

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

November 27, 1984

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

ORAL QUESTIONS

Assistance for Farmers

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the Minister of Agriculture, and my question deals with the farmers in north-eastern Saskatchewan, and they're still waiting for your friends in Ottawa, for the Mulroney government to make a payment.

Back in June the Premier promised, or assured us, that he expected the federal government to kick in about \$20 million of assistance to farmers. During the federal campaign the Liberals promised about \$16 million or \$20 an acre. Your federal leader said that they would match that.

My question to you is: four months later, the farmers are still waiting for this amount of money; they are in serious condition with no crop for three years - will you put pressure on the Mulroney government to make good on that promise to kick in about \$2 for every dollar you did, or \$3 for every dollar you did?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question, and certainly, in terms of having the federal government address the problems of north-east Saskatchewan, or, for that matter, south-east or south-west or south-central or, in fact, the farmers of all Saskatchewan, certainly I have met with the federal minister and many of his colleagues and brought to his attention that issue and many other issues that are, as I mentioned earlier, I would suggest, that are of great importance to all Saskatchewan farmers. As it turns out, when the former administration was in place - and I'm certain the hon. member himself can read *Hansard*, the federal *Hansard* - as it turns out, that proposal, while the federal Liberal administration was in office, had never been to treasury board, and, in fact, that's at least one of the hoops that it is going through now.

And I would suggest that we have represented the interests of north-east Saskatchewan farmers to the federal minister, just like we've represented all the interests of all Saskatchewan farmers to the new federal minister. And I might say it's been a refreshing change to find an open door and a sympathetic ear.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Engel: — I have a supplementary for the minister, Mr. Speaker. The minister talks about a sympathetic ear he has there. I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, and I ask you: when can these farmers anticipate a pay-out? They got about \$7 million early in August that helped them a little ways, but there's no way these farmers are going to survive through the winter without an injection of cash, now. When can they expect you and your minister to stop talking and come up with some action on this one? If you've met with the minister and your proposal received favourable assurance, surely it doesn't take that long to implement it. They've come up with money for other of their friends, but when are they going to come up with some, when are you going to come up with some money for the farmers?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I would, in response to the hon. member's question, just say that I cannot give a definitive answer on when they might expect an announcement. Had it been through the various groups prior to the election, it might have been sooner rather than later. And I can only reiterate that the minister is well aware of the situation, and that their

track record in terms of help for western Canadian farmers, I would suggest, is well-known, and, I think, an impressive one in a short time.

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, you say that you don't know when the federal government might come up with some money for this program to assist the farmers in north-eastern Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, can you assure this House, and the farmers in north-eastern Saskatchewan, that you will not allow this just to stand still for a while without the federal government making a move on it? Will you continue to pursue the plight of these farmers in north-eastern Saskatchewan with the federal government and make sure that this is coming forth very soon and not next year or the year after?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have met with the federal minister. I have met and talked with his colleagues and his counterparts, and they are well aware of the situation.

And I would simply ask, in fact, what have you done? Have you yourself written to the federal minister? Have you yourself talked to the — met with the minister? Have you met with any of his colleagues to press the case?

Mr. Lusney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, it is not what we ask the federal minister. I am asking you: are you going to continue to pursue the plight of the western or the north-eastern farmers and ask the Minister of Agriculture for Canada to come across with the money that they have promised in their election campaigns, and to assist the farmers in north-eastern Saskatchewan immediately?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, yes.

Mr. Sveinson: — To the Minister of Agriculture. Would your government support a three-party resolution addressed to the federal Minister of Agriculture regarding this specific situation?

An Hon. Member: — There are only two parties in this House.

Mr. Sveinson: — There are three parties in the House. There are three parties. The debate isn't the number of parties, but would your government support a resolution supported by all three parties in this House to your Minister of Agriculture requesting post-haste on this situation?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I, and I think my colleagues, in terms of what we support, and what we do not support in this House, give serious consideration to every motion, resolution, and piece of legislation that comes before this House, and certainly if the hon. member wants to play catch-up and get into the action so far as making our position known to the federal minister, I would welcome his help in that area.

Mr. Sveinson: — A further supplementary. My question — apparently the minister didn't understand — was: will your government, through you, support a resolution to the federal minister requesting post-haste on the situation in north-eastern Saskatchewan, which, in fact, was committed by the Liberal government before they were defeated — before they were defeated, before they were defeated? And there is no reason why treasury board has failed to meet on this situation to date. There is absolutely no reason. Can you outline to me that you will support a three-party resolution, and give me in definitive terms?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, let's get it in the record what, in fact, our government has done in terms of our commitment to north-east Saskatchewan. We have put your money on the table. The farmers, the 1,800 farmers up there, have got something close to \$8 million in their hands, and in terms of co-operation and helping facilitate the process for the federal commitment in terms of those farmers, we have provided the names, the programs as we

developed it here, so they didn't have to re-invent the wheel; we have co-operated fully. If that doesn't, at least, I would suggest to all the people of Saskatchewan, point our commitment out to them in terms of helping them and facilitating them, then I don't understand why the hon. member wouldn't understand what our position would be.

Mr. Sveinson: — A simple question — maybe this government might understand it — is: where's the money? Where's the money the feds have committed?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I think I, in answer to an earlier question, suggested that, based on what I have read in *Hansard*, and in answer to the same question that was put to the Hon. Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa, that in fact it has not been through treasury board, and that's one of the routes it had to go, and I would read from that comment that in fact that's the route it's going through.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture, and I direct a question on the same subject. He will recall that his government promised \$20 million, and suggested that the federal government might match it. That's back in Prince Albert in, I believe, June or July. Your government has delivered \$7.2 million, I believe, and that is better than nothing. Nothing is what the Mulroney government has delivered. Rumours are, in Ottawa, that the proposal has been . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . With respect to rumours, it's very, very clear, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite don't want to respond to rumours that appear in newspapers.

What I would like to ask you, Mr. Minister, is this: in view of the fact, as my informants tell me, that the Mackenzie Progressive Conservative constituency association met in Tisdale last night and passed a motion calling for the Mulroney government to match at least the \$16 million promised by the Turner government, will you urge the government at Ottawa, the Mulroney government, to honour that commitment, and do you agree with the position taken by the Mackenzie Progressive Conservative association executive at Tisdale last night?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question, and although he may deal in rumours and innuendo, we deal in facts. And the facts are these: we put our money on the table . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — We have put our money on the table; we committed to help those people in north-east Saskatchewan, and that we have done. We have delivered our funds. And if there's any doubt about the appreciation that those people in north-east Saskatchewan feel about that program, these are a sample of some of the letters, not only from individuals, but from rural, municipal, regional councils, thanking us for that kind of cash injection to farmers who are suffering an especial hardship.

In so far as the resolution or the motion that was presented at an annual meeting last night, I have no knowledge of it, and I would not comment on it, having no knowledge of it.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the member for Souris-Cannington has indicated that the idea expressed by the PC constituency association at Tisdale last night sounds pretty good, does the Minister of Agriculture agree that it sounds pretty good, and will he support that resolution when it goes to the Mulroney government at Ottawa?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I will say again that I, as the Minister of Agriculture, on behalf of the farmers of north-east Saskatchewan, have made representations, sincere, honest representations on behalf of this government to the federal government, the Hon. John Wise, to urge him to make a speedy pay-out to those farmers relative to the flooding that has occurred

there in the past couple of years.

Mr. Lusney: — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, in your request to the federal minister, did you request a payment to be made on the same basis as your provincial program? In other words, it's going to be piggybacked on the provincial program within the five R.M.'s?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I made to him the same offer as I had made and, in fact, as the Premier had announced in June, is that we would offer to administer the program for them, and if they did not wish to re-write a new program, if you like, ours was there for the having. We provided them all the names of the recipients and, in the event that they wanted to piggyback directly on top of our program, we gave them every opportunity to do so and, in fact, offered to run it for them.

Mr. Lusney: — New question to the minister. Mr. Minister, you waved a bunch of letters around a while ago, and I also have a few letters here from farmers not necessarily saying that they are pleased with your program, and one from your friends, the Royal Bank of Canada, that states that what you should have done with your program — although you gave them just a mere 7 million compared to the 20 million that you promised — what you should have done, Mr. Minister, they are saying, is going outside of the five R.M.s. The flooding didn't occur within R.M. boundaries only. You should have gone to the people that were affected, the farmers that were affected, and provided them with the assistance they need. Will you, Mr. Minister, look at your program again, now, and see if you can provide the assistance to those farmers that suffered losses outside of the boundaries of those five R.M.s?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, the question of the boundaries for the designated flood zone were something that were not arrived at unilaterally by this Minister of Agriculture or this government acting in isolation or in a vacuum. To refresh the hon. member's memory, how these were arrived at was after a rather extensive consultation, not only with myself, but the Hon. Minister of Rural Development was there, the Deputy Premier came along, I think the Minister of Environment was there, the chairman of our Agriculture caucus, MLAs from the area. And over the course of a couple of days we met and/or talked with, I think, something in the order of 15 R.M. councils, meeting of R.M.s and R.M. ratepayers to determine who, in fact, had a problem. After that consultation, the general view was that these five were the most severe and were worthy of some special consideration.

