you are saying are no longer going to be farmers in this province, because many of the farmers that applied for your program do not have the finances, cannot get them anywhere else, unless the government would give them a guarantee through the bank to get that money for them to put that crop in.

So you are saying that there will be at least 30 less and maybe much, much more farmers in this province by the time your program is completed or by the time the next month goes by. Because after the middle of June many of those farmers may as well sell out or move on if they don't get any assistance from you.

Mr. Minister, going back to the problem in the North, as my colleague has stated, and that's not going to the North; I say the Hudson Bay area, the central part of Saskatchewan, the north-east and the north-central part of Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Minister, there have been a good number of people in here. And I believe on Tuesday you had some people in from the CAM (Canadian Agriculture Movement) concerned about all the problems in that area. Did you meet with these people to hear their concerns and what they think or what they thought at that time you might be able to do for them as a government?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I did not meet myself with the members that were in most recently, but over the past several months, and I can't recall the exact dates I have met with them. I have met with Mr. Coueslan, who is the leader, as I understand it, but my Legislative Secretary, I believe, and certainly the chairman of AGCOC (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Canada), as others of AGCOC, has met with them. I was planning to be at the meeting — unfortunately, could not get there — but have met with, talked to the members and some of the members of CAM, including the president, over the past several months. So I guess that's what you're asking. Yes, I have.

MR. LUSNEY: — Well, Mr. Minister, I realized you've met with CAM over the last several months or the past several months, but I think their meeting or their attempt to meet with you this past week was to try and indicate to you how serious the problems are that the farmers are facing in that area. And those weren't problems that maybe existed several months ago, but they are problems that have gotten worse in the last month or two. And this is why they wanted to meet with you, to make you realize and understand how serious their situation is. I don't know why you didn't meet with them, but I hope you will at least from what they have said to some of

your other colleagues, realize the seriousness of the problem, and do something to try and help them.

I will leave that issue because it appears that there won't be any help coming to those farmers from this government at this point. And I'd like to go on to another area of questioning, Mr. Minister, and that's regarding Ag reps. Have you appointed an Ag rep for the Canora office?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, yes.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, is that member going to be working out of the Canora office along with the ag rep that was the ag rep for district 19 at that time, or are you going to utilize that office that you have in Kamsack and move one of the ag reps into that area and let him serve district 18 out of the office that is in Kamsack at this time?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, both ag reps will be working out of Canora, each one serving a district. And, for your information, the ag rep that will be taking over the Canora district, where it was . . . historically been known as the Canora district, is Wally Vanin, a person well known to agricultural service in the province.

MR. LUSNEY: — Mr. Minister, you said that Wally Vanin, I believe, will be looking after the Canora district. That's district 19, I assume, that he will be looking after. And then the Kamsack district, the district 18, will then be looked after by Walter or Orest Mysak?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — That's correct, Mr. Chairman, hon. member.

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the minister: does your department give authorizations to rural municipalities and combinations of rural municipalities in order to set up veterinarian districts?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, yes.

MR. KOSKIE: — And can you indicate, Mr. Minister, once you have given authorization to set up a veterinarian district, what assistance does your department provide in the operation of the veterinarian district that is established?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, there are available matching travel grants to help defray the cost to farmers, or at least make more equitable the costs associated with getting the veterinarian to, say, the far side of the district. He shares that cost with somebody close in.

There now is a new one in place, as well, that we've just instituted for this budget year, what's called a hospital operating grant, and, as well, the policy that's been in place for some time and one I think that's important to the youth of this province, the summer veterinary student job program.

MR. KOSKIE: — I'd like to ask the minister whether there is, in fact, assistance to the municipalities which will have, in fact, been authorized to set up a veterinarian district. Is there any capital grant provided in establishing their veterinarian office?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, not for this budget year, at any rate.

MR. KOSKIE: — And that's the point I want to get at. You're indicating, Mr. Minister, that you are assisting farmers. And what you have done is authorize and change the policy. You have authorized the establishing of veterinarian districts. And what previously the government was doing is providing up to 25,000 or one-half of the amount of the capital grants in the construction of the veterinarians' offices — clinics. And what your government — is it not a fact?

— have now cut out the grants for the establishing of the veterinarian clinics.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, you got it. We cut it.

