

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

November 23, 1984

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. Engel:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provision of Rule 16(3) to give notice that I shall, on Tuesday next, move:

That this Assembly regrets this government's total inadequate job creation performance which has caused hardship for thousands of Saskatchewan families, and further, that this Assembly urges the government to take immediate, positive action to deal with the crisis in agriculture and the need for job creation.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Appointment of Employment Minister

**Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. It deals with Saskatchewan's number one economic and social problem, unemployment, and it deals with your totally inadequate response yesterday to the problem of the appointment of a part-time minister. Mr. Premier, there's 34,000 people unemployed in Saskatchewan today, another 4,000 who have just simply given up. My question to the Premier is how many of those people you expect your new part-time employment minister to put to work by say January 1st — 5,000, 10,000, 20,000. Do you expect 5,000 more to be unemployed? How many new jobs have you instructed your part-time minister to try to generate by mid-winter? What is your government's specific job creation goal?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday, the minister responsible for employment has a two-pronged responsibility. One is to co-ordinate all the economic activity that will provide jobs for those that have skills; secondly, Mr. Speaker, is to address the problem in Saskatchewan which deals with the fact that about half of the unemployment are people who are unskilled. And you can create all the economic opportunities that you would like to have, and you'd find people come into the province of Saskatchewan and pick up those jobs unless we can train people that are from the ages of 15 to 19, or to 20 to 24, that do not have high school, do not have post-secondary education. So the responsibility is to do both. But despite those two, Mr. Speaker, I think that it's fair to remind the member of the opposition that Regina has the lowest unemployment rate of any city in Canada.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — And, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the lowest unemployment rate of any province in the nation.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, we don't like to see anybody unemployed. We particularly are very, very concerned about youth that don't have skills to go into the labour force. The combination of the things that we're about to do is create economic activity, and there will be legislation brought in after the Speech from the Throne to deal with that, as well as touch the young people to make sure that they don't drop out, can find the kind of training that they need

to make sure that they can go into the labour force, both in Saskatchewan and out of the province of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Shillington:** — Supplementary. Is the premier seriously putting forth the position that there are tens of thousands of jobs out there going begging, if only people had the skills to apply for them? Is that really the Premier's position?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has identified part of the problem. Part of the problem is that we have thousands and thousands of young people in Saskatchewan, and indeed across this country, that do not have skills. They may have grade 7, or grade 8, or grade 9, but they're not trained as a welder, a technician, or as an economist, or as a nurse, or frankly, anything else. And it's very difficult for us, when we compete internationally, to provide these jobs for people that don't have the skills to match those opportunities of the labour force. One of the reasons that Saskatchewan is growing so rapidly is skilled labour is coming into our province to find jobs because we're creating them faster than other jurisdictions as a result of upgrading, as a result of investment, as a result of venture capital, as a result of several programs.

What concerns us, Mr. Speaker, very sincerely, is the fact that so many young people can't even take advantage of job creation because they don't have the training.

**Mr. Shillington:** — I was hoping the Premier would mention the growing labour-force phenomenon because it gives me an opportunity to deal with yet another of your flights of fancy. The Premier claims that people are flocking to Saskatchewan in droves looking for jobs, and he just can't keep up with all these hordes coming over the borders looking for Saskatchewan jobs.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please! I believe if the member will read the rules of question period you will find that the kind of statements that you were making yesterday, and again today, are not permitted in question period, and I would ask you to get directly to your question.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that the Saskatchewan labour force has been the second lowest in Canada in terms of growth — our labour force has been the second slowest in Canada in terms of growth — how do you square that with your flight of fancy that your problem is caused by people coming into Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what period the individual is referring to. I know that our labour force has grown very rapidly in the last two years, as has our population grown very rapidly. So if you look at the new jobs created, if you look at the increase in the employment force, if you look at the problem, if the members would go back and address the problem of unskilled young people that need to be addressed personally by volunteer organizations, by ourselves, by business, by the opposition, by everybody in this province, then you can begin to focus on the real problem, not the economic activity for those that have skills so much as it is to provide the skills for young people to take advantage of any opportunity that comes along.