And that doesn't mean to say that there aren't areas all over this province that are suffering from either singly or a series of natural or weather-related disasters, because there are. Drought has plagued some areas, and we've dealt with that. Wheat midge has plagued some areas, and we've dealt with that. Grasshoppers have plagued some areas, and we've dealt with that. Flooding had plagued that area, and, I would suggest to you, we have dealt with that.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct a question also to the Minister of Agriculture. The various Tory governments across Canada have been talking about the new co-operation between provincial and federal governments, and one of the basic commitments to western Canada, and to the Saskatchewan farmers by the promises of the Tory party prior to the election, was the removal of the estate tax in respect to the sale of farm lands. What I would like to ask the minister: have you had an opportunity to, in fact, meet with your counterpart in Ottawa, and can you give us an update as to the status of the commitment of the removal of estate tax, as clearly indicated would be forthcoming immediately?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not certain that I'm clear on what the hon. member is referring to in terms of estate tax, unless this is some kind of plan that your party has to increase taxation to farmers and/or business men out there, and that could well be. But I will comment on your point about the consultation and the co-operation, and it is there, it is evident, and it's been something that we haven't seen for some good long time. Evidence of that is things

like the removal of the taxation, the federal taxation on farm fuels which is going to amount to . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — And we have already seen that announcement. Co-operation evidenced in another area by the fact that we have seen a substantial pay-out from the Western Grain Stabilization Fund, but more importantly, a commitment to look at using that fund in even a more meaningful and timely way for Saskatchewan farmers, all Saskatchewan farmers, given the economic hurt out there. I would presume that the point the hon. member is raising would be the one of capital gains, but perhaps he might want to clarify that for us.

Mr. Koskie: — I recognize the ignorance of the minister is being able to make the . . . understand that estate tax on farm land and capital gain are often used as synonymous terminology. I will want to ask the minister, in respect to a capital gains, the federal party, in fact, indicated in respect to capital gains, they indicated to the farmers of Saskatchewan that on their election they would, in fact, remove capital gains. What I'm asking you: have you met with your federal counterpart, and can you indicate to the Saskatchewan farmers an up-date as to the position of the federal government?

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. And I want to . . . I think we're going to keep getting these questions pop up, and they are almost on an ad hoc basis, so let's lay out really, in fact, what I did when I met with the Hon. Mr. Wise and Mr. Mazankowski and Mr. Mayer and the several other colleagues we have down there who understand agriculture. Well, the approach that you might take when you go to Ottawa is you've got one issue, you've got one issue on you mind, north-east farmers, or whatever, and that is all you might pursue.

I want to tell you, this Assembly, and the people of Saskatchewan, I went down there pursuing the very specific issues, like the north-east Saskatchewan farmer situation. And as Minister of Agriculture and as part of a government that understands all the problems in Saskatchewan, I pursued and went to that minister with a wide variety of items. Now you might not understand that, but there are a number of issues facing Saskatchewan farmers today, and I thought and felt that it behoved myself, as a responsible minister of a responsible government, to address those several and many issues.

Now as it relates to capital gains, you might pull that out in isolation and think that that is the only issue facing Saskatchewan farmers. But it is not. There are a number of tax issues. There are a number of tax issues facing Saskatchewan farmers, and I don't pretend to be a lawyer and know the . . . I don't pretend to be a lawyer, and my other habits are good too. But when I looked at tax issues, when I looked at tax issues . . . I raised these with the minister. I raised capital gains, I raised Agribonds, and I raised section 31, because they all impact on the tax — the income tax laws of this country. And I'm very happy to report that as a result of Michael Wilson's statement, Mr. Speaker, he is prepared to refer all of those tax issues to a parliamentary committee on tax reform.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Allegations in National Newspapers

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct these questions to the Premier. I would have liked to have directed them to him yesterday; I would like to direct them to him today. I will, in his absence, direct them to the Deputy Premier. And the Deputy premier will know that newspapers all across Canada have carried reports which suggest that threatening comments were made about JoAnn Wilson in the presence of cabinet ministers. And they further go on to say that those ministers failed to act promptly, and thereby failed to avert a tragedy. My question to you, Mr. Deputy premier, is this: will you tell us unequivocally, that, so far as you know, those stories are false?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I will tell the hon. member that in so far as I know – in so far as I know – those stories are false. And further, in so far as I know, the hon. member is being less than accurate when he's quoting those reports from the eastern media because, in fact, in one report that I saw, Mr. Speaker, it said clearly, "and that those incidents were reported to the authorities." And the member opposite, clearly, has avoided or neglected to tell the Assembly that.

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — No, sir, Mr. Speaker, the member is wrong, and the record will show that. But I'll ask you this question, sir. I want to make it clear that I am not asking about the words or the actions of the member for Thunder Creek except as they may be incidental to asking about your words and your action and those of your cabinet colleagues.

Mr. Collver, in his testimony in Saskatoon, expressed the view that if, upon hearing certain statements, he had acted decisively and promptly, the whole tragedy surrounding the member for Thunder Creek might have been averted.

I want to know from you, sir, whether the same statement can be said of you and your colleagues, and accordingly I will ask this: did you or any of your cabinet colleagues hear the member for Thunder Creek make a statement along the lines of those reported in the newspaper – and I don't propose to repeat them – do you deny that a statement to that effect was made in the hearing of you or some of your cabinet colleagues? And in order to shorten the list, I will say, in your presence, or the presence of the member for Maple Creek, or the member for Kindersley, or the member for Meadow Lake, will you deny that a statement of the type quoted in the newspaper was said in the presence, or in the hearing, of one or more of those who I've named?

Hon. Mr. Berntson: — Mr. Speaker, I obviously haven't polled the members of caucus or cabinet, nor should I – nor should I. I'll just reiterate, Mr. Speaker, the statement issued by the Premier on November 23rd in this House when he said:

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

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Premier. Mr. Speaker, do I have the floor or does the member for . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. I think the time has elapsed and we will continue this session another day.

MOTION UNDER RULE 16

Job Creation and the Crisis in Agriculture

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The official opposition presents Rule 16 motion today to drive home the point that there are three vital issues facing the people of Saskatchewan and this

legislature today. And those three issues are: (1) unemployment – I think everybody agrees that that is a major issue; (2) the crisis in agriculture; and (3) the government opposite's warped spending priorities. And I would like to take this time today to deal with those three issues. These are vital issues we've been talking about for many months and which will continue to be emphasized by this opposition in the months ahead. We will continue to emphasize them, Mr. Speaker, in spite of self-serving ad campaigns at taxpayers' expense, and television extravaganzas, and PR strategies, that this present government has failed to do what it's required to do in the face of these serious problems.

And the record shows, Mr. Speaker, first of all, that there's 34,000 Saskatchewan people that are unemployed this month, 34,000 according to StatsCanada, and an additional 4,000 no longer appear on the unemployment roll because they have simply given up hope and have stopped looking for work.

In its last throne speech, just one year ago, this government has declared job creation to be the number one priority, job creation. In its March budget, the PC government has declared job creation to be its number one priority. After four days of group meditation by the cabinet at Government House in September, what came out of it, Mr. Speaker? Job creation is a top priority.

Well, what's happened during all this time and during all these think thanks? Well, in the 12 months just passed we've had the third worst creation record in all of Canada for job creation, and the number of unemployed in our province has jumped by another 3,000. Some priority, Mr. Speaker. Some performance.

Now the Premier will tell you that his government is creating jobs at a record rate, but he just can't keep up because thousands and thousands of people are flocking back to Saskatchewan looking for work. That's what the Premier will tell you, but that's not what the facts are, Mr. Speaker.

Over the past 12 months, Saskatchewan has had the second lowest labour force increase in all of Canada, the second lowest. Between October '83 and last month the Saskatchewan labour force increased by only 1.3 per cent, 1.3 per cent increase in our labour force. The national average in that same period is 2.5 per cent. So the premier's story about Saskatchewan's labour force increasing at a record rate is just another story. In fact, over the past two and one-half years of PC government, the labour force has been increasing at a slower rate – can you hear this? – at a slower rate than it has anywhere else in Canada during the last two and one-half years.

In his recent television extravaganza the Premier promised that he would appoint one full-time cabinet minister whose sole responsibility would be dealing with unemployment problems. We've heard his excuses of his usage of words. What he announced on December the 16th was a part-time employment minister. This is the biggest cabinet in Saskatchewan's history, 25 members, and yet the Premier can't shuffle the responsibilities to find one full-time job minister. Two without portfolios, and yet not one full-time minister. Some performance, Mr. Speaker.

The employment development minister, the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, is also the Minister of Justice, and the Attorney General, and the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Human rights Commission, the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission, the Saskatchewan Crimes Compensation Board, the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan, the Surface Rights Arbitration Board, the Public and Private Rights Board, the Saskatchewan Police Commission, the Public Utilities Review Commission, communications policy, Sask Tel, Saskatchewan Computer Utility Corporation – I maybe missed a couple, Mr. Attorney General, I maybe missed a couple – but does that sound like giving jobs a high priority, Mr. Speaker? Of course not. But it's been the same throughout the government's term of office, Mr. Speaker – a lot of talk but no action.

There are many times that the PC government could and should, many things that the PC government could and should be doing to help generate more job opportunities for

Saskatchewan people. They could start by making good on their 1982 election campaign promises to provide low-interest money for Saskatchewan small-business men. They're asking me for it all the time. There are about 35,000 small-business men in Saskatchewan. If each one of them could be encouraged just to create one additional position in their firm, the unemployment problem would be solved; the unemployment problem would be solved.