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I'd like to ask you: would you be good enough to stand up in the House and indicate why you saw fit to cut a grant of helping to establish veterinarian clinics throughout the province, which are of great assistance to the farmers of this province?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Well, to be quite simple and honest and blunt about it, the whole operation of the delivery of veterinary services in this province hasn't really had a serious update since about 1937. And I think there was some view that policies were sadly out of date. In fact, I would suggest to you, and I'm not happy about it, but I would suggest to you that some policies are still sadly out of date, and they don't reflect any more what has happened in the livestock community.

I am, in fact, toying with the idea of doing a relatively major review and overhaul, such as was done in 1977-78 by a previous minister of agriculture, in so far as addressing what perhaps is the best method of delivery of veterinary service in Saskatchewan today for Saskatchewan farmers, given that farms have changed out there very much. Now we have clinics well established in many, many parts of the province. In fact, I would suggest to you that that's what led to the decision not to make moneys available any further for that particular program — because I think now we have the infrastructure, if you like.

I guess the simplest way of putting it for you . . . If in the late '70s or mid-'70s we had 1.2 million beef cows served out there by the veterinary clinics that existed of the day, certainly those clinics should be satisfactory to service 830,000 beef cows today. I think it would be a bit irresponsible to continue to build maybe what some might call a white elephant substructure when we should be looking at saving the factory, as well, and I think that's borne out by the fact that there was no uptake on the capital grant program last year.

And I won't get into all the thrusts that we've addressed, as well, to the livestock industry. Simply, I make no apologies for eliminating that particular program. There was no uptake the last year anyway. I'll be happy to sit down for several hours and discuss the delivery of veterinary services in rural Saskatchewan with the hon. member if you so desire.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, I'd like to ask the minister whether he has had any correspondence where, in fact, your department have authorized municipalities and portions of other municipalities to set up a veterinarian district fully on the understanding that the capital grant was in place, that they proceeded on that basis. Have you any situations in which they proceeded on that basis, and that you have now unilaterally rejected providing a very substantial capital grants. And now you have left a number of municipalities and portions of others hung out there with an expenditure, and you seem proud that you have, in fact, been able to cut back on further programs beneficial to the farmers. So I'm asking you: are you aware of inquiries from veterinary and districts which you authorized requesting the capital grant?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — I'm not aware of any particular . . . There may have been in the case of Wynyard, for example, an expectation based on past history that there were capital funds available even though, for example, last year there was no uptake. That may well be the case.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, are you prepared, Mr. Minister, in view of the fact that there was expectations, and in view of the fact that they fully proceeded on the basis and understanding, and of course I am talking about big Quill and a number of other townships from other municipalities, are you prepared to take another look at providing them with a capital grant? Because surely they went into it on the full expectation that the previous, very progressive program of the New Democratic government would, in fact, not be undermined by the vicious

knives of Tory regime.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — No, the thrust here is different. The thrust here is different now, and it's different for a couple of reasons. Number one, as I mentioned earlier, things have changed out there in rural Saskatchewan relative to the delivery of veterinary services, and how best to do it most efficiently. And secondly, how we have tried to address the same problem is: why not let anyone, whoever they need, be it veterinarian or other, build the clinic if the community or an individual so wishes to do so, and we're prepared to help defray their operating costs. You see, your theory very much has been — it's the same with farmland as it is with veterinary clinics — state ownership. You know, you can't get rid of that mentality. You know, I'll be very honest with you. For the most part, the capital grant program could be argued, and in fact has been argued by some, that it was nothing but a sweetheart deal for the veterinarians — nothing to do with helping the farmers.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well I want to tell you that, I asked you a specific question. Big Quill, and some of the surrounding municipalities, or portions thereof, in fact were approved for a veterinarian district under the understanding that they would, in fact, receive some capital grant for the construction of their veterinarian clinic.

I'm asking you specifically: will you in fact reconsider, in view of the fact that they are commenced under the full expectation of receiving a grant? Under that, I realize that you have cut out the capital grants. You've destroyed a good program which we had in place. But will you at least give a commitment that you will provide a capital grant to Big Quill?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I'll do better than that. I'll give them access to a program that I consider better than the capital construction grant program. That is, if there's a veterinarian in there and wants to practise, he will be eligible for a hospital operating grants — could be as high as \$4,500 — over and above the travel grant that they'd be eligible for, over and above the student that he'd be eligible for — \$4,500 a year.