**Mr. Shillington:** — New question. Mr. Premier, the effectiveness of your minister and your approach to job creation was driven home to the people of Saskatchewan when it was announced that Dad's Cookies will close, throwing 42 people out of work in the jobs minister's own riding, none the less. I ask you, Mr. Premier, if that's performance. Can you tell this Assembly what attempts your part-time employment minister has made to try to salvage those jobs?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, clearly the company in question is closing down operations across Canada. I think it put something like 500 people out of work in Montreal or in Quebec. It put them out of work here to the tune of about 40 people.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, obviously we're doing things that have never been done before in terms of job creation, whether it's upgraders or economic activity or venture capital or some things that are causing an awful lot of people to move in here for opportunities. That isn't to say there won't be, from time to time, companies that quit, or companies that move on, and certainly when you look at the magnitude of that kind of decline in Quebec, it's rather significant. For the province of Saskatchewan it's less so. We hate to see it happen, but if they make a decision to curtail their business, it's obviously something that they have to do.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, a supplement to the Premier. Mr. Premier, could you tell me whether or not you are aware of the closure of the wildlife centre at Webb, which laid off 20 people? In light of the fact that your Minister of Tourism has talked a great deal about developing tourism in the south-west, the fact that 22,000 tourists stopped at this centre in the last year and the jobs that were created in the Swift Current area, can you tell me whether or not you agree with the principle of closing that centre; and if you don't agree with it, whether you've made a request of the federal minister to keep it open, to keep those jobs there and to keep the tourism in the south-west as it presently is?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that the hon. member has his facts correct. I will take notice and find out about what . . .

### Assistance for Farmers

**Mr. Engel:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to direct this question to the Premier, and it's regarding the other social, serious problem that's facing Saskatchewan, that has to do with the farmers of this province. And here all your government has been is lots of talk and little action. In your \$50,000 extravaganza a couple of weeks ago you said, and I quote, Mr. Speaker:

This government will not allow our farm families to be forced off, or chased off their farms because of a bad crop. We will not let them lose their land.

He went on to promise immediate action to protect the family farm. Two weeks later, no action. Do you know how many farmers lost their land in the last two weeks in Saskatchewan, Mr. Premier? Do you know how many people threw up their hands in despair and quit? When are you going to stop talking and have some action? When are you going to implement some action?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the Speech from the Throne is scheduled to come down on Thursday next, and we'll be glad to deal with it at that time.

**Mr. Engel:** — Mr. Speaker, another question for the premier. Farmers aren't waiting for another Speech from the Throne. They're not waiting for some more talk. They need help today. We could have been dealing with this problem running along with the session. Farmers are wondering why it's so easy for your government to find \$32 million to guarantee loans for Bill Hunter, \$89 million to help a company from Alberta buy a coal mine in my riding. They're saying, Mr. Premier, when will you announce a specific program? When will you get on with some action? What are you going to do to help them, that they will not lose their farms now?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, anything new will be announced during the Speech from the Throne and later, but I think it's fair to remind the hon. member that this administration is spending in excess of \$150 million extra annually in agriculture that wasn't spent before, or wasn't spent by the previous administration — 150 million. To give you some examples . . . We can add it up, Mr. Speaker. The cattle program, \$48 a head, is \$13 million; to move cattle is 1.5 million; for water and wells it's .5 million; for flood assistance it's 7.5 million; farm purchase program, this year alone, 36 million; the natural gas program, 35 million; counselling assistance, 7.5 million; gas tax, 70 million. In addition to that, we have convinced the federal government to

remove the tax on diesel fuel and if you combine that with the kinds of things that we have suggested they do in stabilization, you are looking at in excess of a quarter of a billion dollars annually going into agriculture in the province that wasn't going in before.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Engel:** — Mr. Premier, I suppose the simple question then would be: your Minister of Agriculture said the sky isn't falling in, the sky isn't falling in. But the farmers are looking for a little bit of heaven. Maybe I should ask you when you're going to call an election so that they can get a real change. Maybe the sky isn't falling in, but the bottom is falling out.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please! The member is making speeches rather than asking questions, and I would caution you that this will be your last warning on that.