They could move to get money in the hands of Saskatchewan family farmers, and that wouldn't even have to add to the provincial deficit. But the minister says he's doing something about that. All he's done is talk. No action, no pressure. Even if the minister in charge of crop insurance would get his act together and quit playing politics with crop insurance, we could get that \$150 million into the hands of farmers today when they need it, not before a provincial election. The money would be used by most farmers to simply pay their bills, and that would help to keep thousands of small-business men in rural Saskatchewan above water.

The PC government in Regina could even pressure the Mulroney government to make good on their campaign promises of a full pay-out from the Western Grain Stabilization Fund. Back in the campaign, the PCs said they would approve a 5 or \$600 million pay-out from the fund this year. Farmers got 125 million, with a promise that more might be coming next spring. Farmers need the money now to stay in business. The bill collectors and the banks are at bay. So helping small business and family farmers stay in business and have the confidence to even think about expansion is one way the PC government could encourage economic growth and new job opportunities for Saskatchewan.

Another I would like to suggest, Mr. Speaker, would be that the PC government start showing some faith in Saskatchewan by building for our future, by moving ahead with research facilities, schools, hospitals. The member from Churchbridge thinks that's a big joke, but there are people around Saskatchewan think there are some highways that need building. Nursing homes have been promises, and aren't being constructed; other facilities that we'll need to service a growing economy. But the Devine government has saw fit to refuse to do this, and started short-changing these vital sectors of our economy at the expense of long-term economic security.

I've talked about the dismal job records of the PC government, but their record in agriculture is much worse – much worse, Mr. Speaker. The Premier keeps saying that he understands the problems of farmers; that he knows what the problems are; that he won't let the farmers lose their land. The Minister of Agriculture spells out the true actions of the PC government. "We are going to shore up success," are the words he used in this legislature. "We're going to shore up success," but what he's really saying: the farmers that are in trouble are bad managers.

The banks are foreclosing on Saskatchewan farmers at the rate of 50 a month. But what do you do, opposite? Nothing. Nothing. The truth is that this government's agriculture minister and his programs are in a total shamble, Mr. Speaker, a total shamble. The operating loan guarantee program introduced with such fanfare last spring – this earth-shattering program is being launched, being laughed at, at every financial institution in the province. The livestock tax credits have proven to be little more than tax shelters for their wealthy friends and lawyers and doctors.

There has been no drought assistance for Saskatchewan grain farmers. The minister stood up today and he said that we've acted on drought and we've acted on grasshoppers. That's not the case, Mr. Speaker. They've done nothing. Nothing. There has been one of the promised federal assistance for flooded farmers in the north-east, as we discussed in question period today. New Democrats say that this legislation must act now to save our family farms.

Number one, we need to pass a foreclosure moratorium to prevent any more farms from going under while the PC government searches for adequate assistance programs. Number two, we need to follow up that kind of foreclosure moratorium with a debt adjustment law, Mr. Speaker, which will force the banks and other financial institutions into renegotiating some of these farm loans that are just too steep. And number three, we need to introduce an effective farm

operating loan guarantee program. Did you notice I called it an effective one – the one that's in place isn't working – which will offer farmers and meaningful provincial government guarantee. And number four, we need to introduce an emergency drought assistance program that will provide up to \$30 an acre to grain producers hardest hit by this year's extreme weather conditions. Number five, we need to reverse the terrible amendments to the beef stabilization plan made by this government this summer, which cost feed producers \$11 million. The PC government will no doubt say, "We can't afford that kind of help for farmers."

It's all a question of priorities, Mr. Speaker. The PC government found \$32 million to guarantee a loan to help Bill Hunter build a hockey rink. They found \$390 million to guarantee a loan to help an Alberta oil company build an upgrader. You found another \$89 million – and this is the biggest mistake this government ever made – that they found another \$89 million to help an Alberta coal company buy the Poplar River coal mine. This government found another \$300 million a year for tax cuts to the oil companies. But what did they find for farmers, Mr. Speaker? What did they find for farmers, for your and my sons? They had no trouble finding \$800 million for their wealthy friends, but there's zero left for farmers and the unemployed.

And this brings me to the third issue, Mr. Speaker, this government's warped spending priorities.

The PC government came to power promising to cut its cost of government. Well, this year the PC government is spending 31 per cent more – not 31 per cent less – 31 per cent more than the new Democrats did during their last full year in office. The government is spending your money and mine at the rate of more than \$8 million a day. So it's all a question of benefits from these expenditures. Over the past two and a half years the PC government has been busy using that money to benefit its powerful friends in big business while short-changing ordinary people. It's been busy, as well, living the good life at the public trough, spending more money on self-serving advertising to the tune of \$12 million this year; spending money on exorbitant salaries for political advisors, more than a hundred thousand a year in many cases; spending tax dollars on 34 international junkets by the cabinet ministers; entertainment expenses of \$25,000 a month for some of these ministers. There's been plenty of money for all those things, Mr. Speaker, but how much have they spent on ordinary people? How much have they spent on ordinary people? The money's there, Mr. Speaker, it's all a question of priorities. And that's why it gives me a great deal of pleasure to move, today, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition:

That this Assembly regrets this government's totally 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.

I so move.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Blakeney: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the debate on this motion, and I would like to direct my remarks at the outset to the job performance which has caused hardship for thousands, the totally inadequate job creation performance which has caused hardship for thousands of Saskatchewan families. And I wonder if anyone can doubt whether thousands of Saskatchewan families have been caused hardship by their lack of jobs? I think nobody can doubt that. And nobody, I think, fairly can doubt that much of that hardship is because of the clearly inadequate performance of the government in creating jobs. Now that performance is dismal. The numbers will show that, the figures show it very clearly.

I refer now to non-agricultural jobs, Mr. Speaker. In October 1981 there were 345,000 in Saskatchewan; in October 1984 there were 357,000, an increase of 12,000 jobs in three years - 12,000 jobs in three years, a job creation rate of about 4,000 jobs a year. Now that is a very low figure historically. During the 1970s the job creation record was between 9,000 and 10,000 a year

on the average, many years more than that, but certainly no period of three years with a rate of only \$4,000 a year. So compared with the record of the government which preceded the one which is now in office – compared with the New Democratic Party record – this three-year record of job creation has been dismal.

Now let's compare it, not with what happened elsewhere or else in this province before the government came to office, but let's compare it with what other governments are doing in Canada. And when you do that it is dismal. Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to compare it with any province which he likes except Albert and Prince Edward Island because, in fact, other than Alberta and Prince Edward Island, the record of this government in job creation is the poorest in Canada.

Let's look at the last three months. I could look at other periods, but I look at the last three months as the period for which I have figures readily available. During this period, in Canada the number of new jobs created was about 2 per cent above the year before in each of those three months – 2 per cent. In Saskatchewan it was about one-half of 1 per cent. And those figures are not my figures. Those are Statistics Canada figures, and if anyone doubts them they can look at the StatsCan figures. If there is the slightest doubt in the minds of any member, I know he will join this debate and put his figures on the record.

But in August of this year our employment record, our job creating record, was the second worst in Canada, second only to Alberta. In September it was the third worst, second only to Alberta and Prince Edward Island. Now that is not a stellar record. That is a record of a government which is not bending any effort, every effort, to create jobs.

This government says that its priority is job creation. It said that in last year's throne speech; it said that in last year's budget, this year's budget as well; it said that after its think-tank in September. Each time it issued a statement saying that job creation was its number one priority. Well I think it's time that we asked whether or not the facts justify the rhetoric, and clearly, on the figures, they do not do so.

Sometimes it's said that our unemployment is due to people coming into the province from outside, and it is because this story is sometimes used that I talked about the job creation record, not the unemployment record. Clearly, if people are pouring in from outside, we ought to be creating more jobs, rather than less. But, in fact, we are only creating jobs at the rate of about 4,000 jobs a year, unlike the record during the 1970s which was \$9,000 or \$10,000 a year.

But, in any case, the justification of people pouring into this province and the work-force growing is not true. It is not true, and the facts will state that it is not true. In fact, our labour force in Saskatchewan has grown at a rate last year, in the last year, which was slower than eight other provinces - slower than eight other provinces. This is hardly impressive. We are not having a rapidly growing labour force in Saskatchewan. That is simply not the case. Almost every other province has a more rapidly growing labour force than Saskatchewan, yet our unemployment keeps going up. With respect to our unemployment figures, they were, and these are the latest figures, Mr. Speaker; in October 1981, 18,000; October 1984, 34,000 – almost double. And I hope that nobody is saying that those figures aren't accurate, because they are accurate. They're StatsCan figures, and every month we look at the figures we see that our unemployment rate is very nearly double what it was short years ago, three years ago.

But, Mr. Speaker, let's forget the statistics for a moment, and let's look at the real facts that real people face each day. I would invite the new job creation minister, the part-time job creation minister to come to my constituency of Regina Elphinstone and go up and down the streets of Elphinstone and talk to people there, talk to people and ask whether it's easier or harder to get a job than it was three or four years ago. Just ask them. Just ask the people who graduate from Scott Collegiate whether or not they are finding it easier or harder to get a job. Just ask the

residents of that area of Regina who have graduated from the University of Regina, or the Kelsey Institute, or the Wascana Institute, or the STI at Moose Jaw, whether or not they're finding it easier or harder to get a job. Talk to the young man, a young man that I know of great energy and initiative, who hasn't been able to get a job and who started a little construction company – I hardly call it a company; it's him and one other person, he and one other person – who's building some decks and some steps, the sort of person who would have had a job building houses had we been building any houses, but we've got a very, very low rate of house construction. He is now virtually out of work since October, and he does not lack initiative or enterprise nor talent.