I would suggest to you that you get a bigger bang than you do spending \$25,000 on a matching grant to build clinics — the old state-ownership mentality. I'm not so sure that Saskatchewan rural livestock population out there needs that any more. It's the old line. You guys haven't come up with anything new. It's the same old line that we used in the '60s, '70s, since '37. Things are changing out there. Get into the 20th century.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well I'd like to ask the minister whether he would feel the same way when we provide grants for hospitals throughout the communities, grants to build hospitals. Are you saying that that's somehow state socialism, sweetheart deal? Is that a sweetheart deal with the doctors?

What I'm asking you here, and I ask you specifically: will you, in fact, in view of the fact that Quill Lakes, Big Quill, went ahead with a . . . got the approval for a veterinarian district, established a clinic under the understanding that they would, in fact, receive a capital grant, will you consider at least their application for capital grants?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, no, I will not. But certainly I have indicated to you that they will be eligible for the same kinds of grant — hospital operating grants, etc., travel grants — that everybody else is. And I would suggest to you that I think, when they look at it, they'll find, in fact, it's a better deal than what the capital grants structure was.

And you made the reference to human hospitals. Certainly if you look at our rationale for our hospital operating grant program, it parallels very closely the human hospital operating kinds of grants. It's based on accredited hospitals, accredited by the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association. It's example of our government bringing the delivery of veterinary services into the 20th century.

MR. KOSKIE: — I want to move to another area of concern, Mr. Minister, and that is in respect to the matching grants for international aid. And I know my colleague from Assiniboia has dealt with that, but I want to bring to your attention a letter which you received, a copy of which I received.

And I want to tell you, Mr. Minister, that the way in which you have acted in respect to the program of international aid . . . Under our administration, the amount of international aid was \$2.1 million. Last year you cut it back to 1 million. This year you cut it back still further to 900,000. Mr. Minister, I am sure that you are aware of the letter that you received from the representatives of the Mennonite conference that was held indicating their . . . the Mennonites' annual conference held at Rosthern.

I want to read to you a few paragraphs of the letter that was written by Mr. Robert Bartel on behalf of the Mennonites that met at the conference over in Rosthern, and he says:

Dear Mr. Hepworth: It is with a great deal of grief, that I found that we, the people of Saskatchewan, have cut the Matching Grants in Aid Program by a further 10 per cent for the 1984-85 fiscal year, as outlined in the latest government budget. This follows the draconian cut of 52 per cent made last year. The fact that I tried to find news of this measure in the local newspapers but was unable to do so shows how insignificant we have made this program. In two years we have cut the program from \$2.1 million to \$900,000.

And I think this program, and all the people here in this legislature, I think, will agree with the outstanding work in the Third World that the Mennonite community and Mennonite church does. And here is a conference that is held, Mr. Minister, for over 200 people at the conference — at the Mennonite conference — signed a petition to you asking you to reconsider and to help the starving people of the Third World, where they voluntarily send many of their members to do volunteer work, and you with the knife slashing and the inconsideration of compassion, not only for the citizens of this province, but a lack of compassion and concern for the Third World.

I'm going to go on and read another paragraph to emphasize how the Mennonite community of this province feel about the actions of this government. This letter goes on:

This response to a world dangerously overarmed and undernourished both frightens and angers me. In our world, 30 children die of starvation or lack of inexpensive vaccines every minute. The world military spends \$1.3 million in that same minute. The cost of one new nuclear submarine equals the annual budget of 23 developing countries with 160 million school-age children. Somehow we have to get our priorities in order!

During 1984-85 (it goes on) Saskatchewan government will spend \$3,279 for every resident in the province, working out to benefits of over \$13,000 for a typical family of four, based upon a Saskatchewan population of approximately a million . . .

And he goes on to say:

According to the Budget Address Highlights I received in the mail, we will spend more than 1 billion on our health care, more than 1,000 per resident. This is an expenditure I heartily endorse, but it makes one think (it makes one think) when 4 out of 5 children in the Third World never see a health worker or when out of 125 million children born in 1981, 12 million died before their first birthday.