**Mr. Engel:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question I want to ask the minister is: on the order paper is Bill 30, on the blues. Would you proceed today – we are here, we're getting paid for it – will you move ahead today with Bill 30, so that the farmers have some real protection that they won't lose their farm tomorrow until your other programs come in place? Bill 30's no good if you haven't got a program to accompany it. Will you proceed today with the Bill that's on the order paper, that would have prevented more than a dozen farmers from losing their farms last week? Will you proceed with Bill 30?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, we will proceed with the Speech from the Throne when it comes down on Thursday.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — You will know that yesterday in this Assembly we had the unfortunate incident of the House adjourning early before any of the business was dealt with on the order paper. I wonder if now, whether you would instruct your House Leader that if we fail to move with your Bill, your proposed Bill and motion, that we go on with government business which varies from constitutional items on the order paper to Bill 30 which would protect farmers – whether or not today we will move on to some of the business that the people of the province are paying us to come here and deal with. What would be wrong with that suggestion?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, we will proceed. We will proceed as the House Leader has outlined, and when we're finished that procedure, then we'll go on with the Speech from the Throne and on into the session.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Premier, are you telling us, then, that we are going to not deal with the issues on the order paper today, and we will again take the day off and the taxpayers will pay thousands of dollars? Well, Mr. Speaker, I will ask the Premier whether or not he will refrain from allowing his Government Leader to adjourn the House early today. Let's put it that way.

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, we will be glad to get on with the operations of the House. It was . . . Obviously we couldn't yesterday because we couldn't get unanimous consent. If we get it we will carry on. If not, we won't.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — I want to get the Premier clear on this because I think he did give us his assurance now that they would not adjourn the House early – that his Government House Leader would not rise and adjourn the House. Is that correct? I asked you whether or not you're giving assurances that your House Leader will not adjourn the House early today, as he did yesterday.

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — No, I won't.

### Security Checks on Cabinet Appointments

**Mr. Koskie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address a question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, yesterday, in reference to the appointments to your cabinet, I asked you specifically

whether, in fact, you had indeed made any security checks. And my follow-up on that – and you indicated, as I understood it, that you personally had not, indeed, done any security checks in the appointments to cabinet. And what I would like to ask you first of all: at the time of the formation of your government did you, in fact, have a transition team in place assisting you in the putting together of your government, including the cabinet, and the firing of many top civil servants? And could you indicate whether you had such a transition team in the composition of that?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, yes, we had a transition team, and I don't recall all the members of the transition team, but I can take notice and get the people that were involved in it.

**Mr. Koskie:** — He doesn't know the names of his transition team. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Premier then: can he indicate to us whether he can remember the duties that he gave to the transition team, and whether or not the duties included assisting him in choosing the appointments of cabinet ministers?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Chairman, I select the cabinet ministers, and the role of the transition team is taking the administration of this government from one group of individuals to another; that always takes place when a government loses and another one wins. It takes some time, and the whole transition to bring in new policies and programs is something that any administration has to go into. That's exactly what we did. I decide who goes into cabinet. I decide, myself.

**Mr. Koskie:** — Supplemental, Mr. Premier. I fully advise that you make the final decision, but I am asking you whether or not the transition team did, in fact, do any of the security checks, or, in concert with any other individual, whether or not any preliminary security checks was, in fact, done by the transition team?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Not to my knowledge.

**Mr. Koskie:** — I would like to ask the Premier then a supplemental: whether Mr. Ron Barclay, a private lawyer – whether or not Mr. Barclay was an adviser to the transition team.

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I can't say whether he was, or whether he wasn't. He might have been. There may have been several people involved in the transition, and I said that I would pull together the names of the people that were involved. I think I went through this in estimates once or twice before, but we'll dig it up if that's what they're interested in.