Or talk about my neighbour who has been working with the Sears organization for a number of years, and she is a part-time worker, and she tells me that she is getting many fewer hours of work than she did years ago. She's still got a job. She still shows up as employed, but she's not getting the number of hours. She's not getting the income.

And if members opposite have a different experience in their constituency, I congratulate them, but I tell you that the experience that I am reciting to this House is all too common in most parts of this province, all too common. And these are real facts about real people.

So on the basis of figures, or on the basis of some very human stories, jobs are scarcer. They're harder to get. Many people who would have been working, and in many cases were working three or four years ago, are not now working. They want to work, they worked before, and they want to work again. And this government is not taking steps which are necessary in order that they may work again.

This government says that it's making jobs its priority. In fact, it's making talking about jobs its priority, and it's time that it stopped talking about jobs, and making jobs its priority.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. It's my duty to inform the member his time has expired.

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was a little disappointed to hear the NDP opposition this afternoon speaking about a rather serious issue. That's the issue of unemployment. And it was interesting that the NDP spoke this afternoon and did not have one suggestion for job creation. What did they talk about? What did they talk about? They talked about building highways. They want to build highways. That is their suggestion. The NDP say nursing homes, and, in fact, there are more nursing homes being built today than any time over the last several years, because the NDP had a moratorium on nursing homes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The NDP say there should be schools. There are schools being built today, more money going into education today than at any time in Saskatchewan's history.

Having said that, even if the NDP would open up their minds to new ideas, new suggestions, perhaps we would begin to deal with what I think all people will agree is a very serious problem. I'm disappointed. I'm disappointed that the NDP can stand up, Mr. Speaker, and say that the only way to deal with unemployment is to pour more government money into government projects. That is their sole solution.

I have to take a look at their convention. And what do they propose? They propose, I believe, a six fifty minimum wage which will put a lot of people out of work in the smaller businesses. They talk about going to help those small businesses, but they put a rider on: only to those small business that will allow democracy in the workplace. In other words – oh, yes, it is a resolution. It has to be that they will have democracy in the workplace. In other words, they

have to be worker-owned businesses. The hon. member from Pelly disagreed with the NDP's position on the minimum wage. So there's division in the party. I'm glad to see that. One person disagrees.

However, having said all of that, I also get a little disappointed in the NDP. The NDP stood up this afternoon and they say they are against a heavy oil upgrader at Lloydminster. And that's what the hon. member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg said. He said, "This, the Progressive Conservative government, is helping out an Alberta oil company with an upgrader," like we shouldn't be helping out Husky Oil. Tommy Douglas sits on the board of Husky Oil. Tommy Douglas, former NDP leader, sits on the board of Husky Oil, and this is now all of a sudden become a large multinational, a huge oil company that we should not get into business.

Let me tell you that this government is going to encourage and will continue to encourage that upgrader to go into Lloydminster whether the NDP like it or not, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — The NDP stand up and oppose the upgrader in Regina because it's a give-away to the huge oil companies. The NDP say that we shouldn't have an upgrader in Regina because it's a give-away to the oil companies, and the people of Saskatchewan have heard this from one end to the other. Only the NDP in their perverse way of thinking would believe that the Consumers' Co-op Refinery is a huge multinational that no government should get into bed with.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — As a matter of fact, when we look at approximately 2,500 jobs during construction in the city of Regina, the NDP said no, and the NDP wouldn't even talk to the Consumer's Co-op Refinery about an upgrader in the city of Regina.

So let's take a look at the job creation record of the NDP. The NDP want to bring back succession duties which will hurt the small-business man and put people out of work — another argument at their convention.

The disappointment, as I say, Mr. Speaker, is that the NDP stood up today and gave some of their old rhetoric. The NDP are happiest in tough economic times and don't know what to do. I just sit and I suppose on a personal matter, Mr. Speaker, think what we could do in terms of job creation if we had the \$600-and-some million that was poured into uranium by the NDP. You know, if I had \$600 million cash right now I think I could guarantee employment for every Saskatchewan citizen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lane: — That was an economic decision made by the NDP, and what happened? A terrible investment, a terrible investment. Mr. Speaker, as the minister responsible for the new agency and the employment development agency, let me indicate what some of the initial thrusts will be.

One, for the first time a government in Saskatchewan is going to go out and consult with the people of Saskatchewan as to what they see the opportunities, and how a government can assist, encourage, or help them develop the new opportunities. Because every program . . . And I say right now that our government has some 26 different job creation programs, 26 different job creation programs.

Mr. Speaker, one of the satisfying things to me after appointment as head of the new agency is the fact that the people of Saskatchewan are already making suggestions. Engineering firms have

come forward with proposals where they see an area of opportunity for Saskatchewan businesses to grow and expand, an area of opportunity for export. For the first time people are coming forward, the Christian business community, of what they can do in terms of job creation and where they believe they can play a role.

That is in no way, Mr. Speaker, to minimize the problem. Saskatchewan proudly says that we have the lowest unemployment in Canada. The NDP in Manitoba had one month where they had a lower unemployment rate than Saskatchewan, all of a sudden realized that what they were doing was working. They threw up their hands, backed away, and up went their unemployment rate again. All of a sudden they saw this growth of the private sector and growth of business. It scared the heck out of them in Manitoba, and they got the unemployment back up again.

So we do have, Mr. Speaker, we do have some pluses in Saskatchewan, notwithstanding what the NDP say in their negative approach. They discourage and criticize the fact that population is up 60,000. And let's not say that those 60,000 are not working, because most of them are working. They say that we should not have upgraders, and they're on record as saying that the thousands of jobs that will be created in the spin-off benefits should not be taking place in the province of Saskatchewan.

The structural problem we have to deal with, and the serious one, is youth unemployment. And it's interesting that a review over the last 10 years in the province of Saskatchewan shows that whatever the unemployment level is at any time, at least 40 per cent, and in 1976, 60 per cent of the unemployed were young people under the ages of 24. That is a tragedy.

No one has sat back yet, and I say that with all respect to the previous administration, they did not begin to look at that fundamental question. Why did the young people even in 1976 when they were 60 per cent of the unemployed, drop out of school? Why did they decide at that time that they were not going to go on and take the skills and obtain the skills that are necessary for their full and active participation in the Saskatchewan economy and the Saskatchewan way of life? That problem, Mr. Speaker, will be one that is a serious one, obviously, and it is one that will take a long time to resolve. But when we have 16-year-olds, Mr. Speaker, that drop out of school, we had better find out why and we had better begin to try and find ways to encourage them to stay in the system, stay in the system.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, we got some criticism for welfare reform from the NDP because we said that 16 and 17-year-olds should not be able to walk away from home, go down to the nearest welfare office and become fully eligible to receive assistance and not worry about their family ties. I suggest that that's wrong. And I suggest, Mr. Speaker, with all respect to the hon. members, when that happens, we do not allow the young people, and we are not doing them any favour.

Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — It is my duty to inform the member that his time has elapsed.

Mr. Petersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Previous speakers on this motion have dealt with jobs and employment. I'd like to deal with the agricultural side of it, if I may.

An Hon. Member: — Tell us how good it is.

Mr. Petersen: — I shall. I shall definitely tell the hon. member how good it is. Now agriculture, Mr. Speaker, as we've said a number of times, is the main concern of this government. It's the main engine of our ship of state in Saskatchewan. It really is.

The motion introduced by the flying farmer from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg proves to me that he is an aviator and not a seaman on this ship of state. It's very simple. When a fighter plan is hit, the

pilot yells, "Bail out," abandons his aircraft, and floats down gently in his parachute. When a warship takes a broadside, the captain yells, "Man the pumps," and tries to save her.

Well, Mr. Speaker, our government in this province has taken several broadsides, from the previous Liberal administration in Ottawa, from mother nature. We've had a mutinous crew that took the form of the NDP opposition. Yes, we even had a rat on board. But it's okay, he left and joined a sinking ship.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we've not only manned the pumps and saved our ship, we've won a few battles at the same time. And that says something for this government. Let's look at the "immediate positive action to deal with the crisis in agriculture," to quote from the motion that we've already put in place. I'll list some of them for the members opposite because they haven't been listening. They can't have been listening or they wouldn't have introduced a motion like this.

We identified interest rates as one of the main problems out there. So we introduced our farm purchase program to help young farmers get started. It replaced the old land bank program. It was fairly successful. Yes, it was. In two and a half years, we've got over 3,000 young farmers enrolled in this program that have started farming. Compare that to the 151 tenants who became farmers under the land bank system.

Not only that, during the NDP administration, curiously enough we lost almost 10,000 farm family units from the statistics map in Saskatchewan – almost 80,000 farmers in 1970, and now there's less than 70,000. Where did those 10,000 go? I ask the hon. opposition, where did they go? Did they just disappear into thin air? Curiously enough, you never hear the opposition mention those 10,000 farmers. That's the NDP record.

The Agricultural Credit Corporation was another item that we introduced. Farmstart was in place; ag credit replaced it. We streamlined it and made it reflect the face of agriculture today, the real agriculture today. It's very interesting that their program, you could get support for feeding rabbits but you couldn't get support for feeding cattle. It doesn't make much sense to me.