And he goes on, and I want you to draw to the attention of this Assembly the sincerity of the Mennonite Church and the Mennonite representatives to this conference.

And he goes on to indicate the crisis:

But if one . . . Too often we think the problem is too great and that we can do nothing to rectify the situation. We say, "The poor will always be with us." But if one sets one's priorities straight, the task is not nearly as awesome. . . The money required (this is . . . I want to get this on the record) to provide adequate food and water and education, health and housing for everyone . . . has been estimated at 17 billion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order, order. How many pages is this letter? There are rules about reading from other people's speeches and other people's material, and I was just wondering if the member could get to the point or paraphrase.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — On a point of order. If anyone is suggesting that it's out of order to read . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Sit down. Order . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Look! Who the heck is saying sit down when they're sitting in their seat? Just calm down, and allow a member to have a word. Just calm down!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — This is getting out of hand when people suggest that members cannot come in this House and read letters from constituents — long letters, short letters. And if this is going to be the position of the government, I want it on the record. We'll have a vote. And if you want to say that we can't read letters from our constituents — something that the whole history of the parliamentary system has built upon — say it. As the member for Kinistino and others are saying it.

But I am taking the position that we are entitled to read letters, that we are going to read letters, and if the members say no, then we will have it ruled out of order. We'll have our debate on it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — What was the point of order?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — The point of order was that the chairman was interrupting a member when he was reading a letter from the Mennonite conference, dealing directly on point — directly on point with a Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation grant.

There is a subvote for the grant of Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation. A group like the Mennonite conference writes in and asks about this grant. And I am suggesting to you that it is in order for this committee to hear what the Mennonite brethren have to say about subvote no. 5, matching grants for international aid — \$900,000.

Here is a group of citizens mentioning the figure, aware of subvote 25, offering their views to this legislature, and it is being suggested by members opposite that they should be gagged, that this committee should not hear from the Mennonite conference, and that somehow it is in order . . . somehow it is not in order. It is not in order for the member to read it. I am suggesting otherwise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order! Well the point of order that the members are allowed to read from letters, there is merit in that, that members are allowed to read from letters. However, in *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, there is a ruling:

A speech should not, however, consist only of a single, long question, and a series of quotations joined together with a few original sentences.

And I was inquiring whether there was any speech in this, or it was going to be a long, continuous quotation.

Now the question I had was: how many pages does this letter contain, and we're getting into a situation where I was inquiring whether we were going to have, under rule 25, tedious repetition or not, and that's what I'm inquiring. I will allow you to proceed and I will observe to see what the situation is.

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I'm not challenging, I'm not challenging your decision. But I don't know how anyone could say it's tedious repetition when I'm giving to the legislature and to the people of this province a very, indeed, a concern of the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order. Do you wish to proceed with the debate, or should we go on to another member?

MR. KOSKIE: — I will proceed, Mr. Chairman. And as I was saying, this is the vicious slash that has undertaken in respect to international aid from \$2.1 million down to 1 million last year, now cut again down to \$900,000; shows a lack of compassion of this government for the problems and the starvation in the underdeveloped worlds.

And I want to close this part of it in respect to the letter that has been addressed to the Minister of Agriculture. And he says that:

I am enclosing a petition signed by over 200 people of the Mennonite annual conference held in Rosthern.

That was on February 24th. And do you know what the Mennonite conference asked? They are asking that we reinstate the matching grants in aid to the former levels of \$2.1 million, as it was before the vicious cuts were introduced by this right-wing Conservative government who will not even provide matching grants to volunteer organizations who are willing to go out and offer assistance to the poor throughout the world.

Actually what we have here is the evidence of a neo-right-wing government who won't even work with the church groups throughout this province to aid those who are in need. And what I'm asking the minister: how can you, in fact, justify having slashed those international aid grants from \$2.1 million down to \$900,000, when over 300 people from the Mennonite community are, in fact, petitioning? They have sent a petition to you, Mr. Minister, requesting that you take a look at your budget and to increase it.

I want to say that the member from Saskatoon South has come over to this side of the legislature, and he has offered me some assistance. And do you know what he has said in respect to the international aid programs? He said it's Communists. It's assistance to the Communists. And I say, with this type of attitude: how can the Mennonite community expect to carry on their very worthwhile efforts in the Third World in helping the poor and the sick?