**Mr. Koskie:** — Final supplemental. I want to ask, and it's my information, Mr. Premier, I want to ask you: did Mr. Barclay's duties, in respect to his advice to the transition team, in fact, include security checks of those who were going to be appointed to cabinet? Did, in fact, Mr. Barclay provide that service either to the transition team, to yourself, or to the government?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't know the answer to that. I'll take notice.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, I have a new question also with respect to Mr. Barclay's activities. Information tabled in this legislature indicated that Mr. Barclay's firm, MacPherson, Leslie and Tyerman, had been paid \$377,000 in legal fees over that particular year. Little question, I think, that Mr. Barclay did the bulk of that work for that firm. The Premier will also remember that during the Thatcher trial Mr. Collver said under oath he had asked Mr. Barclay for advice as to whether or not he should go to authorities with information given to him by Mr. Thatcher, and you will also know that Mr. Barclay told him he had no legal obligation to do so.

I ask the Premier, not for a legal opinion, but for a judgement as leader of a government. Do you not agree that if Mr. Collver had passed on this information, a tragedy might have been prevented? And do you not agree that whether or not it was sound legal advice, the advice is

very much open to question on moral grounds?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm not in a very good position to make a legal interpretation of what the individual is asking with respect to legal judgement. The Attorney General's in a better position to make a comment with respect to the legal interpretation of whether somebody should, or should not, be advising something about it, and if he wants to make a comment, he can.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — The hon. member knows, one, that the matter is before the courts. Secondly, I suppose it's a rather strange position to be arguing that someone's lawyer speaks for every client that he represents, because we will certainly be reviewing other activities if that's decided to be the principle of this House, if that's the argument the hon. member's making.

**Mr. Shillington:** — New question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, the lawyer in question was doing a good deal of work for the government and, through the government, for the taxpayer. The lawyer in question was doing a good deal of work for the taxpayer and for society. Do you not think that that lawyer had some obligation to society to pass on information which the police clearly should have had?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Responding to the hon. member. The hon. member has, in the past, Mr. Speaker, brought this House as low as it possibly can go, making innuendoes he's afraid to make outside the House. I challenge the hon. member, Mr. Shillington, to make his statements outside the House. If he is complaining about any lawyer in the . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. The minister, in responding, should not use the member's name but, rather, can use the member's position or constituency, and I would ask him to refrain from using the member's name.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — If the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, has a complaint against any lawyer in practice in the province of Saskatchewan, I would hope that he, in his professional capacity as a lawyer, would have at least the respect for the profession to make it outside the House to the Law Society of Saskatchewan in the appropriate manner. If he has nothing, then I think he owes an apology.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Shillington:** — New question. Mr. Premier, my complaint is not against that particular lawyer; my complaint is against this government. And my question, Mr. Premier, is whether or not you agree that a lawyer, who does a good deal of work for the taxpayer, has some obligation to society to pass on information which the police, clearly, should have had?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Mr. Speaker, I think we are dealing with the legal advice that a lawyer has given his client. That is privileged. And I think everybody in Saskatchewan knows about solicitor-client privilege.

For the first time, Mr. Speaker, we have a member of this Assembly saying that lawyers advising their clients should make their advice public, and that they had a duty in criminal matters, or otherwise. I think that you are casting terrible aspersions, one, on the legal profession, the society of Saskatchewan; secondly, I think the position that you're advocating is terribly dangerous. You are putting all of the legal aid people's clients . . . I'm supposed to be advising the government, and I say that's wrong. And I will never ask for it, nor will this government ever ask for it. I say if there's a complaint against a lawyer, he, of all people, should know that his innuendoes in the House get him nowhere, and that he now has an obligation, if he believes that he has a concern, to take it up with the appropriate people — that's the Law Society of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Shillington:** — Well, since the Premier is unwilling to deal with this issue today, as he was yesterday, then let me address a question to the Minister of Justice. Do you not agree there was all the difference in the world between information which comes to a lawyer about a crime which has been committed, and information which comes to a lawyer about a crime which is going to be committed. Does the Minister of Justice not agree no privilege attaches to information which one has with respect to a prospective crime?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Well, it's very interesting that they can quote from the transcripts and then miss what was said, because my understanding of what was said at the trial is that a legal brief was made by a lawyer on behalf of his client. So obviously a legal opinion was made. I'm not privy to that legal opinion. I don't want to be privy to that legal opinion, because it is not my right to interfere in the relationship between any lawyer and their client.