The sale of Crown lands- we believe that farmers and the people of Saskatchewan should own their land, not a government, not a state. So we introduced a program to help lessees buy their Crown land. That was something that the NDP would never have done because they don't want anyone to own land.

Crop insurance, crop insurance, there's a good one. The hon. member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg yesterday asked some questions of the minister in charge of crop insurance.

An Hon. Member: — He's sorry he did.

Mr. Petersen: — I'm certain he's sorry he did now. And just so that he gets it straight, in case he hasn't taken the time to do his homework, I'd like to point out some of the things that crop insurance is doing and is working on to alleviate the problems that we have. Are you listening? Good. Now remember it.

We were accused of being an administration that was slow to act. Crop insurance was accused of being slow to respond. Well, I don't mind you criticizing the elected members of this House, but you were criticizing the people who are working out in crop insurance for the farmers of Saskatchewan. You criticized those people for the job they were doing. That's low of you, very low. You accused the minister of doing very little. Well, we've had an increase in staff of 28 per cent, trying to deal with it. Field persons have gone up 28 per cent. In 1982 there was 237 field persons; in 1984 we've got 290 field persons. We realize there's a problem out there and we've

met it head-on. We've tried to help take care of the bottle-neck in head office by bringing some experienced field staff in to deal with the heavy work-load and try to ease the work-load in the processing section. The corporation is constantly monitoring the grading station to reduce bottle-necks at that end of it. We've had more than 75,000 grain samples processed to date. Compare that with 50,000 in 1980, the previous bad year.

I'd like to go on a little further in the amount of claims that have been processed. In 1984, to date – to November 19, I should say – there were 17,588 claims processed. In 1980, which was the previous very bad year, under your administration there was only 12,224 claims processed. That's amazing. That's amazing. That's amazing. The amount of money that has gone out is significant. In 1984 to November 19, there has been over \$80 million put out there to the people of Saskatchewan. And if that isn't an answer or some help to the immediate problems facing our farmers, I don't know what is.

Oh, but let's look at 1980 under your administration. Oh, you only had 43 million out there to them by this time. I wonder what was wrong? Were you buying more farm land with the money? You didn't have it? Or what was it – Cornwall Centre? I'm not too sure what you might use the money for.

I could continue with crop insurance and point out all the good features that our minister has introduced, but I'd like to go on to some of the other programs that we have. Those aren't the only four or five. We've introduced a feeder-to-finish stabilization program. It works in conjunction with the cow-calf-to-finish program. We've had a lamb assistance program. Our sheep farmers had a problem out there - depressed markets, depressed prices; \$208,000 has been paid out to those producers to help them over this cost-price squeeze.

We've got a feed grain and forage listing service in place. We've got a pre-conditioned feeder calf program, Feeder Associations Guaranty Act, Livestock Investment Tax Credit – and that's an interesting one. This is an innovation that the NDP could never fathom. They believed in grants and give-aways. We believe in incentives. And it's very simple, very simple. You get a tax credit on your provincial tax payable, of \$25 for every steer or heifer that you feed out; \$3 for every hog you feed out; \$2 for every lamb that you feed out. There's nothing magical about it. It's simple and straightforward and you might be right – it's way too deep for them, as the member from Saltcoats says. Would you like me to explain it again just in case it went over your head?

An Hon. Member: — The people in his constituency are using it.

Mr. Petersen: — The people in his constituency are using it! Well that's amazing. I'm glad to hear that.

We had a farm business analysis program put into place. That's to help people understand why they're keeping books. It's great to tell a guy, "Keep books and you'll do fine," but you have to have somebody to help him interpret his results.

Our FarmLab program has been expanded and streamlined. Agricultural research has been enhanced. We got irrigation incentives, and in case any of you are interested, there's even an irrigation manual out there that tells you all the programs and all the things you can get to help you. But of course you may never have taken the time to go down to your ag rep and find that out. You're too busy flying your plane.

Our counselling assistance program for farmers has been a success. We've dealt with just about 500 people that had problems this spring. We've worked with them; we've outlined the fact that counselling and consulting is one of the major problems that farmers have out there. We don't just believe in throwing money at something until the problem goes away. We like to put in some long-term help.

Tax relief. The member for Quill Lakes talked about tax relief today. Well we've put in the Home Quarter Tax Assistance Program. Over \$11 million went out to the farmers of Saskatchewan.

Utility benefits. We eliminated the education and health tax on farm use electricity. That's right in our little "Pocket Politics" that the member for Quill Lakes is so fond of holding up.

Flood assistance. We had questions during question period about . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. It's my duty to advise the member his time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lusney: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I enter this debate with some pleasure because I think the motion that my colleague has put forward was a good motion, and one that this government should follow. It's a motion that does indicate just how dismal the record of this government really is in job creation and in assistance for farmers.

The member for Qu'Appelle and the member for Kelvington-Wadena made a few comments which I am going to address, Mr. Speaker. But I would like to say that the member for Kelvington-Wadena was talking about all the good things that this government has provided for the farmers of Saskatchewan, because he dealt solely with agriculture. And I say it's a very good point to be making that agriculture is in trouble and we should be doing something for them. But he was talking about the crop insurance program and how much they've put into the crop insurance program.

Well, Mr. Speaker, every farmer in this province knows that the only thing this government put into the crop insurance program was the administration costs, and that they haven't done too well with.

Mr. Speaker, he talks about the benefits of utility rates. Well I wonder how many farmers out there today feel that their utility rates have gone down since this government has been in power. In fact, Mr. Speaker, talking to all the farmers out in Saskatchewan – and I can say so for myself too, my power bill in the past month has gone up by \$50 in a three-month period. Fifty dollars. And that has happened to every farmer in Saskatchewan. And that, Mr. Speaker, was not because it turned cold a month ago. That was just an increase that was imposed by the government, by the utility review board that they put into place to try and blame someone else for increased cost of our utilities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lusney: — But the ones that are to blame for it, Mr. Speaker, is not the utility board. It is the government sitting across the House. That's who is to blame for it.

And the farmers are in trouble today because this government has increased all the costs that it had any control over to the farmers. It increased everything they could possibly increase. The federal government has done the same, and it doesn't matter whether it's a Liberal or a Conservative government in Ottawa. They're both the same. And you can tell by the government that policies that the Liberals had – the policies that the Conservatives have now – that the same thing is going to continue to happen. People are going to see increased costs, less services, and it's going to be hardships for everyone in this country.

Looking at what – the member says, talk about community pasture rates. Well all you have to do is look at some of the newspaper articles that are out there that indicate just what agriculture is facing today, and it says "Thousands of farmers in financial bind." And that's not, that's not an indication by the papers alone or by some author that nobody is aware of. This comes forward from the Farm Credit Corporation, and I can read you just a quote, Mr. Speaker, that the Farm

Credit Corporation, what they have to say about it. And it says that:

16 per cent of Saskatchewan farmers were in serious financial condition during an extensive survey conducted earlier this year.

That's the Farm Credit Corporation. They see the problems that are out there.

The National Farmers Union are saying the same thing. The farmers are in trouble. The National Farmers Union realizes that. The wheat pools realize the problems the farmers are facing. And, Mr. Speaker, even the Palliser Wheat Growers, the friends of this government, are finally realizing that there are problems in agriculture. It took them a long time to realize that, but only because they had one year of drought – one single year of drought and they finally realized there are hardships there.

They didn't say much about the north-eastern farmers that had three years of bad crops because of frost, because of excessive rain. But now they have one year of drought and they're finally realizing that hardships can hit everyone.

So there are many organizations and many farmers out there, Mr. Speaker, that know that there are difficulties in agriculture. Even the banks realize that too. The Farm Credit Corporation says that about 80 per cent of the farmers, or one-third of the farmers today are holding 80 per cent of the money that is outstanding – 80 per cent of that debt, one-third of the farmers – one-third of the farmers that produce about one-half of Canada's food. One-half of Canada's food production is in trouble this year. And it's going to be in worse trouble if this government doesn't take some action to correct that.

One can go to another statement from the Farm Credit Corporation which says that out of 39,000 farmers, 1,700 farmers are expected to go bankrupt in the near future. Seventeen hundred farmers of them are going to go bankrupt, and I think that's been quite evident from some of the actions taken by their friends, the banks.

Mr. Speaker, it is no wonder that a lot of this is happening. One can understand why it's happened, because if you look at what it costs a farmer to buy fuel 10 years ago – and I'll just quote you some figures. They're in here in the *Union Farmer*. If some of the members would take time to look at it, they would know what the problems are in rural Saskatchewan. Diesel used to be, 10 years ago, Mr. Speaker, used to run around 30 cents a gallon. Wheat then was about three fifty a bushel. That could have bought almost 10 gallons of fuel, in excess of 10 gallons of fuel at that time, for a bushel of grain. Today, we've got wheat at about four and one-quarter. What are we looking at per gallon for diesel? A dollar eighty-five, Mr. Speaker. That was the price that I got today. A dollar eighty-five, Mr. Speaker, gives you what? About two and one-half, not even two and one-half gallons of fuel, and yet the price of wheat hasn't gone up in proportion to what it costs the farmer for inputs.