I ask you, Mr. Minister: can you stand in this House and give justification, when the Mennonite community have demonstrated a record of performance in the Third World unequalled, probably unequal to any other group, and here they are advocating that you reconsider this flashing of international aid so that the poor of the world can be cared for. Will you stand up in this legislature then and indicate why you saw fit to decrease the amount of assistance to the poor of the Third World?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I consider this a very serious issue, the business of government matching funds that private individuals out there — church organizations, whoever — do, out of the goodness of their heart, raise for those less fortunate than themselves. And I agree with you.

But the Mennonite community out there, their performance has, as you said, perhaps been second to none. And I want to, at this point in time, take a moment and congratulate and commend every person out there who has been and is doing so on an increasing basis, providing dollars assistance to help those people less fortunate than ourselves in this world. And I think that they should, and I will congratulate them and commend them to no end. They are sincere and honest people — sincere and honest people.

And I was not happy that we had to reduce their grants by \$100,000 this year. I was not happy that we had to reduce that by \$100,000 this year, but I think they can appreciate the tough decisions we had to make. There was hospitals and nursing homes and schools that had to be built. There were tough decisions that had to be made — tough decisions. And I'm not happy that we had to decrease it by \$100,000 because there were tough situations, as I mentioned — hospitals, nursing homes, schools. All those things were tough decisions, and we've made them.

But the point that needs to be made here is: what is our record in Saskatchewan since we have become government? Number one is, and I want everyone to know this, that we, to my knowledge, provide the second highest, the second highest in terms of matching grants and aid for foreign . . . for assistance in Third World countries — the second highest in the country. And I think that's an admirable track record. I think that's very admirable.

And I don't say that simply because I'd like to toot our government's horn. But I would refer hon. members in this legislature to the April 9, '84 *Leader-Post*, page B7, and what did one Romeo Maioni, director of the Non-Governmental Organizations division of Canadian International Development Agency say about Saskatchewan's contribution? Well, what the director of Non-Governmental Organizations, the division of CIDA, said about Saskatchewan was this:

He said Saskatchewan is relatively generous in the area of foreign aid even though the recent provincial budget cuts to \$900,000 from \$1 million the amount of money allocated to matching aid from NGOs in the province.

We are still relatively generous, and I would say we are — second highest in the country to my knowledge, second highest. To my knowledge as well, to my knowledge as well, for example, if you look at last year and the year before in Manitoba, what was their contribution? 300,000. 300,000. We're still nearly a million here, and I'm proud of that. I'm proud of that.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — But I want to tell the hon. member and, in fact, everyone in this legislature what was going on when the NDP were in charge of the matching grants and aid program, because they have undermined, they have undermined all the sincere, and honest, and dedicated people who have given dollars to this cause in this province. They have undermined it with nothing but the worst of sleazy politics, nothing but the worst.

I want to tell you what the Mennonite community brought to the attention of one of our members, and was extremely upset. They brought to him the brown package that was passed around at one of the SCIC board meetings. And what was in the brown package? An invitation to join the NDP party. That's the kind of undermining that you are responsible for. You are undermining sincere and honest people. NDP application form.

What else was going on? What else was going on when the NDP were in charge of the matching grants and aid program? I want to share with the members of this Assembly the kinds of projects that that government was matching, and you'll see the general theme here. You'll see the general theme — many, many good, sincere, honest projects that everybody viewed as deserving of support, received support.

But here is the kind of other thing that I think the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, this is one of the reasons why they voted you out of power. Project example — quoted directly from this:

This project means to consolidate and develop union organizations which have been elected by the peasants in the area.

Another one:

Train potential union leaders.

Another one:

This project proposes to provide counselling services to unions already organized, to organize new unions, and to train new trade union leaders.

The same old line. Nothing but interest in the big union bosses, and getting big union bosses across the country and into the Third World. Those people in the Third World are interested in receiving help with hospitals and food and schooling, not training union bosses. That's all you people have been interested. The same old line. Support the same old group.

Well I want to point out one other example of the kind of dangerous thing that you were engaged in, the kind of dangerous thing you were engaged in. Here is the worst of all in my mind, because this is undermining the youth of the world. One of the projects that you were funding was: conscientize — emerging youth. What is . . . Is that brainwashing the youth of the world . . . (inaudible) . . . with NDP union rhetoric.