I am surprised that the NDP argues that solicitor-client privilege no longer applies. If one is concerned about the activities of a lawyer in his professional capacity, you have the appropriate measure to take, and I think you are obligated as a lawyer to take that to the Law Society of Saskatchewan.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Resignation of Mr. Thatcher from Cabinet

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, because of the tactics of the former premier I am left with no choice but to say the following. Mr. Speaker, I want to make five points:

1. I never talked to Colin Thatcher about the Wilson incident, prior to it, or after it, inside, or outside cabinet.
2. I repeat, as I've said before, his resignation from cabinet had nothing to do with that incident.
3. Nothing to do with any part of that incident was ever discussed by cabinet at any time.
4. All facts, rumours, innuendoes, or whatever, were given to police authorities.
5. And at no time did the former premier give me any information about the Wilson incident, or its investigation during his administration.

To the best of my knowledge, each and every elected member of the legislature, and each and every official of the government has co-operated at all times with authorities. In my view, the police force, the RCMP, and all government officials, have handled the whole matter in a very professional fashion. As a result, a jury of Saskatchewan peers has reached a well-known verdict.

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Mr. Speaker, I raised in this House yesterday, stories circulating across Canada about the conduct of the minister sitting opposite. The Premier chooses to call that "tactics." He was very careful not to suggest that he had even asked for any retraction from any newspaper across Canada. Surely, a startling position for a first minister.

And note the care with which he has spoken to this House. He has never talked to the member for Thunder Creek. We didn't allege that. He has . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Order.

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — The record will speak for itself, and I don't — the record will speak for itself. We never alleged that the Premier talked to the member for Thunder Creek.

Secondly, he gives his explanation as to the resignation. We do not question that, although we think it a remarkable confluence of events, that his . . . He says that he's never discussed by cabinet, i.e., at a formal cabinet meeting, never alleged, never alleged – I said at a meeting at which cabinet members were present. That's what the record says. That's what I allege. And that's what he doesn't. There was no more . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please!

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Be careful. I am saying . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right. I . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — I've called for order a number of times, and that order applies to both sides of this House. Throughout the time that the Leader of the Opposition has been trying to speak, there has been hollering and shouting from this side, and from this side, and it's impossible for this House to carry on its business in that form. I would ask you to give the Leader of the Opposition an opportunity to make his points. The Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to correct the statement I just made. I want to say, as quietly as I can, that the Premier . . . I did not say the Premier had spoken to the member for Thunder Creek. I expressed surprise at the reasons that the Premier gave for the resignation, particularly since it seemed to me that they corresponded with a number of other events, some of which have been raised in this House. I did not allege, nor did the newspaper allege, that anything had happened at a formal cabinet meeting. I was repeating the allegations that were in the newspaper, and they spoke of things at which cabinet ministers were present. That may or may not have been a formal cabinet meeting. The Premier was very, very careful in his statement not to say that it didn't happen at a meeting at which cabinet members were present, but at a cabinet meeting.

Now, I merely make one point. If all of those facts are true, and if, as the Premier states, he has been aware of the newspaper reports which are now close to two weeks old, I find it surprising that a first minister would not even ask, or have one of his colleagues ask, for some sort of a retraction when those stories are in, not minor newspapers, but virtually the leading newspapers in Canada. The Premier may now put forward his story, and I do accept it, since he is . . . I accept what he said. I accept what he said. But I do not accept it as a negation of the newspaper stories, and I am frankly surprised that the Premier did not add, "And I am asking those newspapers to withdraw those stories." I think that it is surely surprising if stories like that can be circulated across Canada, and a first minister in this country doesn't ask for a retraction.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Petersen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before orders of the day, with your leave, I would like to introduce a group of high school students from Foam Lake high school, who are sitting in the gallery behind me. I'm sure they've enjoyed question period today, and I would like to introduce them to all hon. members and ask all hon. members to welcome them here today. I'll be meeting with you in about 15 minutes.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, with leave, I move that an Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act be now introduced and read the first time.

**Mr. Speaker:** — The member has asked for leave. Is leave granted? If the member is objecting,



would he speak loud enough to be heard.

**Mr. Sveinson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm objecting, and I did say no.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Leave is not granted.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:37 a.m.