The same has happened with machinery, with chemicals, fertilizers. Everything has gone up, Mr. Speaker, and the farmer is in real trouble today, not because he is inefficient, as some of the members opposite do indicate from time to time, that a lot of our farmers should be off the farms because they are unproductive and inefficient and they shouldn't be there. Mr. Speaker, those farmers are productive, they are very efficient, and they have proven that because they have been able to produce this grain, half the food production of this country. Using credit, they have been producing it at a price that's way below what their inputs have gone up to. They should be getting a lot more for what they produce. But they are efficient, they are productive, and they have been able to continue producing.

But how long can that continue, Mr. Speaker? How long can we expect our farmers to continue producing food for this country at a cost that's almost below the cost of their production? How long can we expect these farmers to continue?

I think it's time for both federal and provincial governments to realize the situation that agriculture is facing. It is time that they realized that something has to be done to assist agriculture and, in turn assist business people and create employment, and make sure that there is a supply of food for the people of this world. That's what these governments should be addressing themselves to. But they aren't. They can find \$300 million for oil companies, but they only find about \$7 million to produce farmers that were hit by drought in north-eastern Saskatchewan. They promised 20, but they only found 7 million. But there is \$300 million for oil companies.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think our priorities have to change. They have to change because we cannot eat oil, and the oil companies have never had a loss, but the farmers have.

Mr. Speaker: — I just inform the member that his time has elapsed.

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the opportunity to be involved in this very important debate on an issue which is of importance to all Canadians and certainly people in Saskatchewan. I would like to quote the resolution, at least the first part of it, and it says the following:

That this Assembly regrets this government's totally inadequate job creation performance . . .

Mr. Speaker, what I regret this afternoon is that the members opposite, in approximately the hour and 15 minutes that we have been debating so far, have not come up with one constructive, specific, forward-looking, innovative proposal to deal with job creation in the province of Saskatchewan. Not one.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution talks about a totally inadequate job creation performance for the province of Saskatchewan, and I want to ask the question to the members of the Assembly this afternoon: what would it be like to live in a province which had a totally inadequate job creation record? What would that province be like, Mr. Speaker? And I would suggest the following.

I would suggest that the population in that province would be decreasing. People would be leaving that province because there weren't opportunities for them and for their children. They would be seeking opportunities elsewhere. The population would not be increasing; the province would be decreasing. And I would remind the members of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that that's exactly what took place in Saskatchewan in the early 1970s when the NDP took over. The population of this province went down. The people of Saskatchewan left because there were not job opportunities for them here.

Today, just the opposite is in place, Mr. Speaker. The population is increasing and it is increasing substantially, Mr. Speaker — thousands upon thousands of new people, here in the province of Saskatchewan. Why? Because of the job creation record of this particular government. Here's where the opportunity is, and I believe we can all be proud of that, Mr. Speaker, the population would not only be increasing, the labour force itself would be increasing, and that's what the statistics bear out, contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition had to say. Our labour force is increasing significantly.

Perhaps the most important criterion, Mr. Speaker, that we should look at, is the unemployment rate. If this province had a totally inadequate job creation record, Mr. Speaker, then we would expect that the unemployment rate in the province of Saskatchewan would certainly not be the best. And I want to bring some statistics to your attention that the members opposite have ignored.

In the province of Quebec, which has the fifth lowest unemployment rate, their rate is 12.8 per

cent, Mr. Speaker; Ontario – the bedrock of Canada – Ontario, 8.9 per cent unemployment; Alberta, 11.8 per cent unemployment. Here is Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, our unemployment rate dropped .6 of a percentage point last month, the largest single drop. September to October, since 1944 here in the province of Saskatchewan. Today our unemployment rate is the lowest in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — Seven point nine per cent. The Canadian average is 11.3 per cent. Now I ask the members of the Assembly: if the population is increasing, if the labour force is increasing, and if our unemployment rate is consistently the lowest in Canada, would anyone, Mr. Speaker, would anyone want to conclude that this particular province had an inadequate or even a partially inadequate job creation record? On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, I think that taking a look at those statistics that I have just quoted, that people of common sense and sound mind and rational thought would conclude nothing else but that this province is leading the way in Canada as far as its job creation record, and as far as the opportunities for employment in the country of Canada today.

Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Social Services, I am of course concerned about those people that are on welfare, those people that might not have the opportunities that others have, for one reason or another. And I am pleased to tell the Assembly today that in 1984, during the last six months, the welfare rolls here in the province of Saskatchewan decreased 2,380 cases, the second largest drop in the welfare rolls in the last six years in the province of Saskatchewan. And one of the reasons why that drop took place, Mr. Speaker, is because we are paying attention to the employment needs of welfare clients, through our training programs, through our education opportunities, and through our direct job creation efforts.

A good example is our Saskatchewan Employment Development Program, which this year created 1,532 jobs. And I would want to quote to you, and to the members of the Assembly this afternoon, a letter that I received from the town administrator of the town of Radisson, which talks about the Saskatchewan Employment Development Program. And he says the following:

On behalf of council, I want to convey to you and your government our appreciation for your approval of a project for the town of Radisson under the above-mentioned program. The approval will allow us to employ four persons for 26 weeks on designated community projects, which promises to benefit not only the employees and their families, but also the Radisson community, and we don't mind admitting that we do need the help. (And we, as a government, certainly want to provide that help.) We have always advocated a continuing annual summer program for those persons who are eager to work but unfortunately find themselves at the mercy of government assistance. We truly are in sympathy with these people. We want to compliment your government for supporting such a program. Please accept our very good wishes for your government's continued good fortunes.

Mr. Speaker, that is an example of one of the programs of this government that are directed specifically to job creation for welfare clients.

We could talk about the opportunities in my colleague's Department of Advanced Education and Manpower. There, Mr. Speaker, this year alone, a total of 6,132 jobs were created for a variety of people in the province of Saskatchewan. When you take the 1,500 in Social Services, the 6,100 in the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower; when you take the capital construction projects, whether it be the Nipawin power project, or the rural natural gas program for farmers; or whether you take the nursing home construction projects that the Attorney General talked about previously, clearly this government takes very seriously its responsibility to provide direct job creation benefits to the people of Saskatchewan in the order of millions and millions of dollars' worth of job creation projects.

But, Mr. Speaker, if that's all we did, we would be extremely derelict in our responsibilities as a government. I would suggest if that's all that was done, that would be the NDP approach – direct job creation. And that's all they advocate, if you listen closely. But more important, Mr. Speaker, than direct job creation, is the attitude of this government towards business, and particularly towards small business. I believe that people in Canada and in Saskatchewan agree with this government when we say that permanent, long-term job creation is not the result of direct government intervention. On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, it's the result of business, and in particular, small business creating long-term permanent jobs. That's where the activity is going to take place. We believe that very strongly, and that's what we support, Mr. Speaker. That's why we introduced our Department of Tourism and Small Business. And that's why we introduced the Department of Economic Development and Trade, Mr. Speaker. That's why we introduced the Department of Science and Technology – three departments that are not going to work against the small-business man as the former government did, but three departments that are going to work with the business community in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Dirks: — And what are the results, Mr. Speaker, of this particular approach to job creation that I have just talked about? Well the best example, Mr. Speaker, that we can talk about, you find in the oil patch here in the province of Saskatchewan. Never before in the history of Saskatchewan is there so much oil and gas well drilling and in spin-off activity as there is today. And it's the result of a Progressive Conservative government taking those kinds of innovative steps that should have been taken a long time ago, but the former government chose not to do so.

Mr. Speaker, whether it's the oil patch, whether it's the upgraders which are coming – and people are looking forward to those with great anticipating, knowing that they are going to inject literally hundreds of millions of dollars into the province of Saskatchewan; whether it's the fact that the Prime Minister of Canada has designated Saskatchewan, in particular the capital city of Regina . . .

Mr. Speaker: — It's my duty to inform the member his time has expired.

Mr. Yew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to participate in this debate, Mr. Speaker, in a debate following the motion presented by my colleague, the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. The motion before us, Mr. Speaker, is simple. It calls the PC government to recognize that its job creation record has been poor. It calls on the PC government to finally take some positive, concrete steps to provide jobs for Saskatchewan people – to provide jobs, Mr. Speaker, to provide the opportunity for their secure, long-term future; to provide hope.

We all know, Mr. Speaker, how Premier Devine and his PC members like to talk about jobs. They like to talk about their record, and they like to talk about their programs and their policies. But, Mr. Speaker, the people of northern Saskatchewan have had enough of those empty promises, empty discussions, etc. They're fed up with the PC government's neglect and abandonment for the people in northern Saskatchewan.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, my constituents throughout the North, in places like Sturgeon landing, Kinoosao, Wollaston Lake, Pelican Narrows, Deschambault, etc., La Ronge, have urged me to invite Grant Devine, the Premier of this province, to come out of his office, come out of hiding and to meet with northern people in the top half of this province. They have urged me to urge the Premier and his colleagues, cabinet members, to visit the northern communities and to see for themselves where unemployment levels are simply uncalled for. We have communities with unemployment as high as 90 to 95 per cent, where there is nothing but welfare dependencies, where we have social problems, a high incidence of suicides, alcoholism, etc.

We invite the Premier and cabinet members of the Conservative government to visit northern families, and also not simply to talk at them, but also to listen to the northern people, Mr. Speaker, to listen to northern families who want to work, who need work, who are prepared to move to a job, if only there were any jobs available.

And so, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents, on behalf of the residents of the Cumberland constituency, I issue this open invitation to Premier Devine. Come up north and listen. Come up north and see for yourselves the desperate situation of communities that have no jobs, of communities and people with no jobs, and families without hope.