That's why I am extremely proud of what our commitment has been. Our commitment has been to help them produce food, irrigation systems, hospitals, education, growing crops — not this sleazy politics that you were engaged in.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — And because the people out there agree with those kinds of sincere and honest projects, groups like the Mennonites, our commitment to, example, the Lesotho project since we took over in government, has increased, not decreased.

I could go on as well to talk about our commitment to Agdevco, which are part of our international conscience in helping those less fortunate than ourselves. In fact, when I was over in Africa, a year ago now roughly, I had a chance to talk to some of the people working in the mpongwe wheat scheme over there, developing food, not training union leaders. That's what we're interested . . . (inaudible) . . .

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order, order! Will the government members restrain themselves.

MR. KOSKIE: — I want to say I am not surprised by the minister's comment. Why would he not be proud of a massive cut to help the church groups provide services to the poor of the Third World. Why would we be surprised at his comments when, in fact, here in Saskatchewan in the Department of Social Services we have seen the same savage slashes in respect to the handicapped people of our own province.

Why would we be surprised at a minister that would stand up and say: I am proud that I have cut the budget to international aid from 2.1 million to 900,000 in two years? Why would we be surprised, in fact, when this government has demonstrated clearly its lack of compassion for the handicapped of our own province? Why, in fact, would we be surprised when we find over \$1

million cut from international aid; when we find that the programs for the handicapped are being slashed in our schools, and throughout our educational program?

Why wouldn't he be . . . why would we not expect this minister of this right-wing neo-conservative approach? Why wouldn't we expect him to say that there's \$900,000 and he's so proud of it.

But I want to say that the people of Saskatchewan are not proud. One of the great traditions of this province is that they have been able always to work together to develop their co-operatives, to develop medicare, to develop programs of great assistance to people of the province. This has been the tradition. And I want to tell the minister: to compare with any other province is not . . . will not prove nothing. This province — in Saskatchewan here, Saskatchewan people provide more voluntary assistance to people in this province than anywhere else in Canada.

And certainly what I am saying: that there is a great concern, a great concern that there has been a political, there has been political interference here by this right-wing Tory government, because the priorities of the programs were established by the individual church groups that participated. And now what they have done is to intervene and to start going against the very will of the churches of establishing assistance to the poor of the world.

And I think we've hit a very weak spot in the approach of this government. And that's why they have to be called to order, because here is a petition. And this petition I'm going to read to the hon. members, because it represents what the Mennonite community are thinking today. And it says:

Whereas the Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation has in the past been the recipient of an allocation of government funds in the form of matching grants to assist agencies of Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation in their world-wide endeavours; and

Whereas in 1982 the matching grants from the provincial government was approximately \$2.1 million, and in 1983 this matching grant was reduced by \$1 million'

We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Government of Saskatchewan to raise the amount allocated to overseas development projects to approximately \$2.1 million, which is still far short of the estimated 4.6 million expected from the non-government organization sources in 1984.

Here is what we have in Saskatchewan: a group of churches, a group of people committed to meeting the problems in the underdeveloped world. They have gone out and they have been able, through their dedication to this program, been able to raise substantial money by collecting from the public. All they have asked us is to match those grants in which the public will support the organizations to bring assistance to the underdeveloped world. And what our government here obviously has done is to consider and to really cut, undercut, undercut the efforts of all of these church groups which wanted to go forward and to assist the poor of the Third World.

And I ask you, Mr. Minister, why do you stand there . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Saskatoon South, who will never get into a debate, Mr. Chairman, but wants to always make comments from . . . not even from his own seat, not even from his own seat.

And what I'm saying, Mr. Chairman, is that this here represents a concern of a major organization, the Mennonite group of Saskatchewan, who have gone so far as to petition this government to reconsider the amount of their grant — to raise it at least to the equivalent when we were in government, at \$2.1 million. And what we have, Mr. Deputy Chairman, is a minister who stands up, after having cut it from 2.1 to 9, bragging and saying he's doing such a great effort.

And what really surprises me most is that we get comments from other members of the Tory back benches who say that the work that the churches were doing in the past with the \$2.1 million that we provided, was somehow Communist inspired. That is what they have said, and I think that is an allegation, an allegation that is an affront to all of the church groups who have banded together to collect money to go out and help the Third World.

And so I ask you, Mr. Minister, in view of the petition that you have received, certainly the representations from a large number of other groups . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order, order!

MR. MYERS: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to have a point of order that the member from Quill Lakes has accused me of saying things which I did not say. He's taking them out of context. I would like the member to apologize.

MR. CHAIRMAN: — Order! I need not hear any further comment on it. The point of order is out of order. I do not recall the member from Quill Lakes referring to the member from Saskatoon South specifically, and therefore the point of order is out of order.

MR. KOSKIE: — And I, with a rude interruption for a point of order, clearly indicates the very sensitivity of the members. And, Mr. Chairman, I have the floor and if other members want to get into the debate subsequent to my finishing the comments, I'll be pleased to allow them.

I want to say that the way in which the government handled this whole situation without even any consultation with the church groups — even if they wanted to change some of the priorities, what justification is there in a Third World, as is set out in this letter, the circumstances of which are desperate. What possible justification is there, Mr. Chairman, for this government showing their lack of compassion, showing even their concern to work with the religious community in providing services to the Third World?

And so I ask the minister: how do you justify in respect to the petition from the Mennonite community? Have you, in fact, replied to this, to the petition which you received, Mr. Minister? And I have received a copy because some of my constituents signed the petition.

I ask you: will you, in fact, reconsider the massive cuts which you have put in place against the wishes of one of the most active groups, the Mennonite community?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, hon. member, I don't think we need debate this at great length. I think the point I think the point I would like to make is that this was not an easy decision. I would love to have been able to increase it. Fortunately, I think by taking out some of what I think the taxpayers consider desirable projects, we've been able to probably increase our level of moneys to those projects that are consistent with putting food on the table and providing health and education services.

And I could as well read into the record, just as you have, letters from member organizations that say things like: you know, we're most grateful; appreciation of your support of our project; fortunately your government has recognized the need for such aid programs; has it joined it.

But the important point to make here is that, even with the slight cut-back we've had, the people, because they're sincere and honest out there, have responded by increasing their giving, and I think that they are to be congratulated for that.

As well, the point you raise about us not consulting, that's not true. That's not true at all. I have met with SCIC (Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation) on numerous occasions. I have, in fact, before the budget was brought down, in fact, before the budget was brought

down, and because we wanted to include them in the consultative process, my colleague, the member for Kelvington-Wadena, the chairman of the ag caucus, along with several other members here, met with them, listened to their side of the story so we'd get a feel for how our priorities should be arrived at as well.

And this is a real credit to the Minister of Health, and I believe that his colleague, the Minister of Social Services, for the first time ever in the history of Saskatchewan, to our knowledge, they had just a tremendously successful meeting when all the church leaders of this province, for the first time every, were called in to discuss what they thought of social issues here and outside the country, whether they be health or otherwise. And he's to be commended for that. So what more can I say, Mr. Speaker — Mr. Chairman, rather.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, I would just like to say that I listened very closely to the minister explaining the cuts and find it interesting that the minister would say that some of the projects that were decided on by a committee of the churches, because that's who made all the decisions now. That process hasn't changed, Mr. Minister. Every project that was funded was decided on by a committee of the churches. The government simply matched the grants, as the decisions were made, without any stipulation or any inquiry into where the church was being done.

And if the members don't believe that, if the members don't believe how those decisions are made now and were made in the past is exactly the same, then I would ask them to contact the Mennonite church and ask them how those decisions were made to fund all of the projects, not just the ones that you're doing now, but in the past, and ask them whether or not there was any involvement from the government of your time. I don't believe there's involvement now, other than cutting back or giving more. Nor was there in the past under Ross Thatcher or Allan Blakeney. And I challenge you to ask the churches how those decisions were made.

And if there were projects that you believe were funded inadvertently or wrongly, then I would ask you to take them up with the committee that made those decisions, because I think your attack on various decisions is unfortunate because I believe that projects that were decided on this year, as in the 1970s, are appropriate and should be matched.

In closing that part of it, Mr. Chairman, I would like to refer to one other item, and that is a statement which I referred to in *Hansard* in talking about agriculture on another day. And on page 1121 of *Hansard* I referred to an eminent journalist when I was talking, I believe, to the Minister of Agriculture at that time. I referred to a journalist, Pat O'Dwyer, as one of the supporters of the Conservative Party.