I noticed today, Mr. Speaker, that in this debate none of the PC members are telling us that they have made Saskatchewan open for big business. They are not telling us that their open-for-business policies are a success. I suppose the reason for this, Mr. Speaker, is that they are not a success. Those policies have been a complete and total failure as far as the top half of this province is concerned.

Since this government took office, Mr. Speaker, there are not more businesses open in the North, there are fewer. There are not more native Northerners in business in La Ronge, but actually very fewer. There are not more businesses in P.A., but fewer.

Now it is certainly true, Mr. Speaker, that the Devine government's open for big business policies have produced some profitable benefits for banks, for bond dealers, for big oil companies, and for the Hudson's Bay Mining and Smelting Corporation. But I say to you, Mr. Speaker, there are certainly no benefits for Saskatchewan small businesses and farmers, no benefits for Saskatchewan people who so desperately want to work, who need to work, and who want to work. And while I know that this PC unemployment crisis is severe all across southern Saskatchewan, in Regina, Saskatoon, P.A., and smaller rural centres, I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that nowhere is the job crisis more severe than it is in northern Saskatchewan.

When this PC government was first elected two and one-half years ago, Mr. Speaker, my constituents in the North expected the worst and, unfortunately, that is exactly what they've got, that is exactly what we've got, a deliberate and steady set of PC government measures and policies which have weakened and threatened northern communities, which have halted economic activity in northern Saskatchewan – policies and measures which have cut back on people, PC policies which have undermined the dignity of northern people, which have undermined the hope of northern young people.

My constituents, Mr. Speaker, know that it doesn't have to be this way. The PC attack, neglect, and abandonment of the North is not the only way, and that is why they want Premier Devine to come into northern Saskatchewan and stop talking for a change, but to listen, because there is another way.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I support this motion put forward today by my colleague and I urge the government to recognize the social and economic hardship and pressures which exist for the people in northern Saskatchewan. I urge the government to do the following: recognize the desperate situation confronting the northern peoples.

I urge the government to listen to their concerns, the concerns of their children, their future, and their communities. I urge the government to respect the dignity of northern people. I urge this government to respect their traditional relationships to each other, to the land, and to the natural resources around them. I urge this government to develop a concrete, positive set of measures for social and economic development for the North, and I urge this government to do that in consultation with northern people themselves. And finally, Mr. Speaker, I urge this government to stop talking about job creation, and I urge this government to come up with some concrete action to help alleviate the high disparities confronting northern peoples.

I will, therefore, Mr. Speaker, conclude my remarks today by urging all members to join me in support of the main motion as originally put forward by my colleague from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Birkbeck: — Basically what we have here, Mr. Speaker, is an NDP opposition charging that this government is not performing well in the areas of job creation and in agriculture. The Minister of Justice, the Minister of Social Services have proven the government's case that we are number one in Canada in job creation.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of agriculture, the member for Kelvington-Wadena laid out a number of programs that we are conducting now under the Department of Agriculture. He listed them all off. So one has to assume that this motion would never have hit the floor if, in fact, the members in the opposition, an NDP opposition, had been well advised, if they had been informed, had read the material that's available to them, as it's available to all other members. I was rather impressed with the long list of programs, the achievements that this government has already embarked on, has concluded a number of, that was listed by the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

So, Mr. Speaker, rather than going through all of those again, I am going to just ask one of the pages to come over, if they would please, because I want to send across the House for the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg a whole series of pamphlets and brochures, plans and publications. It's all here. If the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg will believe this, I thank you very much. The member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, if you wouldn't mind reading all of that information, you will be so impressed with the Department of Agriculture, this government's record in agriculture, that you'll want to join this side of the House, Mr. Member.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Birkbeck: — Now then there's some very important things that have to be said and I realize my time is short, but I do want to draw to the attention of the House two resolutions that the NDP have as a result of their convention. One is support of one of those programs that you'll come across, Mr. Member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg: long-term, low-interest rates for the beginning and developing family farms. We had that in place, and your convention has supported it. If there's one other . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. It's my duty to inform the Assembly that the 75 minutes allotted for this topic have elapsed.

MOTIONS

Resolution No. 24

Mr. Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Sveinson: — To speak to item number 7, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — The question was stood by the member who has put the motion on the floor. There is no opportunity at this time to speak to it.

PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

Resolution No. 12

Mr. Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Sveinson: — I would like to speak to resolution number 7, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — The opportunity is not there, I'm sorry. This particular motion was stood by the government. If the member wishes to speak, if he's objecting to it, we'll vote on it to see whether the motion should continue or not. Is that your intent?

Mr. Sveinson: — That's my intent, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: — All right. The question before the Assembly is the standing of Motion No. 7. The motion stands . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Order, please. When the House is moving down the order paper and members here at the table or I are on our feet, there is supposed to be silence in the Chamber.

Resolution No. 13

Mr. Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is whether or not we can stand Motion No. 9. The motion stands.

Resolution No. 20

Mr. Sveinson: — I'd like to speak to item number 10.

Mr. Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the standing of Motion No. 10. The resolution stands.

Resolution No. 23

Mr. Sveinson: — I'd like to have the opportunity to speak to that motion.

Mr. Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the standing of Resolution No. 11. Resolution No. 11 stands.

Resolution No. 14

Mr. Sveinson: — I'd like to speak to Item No. 12, Resolution 14.

Mr. Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the standing of Resolution No. 12. Resolution No 12, stand.

SECOND READINGS**Bill No. 30 – An Act respecting the Protection of Farm Property**

Mr. Engel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity today to speak in support of Bill 30. This Bill was introduced for first reading about seven months ago. And it addresses clearly, Mr. Speaker, as I've said earlier today, the number one issue in Saskatchewan, the severe financial crisis facing family farms across our entire province. This Bill is long overdue. As I said earlier today, in the last two weeks we've lost more than a dozen farmers. We're losing 50 farmers a month, Mr. Speaker, every day and every month that we wait to introduce this kind of legislation. And I invite the government opposite, I invite the members opposite to note that they have deliberately and repeatedly kept this Bill from coming forward since its introduction seven months ago.

The Bill that was introduced seven months ago, Mr. Speaker, was a major plank in what we then called an emergency farm assistance program. That was last spring, Mr. Speaker, when everybody in rural Saskatchewan, everybody except the Devine government, knew that there was an urgent and growing crisis in agriculture. Today I listened to the member from Kelvington-Wadena talk about the wonderful things this government is doing in trying to say that there isn't an agriculture crisis. I say to the member, "wake up." I said, wake up, it's time you acknowledge that there is a problem. There's a problem out there. They wouldn't even debate this Bill, Mr. Speaker. They would not even consider the several legislative and final components of an emergency family farm assistance plan. When asked about this Bill, Mr. Speaker, how did they explain their delay and their inaction? How did they explain it?

First, like I said earlier, they claimed the problem wasn't serious. The Minister of Agriculture said that compared to the rest of Canada, things could be a lot worse in Saskatchewan. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, in the last seven months things have gotten an awful lot worse with the management, with the programs this government has introduced. Things have gotten an awful lot worse in the last seven months.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the Devine government refused to address this Bill because they claimed that pressing farm – increasing foreclosures and high level of bankruptcies are not a serious problem yet. They're not a serious problem yet. But the real reason that this Bill wasn't acted on, and the real reason why the government opposite refused to act, was revealed quite clearly by the Minister of Agriculture, the doctor for Weyburn, when he said, "It is our policy to shore up success." Do you remember when you said those words? You're going to shore up success. That's why they didn't need an emergency farm protection Bill. That's why they didn't need a Bill respecting the protection of farm property, and we certainly know what they meant by their policy of shoring up success. They were turning their backs on the thousands of family farmers under severe financial pressure. They were turning their backs on the thousands of the most productive family farms caught in the vicious cost-price squeeze. They turned their backs on the tens of thousands of farmers suffering under higher grain freight rates paid to the CPR, higher utility rates, higher property taxes, and higher interest rates added on to higher fuel costs. They turned their backs on the hundreds of family farmers who, just this year alone, have experienced the heartbreak of foreclosure. That's their policy. Turn you back on it, don't look at these family farms of Saskatchewan.

And you move in the direction of shoring up success. Well, we certainly know who's been successful under your government, Mr. Deputy Leader. We know who's been successful. The chartered banks – record profits, and, in fact, are the most profitable in the world, the banks here in Canada. The CPR is successful – the CPR is successful, which has increased its profits two and one-half times over the last year's level, and its profits are up because of higher grain freight rates.

Shoring up success, the minister says. And others are pretty successful under the PC policies, too. Big corporations whose profits are reported to be up 33 per cent over last year, big oil companies who have received more than \$300 million from this government, Manalta Coal of Alberta which . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. The Bill that we're debating is Bill No. 30, An Act respecting the Protection of Farm Property, and I fail to see the relation between Manalta Coal and the big oil companies to the subject under discussion. I would ask the member to stay with the subject discussed.

Mr. Engel: — Mr. Speaker, the point I was trying to make is that this government is ignoring the grave situation facing our family farms. They're ignoring this because they have their spending priorities elsewhere, and they don't have money to take care of the farmers. If we'd have the money, the \$800 million that was spent in the few examples I listed, if we'd had that money we wouldn't need this Bill, Mr. Speaker. There would be no need of a Bill to protect family farms if

the farmers would have the \$800 million that was given to these companies. If I can't list the companies that were shored up, I will say that the money that was spent on the companies that were shoed up could have been implemented in farm programs if you'd have taken my advice this spring.