A letter to me from Mr. O'Dwyer said that he has in no way been involved in the Conservative Party and, Mr. Chairman, I would agree with him that accusing him of being involved in the Conservative Party, when he isn't, is a slur on his name, and I would ask that the record be set straight, that I would like that issue . . .

And I extend my apology to Mr. O'Dwyer for saying that he was a member of the Conservative Party. I, too, would consider that to be a slur if somebody referred to me as a Conservative when I wasn't. Therefore I would like the record to show that.

Item 1 agreed to.

Items 2 to 18 inclusive agreed to.

Items 19 and 20 — Statutory.

Items 21 to 23 inclusive agreed to.

Item 24

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister: why would the grant to 4-H program be cut in this year's budget?

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Well, once again, being a long-time supporter of the 4-H, in fact a member of 4-H for probably 10 or 11 years in my youth, one of these, a cut like this is not one that I like to do. But in fact, it's not really a reduction in funds that have been made available to the 4-H movement because what does not show in here — what shows in here is something like a \$17,000 or \$15,000 decrease in their grants.

What does not show in here is at the very end of fiscal year '83-84 we found, if you like, an additional \$100,000, which the Premier presented to the Saskatchewan 4-H Foundation, over and above last year's commitment to the 4-H movement. So I know the impression left by the number here would suggest that we're downplaying our 4-H as a priority. That is not true. In fact, they've received more money, in fact I think \$100,000 more, than they did last year.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — Mr. Minister, I think I know what you're saying: that it was opportune for the Premier to present a cheque to the 4-H. And for political reasons you arranged . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, and you arranged for a cheque for him to present at that time which meant that this year you had to cut back.

And I think that playing politics with the 4-H, a very non-political organization . . . And I, too, have been a member of the 4-H when we were young, and very, very interestingly it has a great deal to do with whether or not people, I believe, stay in the agricultural sector. But I would think that playing politics with the granting of money to the 4-H clubs of this province, and this year it's very obvious that \$15,000 less than last year is being paid . . . Otherwise, Mr. Minister, it wouldn't show that here in the book. I think it's unfortunate that nobody encouraged you to, at minimum, increase the grant by 10 per cent from last year or, at least, not reduce it by the 15,000.

And I would ask the minister to review that because I think it's unfortunate that you would choose to cut back in grants to 4-H this year.

Item 24 agreed to.

Items 25 to 34 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 1 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE

AGRICULTURE

Capital Expenditure — Vote 2

Items 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.

Vote 2 agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND LOANS, ADVANCES AND INVESTMENTS

AGRICULTURAL CREDIT CORPORATION OF SASKATCHEWAN

Vote 147

Item 1 — Statutory.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
CONSOLIDATED FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE
AGRICULTURE

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 1

Item 1 — Statutory.

CONSOLIDATED FUND LOANS, ADVANCES AND INVESTMENTS
AGRICULTURE

Vote 146

Item 1 — Statutory.

SASKATCHEWAN HERITAGE FUND
BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE (AGRICULTURAL DIVISION)

Ordinary Expenditure — Vote 50

Items 1 and 2 agreed to.

Vote 50 agreed to.

SASKATCHEWAN HERITAGE FUND BUDGETARY EXPENDITURE
AGRICULTURE

Provincial Development Expenditure

MR. CHAIRMAN: — There's no expenditure for 1984-85.

SASKATCHEWAN HERITAGE FUND
LOANS, ADVANCES AND INVESTMENTS (AGRICULTURAL DIVISION)
AGRICULTURE

Vote 62

Item 1 agreed to.

Vote 62 agreed to.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
SASKATCHEWAN HERITAGE FUND
LOANS, ADVANCES AND INVESTMENTS (AGRICULTURAL DIVISION)
AGRICULTURE

Vote 62

Items 1 and 2 agreed to.

Vote 62 agreed to.

HON. MR. HEPWORTH: — Mr. Chairman, I believe that completes the business relative to agricultural estimates. And if so, I would like to at this time thank my officials for their assistance, and as well, the hon. members for their relatively concise questions.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 1:50 p.m.