I gave you a five-point program to shore up the farmers, not shore up the successful business men. And what did you do? You laughed at it, and you treated it with scorn, and you turned your back on it. At least some of them will know, some of the members opposite will know of the thousands of grain farmers hit hard by the drought this summer, those who haven't received a dime in emergency assistance from the Devine government. Not one dime has gone out to drought-stricken farmers. Some of them, Mr. Speaker, will know the frustration and desperation of hard-hit crop insurance claims, still waiting for their money from July – still waiting, bitterly frustrated by the weak, inefficient minister of crop insurance.

And at least some of them, Mr. Speaker, will know that every month they have delayed, every month that they have promised action, every month that they have talked about action, Mr. Speaker, another 50 farmers have gone down the tubes. And you can sit by and twiddle your thumbs. You can sit by and twiddle your thumbs. Not since the last time Saskatchewan suffered under Conservative government, Mr. Speaker, not since the Depression of the '30s has there been such widespread and such alarming crisis in rural Saskatchewan.

Some members opposite will remember, Mr. Speaker, that under the policies of the Liberal government in Ottawa and the Thatcher government in Saskatchewan, our farmers were in serious trouble in the early '70s – in 1970 and early '71. For many of them at that time, foreclosure was a very, very real and pressing threat – 1970. That is why, Mr. Speaker, we, immediately after the general election in 1971, the Democrats passed an effective farm family, family farm protection Act. It was in place for one year and it worked, Mr. Minister. That family farm protection Act solved the foreclosure problem, solved the higher interest costs, solved the court costs that would be faced by many people. And that Act worked. And that's why we were so anxious to see that Act introduced today.

That is the Act which has served as a model for this Bill that's before us – Bill 30, the family farm protection Act of 1984. The central provision and thrust of this Bill is clear and simple, Mr. Speaker. The Bill will give a breathing space. If it would have been introduced in April like we had hoped, it would have given 18 months. But it will still relieve the immediate pressure of foreclosure on family farms till they get a chance to get another crop next October.

Essentially it says that all foreclosure action on farm land, on livestock or machinery, until next fall – until October the 31st, 1985 – until farmers have gotten their next crop off.

I know there will be objections to this Bill, Mr. Speaker – strong objections from the big eastern banks and their friends in the Devine government. But before they speak up too loud in objection, Mr. Speaker, let them first acknowledge publicly, here in this Legislative Assembly, the close corporate and financial ties that bind the PC party to the chartered banks.

In 1983, Mr. Speaker, \$25,000 in direct financial contribution came to the PC party of Saskatchewan from the big banks - \$25,000. That's why they don't want to move on this Bill. And in the same year, their further direct contribution went to the PC Party of Canada, not of \$25,000. How much was it, Mr. House Leader? \$180,000 - \$180,000 from the chartered banks to tell this government, "Look boys, keep your hands out of the financial picture. Let us have our own way." That's what they're telling them. That's why you won't move on this Bill. In 1983 the big banks and the bond dealers and other financial institutions directly contributed another \$36,000 to the PC Party of Saskatchewan, and you wonder why you didn't move on this Bill for seven months. That's why you didn't do it.

I realize that some of the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, may not be willing to reveal all the

details of these contributions to their constituents, or to the people of Saskatchewan, but I'm pleased to make them available to anyone that requests them. I am pleased to make them available. And so, Mr. Speaker, before the members opposite complain too loudly about this Bill, before they try to delay it still further, I simply invite them to do this: number one, acknowledge that you have deliberately delayed this Bill for seven months. Acknowledge you've deliberately been delaying it by saying it's clearly unnecessary.

Number two, acknowledge that similar legislation has worked effectively in Saskatchewan before. Acknowledge that. And number three, at least acknowledge publicly here in the legislature the details of the direct financial contributions from the chartered banks to your party and to the PC Party of Canada.

Let me turn to the broader policy context of this family farm protection Act. It is obvious to us all, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill by itself will not address or fully meet the farm financial crisis that is so urgent across rural Saskatchewan. This Bill will not stand alone. That can be done not by a single Bill, but only by a broad comprehensive policy implemented by a government that cares for farmers, similar to the emergency plan I announced last spring.

Unfortunately, the Devine government did not take the problem seriously then, and it failed to act thus far. And it's failed to act on any of the program suggestions we make. But the farmers of Saskatchewan have waited long enough for this government. Indeed, they have waited fair too long. The time for talk is past. It's now time to act. I therefore urge the PC members opposite to implement immediately and without delay a comprehensive and positive set of measures to address and deal with the urgent crisis across Saskatchewan agriculture, firstly by supporting the passage of this Bill to provide a breathing space till some of the other measures become in effect. If we pass this Bill, then an effective debt adjustment mechanism would work to ensure that the losses are shared equitably, to ensure that viable and productive farmers are not crushed by a huge debt burden, and to ensure that the big eastern banks do not continue to profit from Saskatchewan's misfortunes.

Number three, an acreage payment – an immediate financial assistance plan of about \$150 million from this provincial government to the most severely pressed family farmers. Hundreds of millions of dollars were found, as I've said in the past, in loan guarantees for all kinds of Alberta companies. Hundreds of millions of dollars were found. But yet they haven't found one dime for stricken grain producers.

Number four, expand and equip the farm operating loan guarantee program. If we had this Bill in place and an effective loan guarantee program were in place – one that the chartered banks and the financial institutions wouldn't laugh at like they do at your program you've got now – if you'd have an effective program in place, then this Bill would work. Then this Bill would work. If you'd implemented tax rebate on farm fuel of 32 cents a gallon – a substantial rebate, not a measly one that was announced in Ottawa – if you'd substantially reduced the property tax paid by farmers, if you would put pressure on the PC government in Ottawa to deliver on its many promises to Saskatchewan farmers, then this Bill would work. Then this Bill would become a cornerstone that would save hundreds and thousands of farmers in Saskatchewan.

The Devine government should immediately call on the Mulroney government to honour its campaign promises – promises like the \$500 million that was promised to be paid out in the Western Grains Stabilization Fund; promises to eliminate the capital gains tax on farms; promises to introduce Agribonds; promise to reduce farm credit interest rates and repeal the Western Grain Transportation Act. That's the big one that really hurts. Every bush of wheat you haul, you know you're contributing to the profits of the CPR.

And so, Mr. Speaker, that's what I call this government, and that's what I urge this government to call on the federal government to do. And now, herein Saskatchewan, support and pass this Bill today. Support and pass this Bill today. And then address the financial crisis in Saskatchewan by

immediately introducing a comprehensive and positive sets of measures to address the crisis that farmers are facing.

The time for talk, Mr. Speaker, is past. Let's have no more Devine dithering. It's time for this government which has talked and delayed and delay and talked – it's now time for this government to put up.

In conclusion, on behalf of the farm families of Saskatchewan, on behalf of the hundreds of rural communities right across our province, on behalf of the thousands of small Saskatchewan businessmen which are suffering no less than the farmers because of the farm crisis; on behalf of a generation of Saskatchewan young people whose future we are obliged to secure, not by a bunch of printed rubbish, not be a bunch of printed material that isn't worth the paper it was written on. If you'd give one farmer the cheque for that reproduction, he could stay in farming, but you tell him to read that. FarmLab was around before you guys thought of getting into politics. FarmLab was around before you thought of getting into the government.

Mr. Speaker, I say it's simply time to put up or shut up. It's time to act. It's time to support this Bill and pass it today. Thank you.

I move second reading of Bill No. 30, An Act respecting the Protection of Farm Property.

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just make a few comments on Bill No. 30, An Act respecting the Protection of Farm Property. In listening to the hon. member speak, I am a little bit confused insofar as where he is really coming from in terms of addressing the farm problem out there. When this Bill was placed before the Assembly last spring, at that time it was part of a six-point program. Then this fall, I see in the news media that he's advocating a four-point program. Today, he advocates this as part of a five-point program, and so I have to wonder, tomorrow what will it be?

The issue is a very important one in Saskatchewan, a very important issue. It is an issue that can affect not only farmers, but virtually the entire farm community out there. The farmer himself, of course, the implement dealer, the chemical dealer, the fertilizer dealer, the federated co-ops, that whole farm service sector. And I would just have to wonder if, in fact, the member has done his homework in terms of developing this Bill, and has he really talked to that very other large part of the farm community out there.

It's my view that this position is so important, Mr. Speaker, so important that I would want to, in fact, not only review what he has said, but as well, his analysis leading up to what he has presented, and at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, I would beg leave to adjourn debate.

Mr. Speaker: — The minister had asked for leave to adjourn debate. Is leave granted?

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas – 46

Muller	Dutchak	Rybchuk
Birkbeck	Embury	Caswell
McLeod	Dirks	Hampton
Andrew	Maxwell	Gerich
Berntson	Young	Boutin
Lane	Domotor	Schmidt
Taylor	Muirhead	Tusa
Katzman	Petersen	Meagher
McLaren	Bacon	Glauser

Garner
Smith (Swift Current)
Baker
Hepworth
Duncan
Currie
Sandberg

Sutor
Hodgins
Parker
Smith (Moose Jaw South)
Hopfner
Myers

Sauder
Zazelenchuk
Johnson
Martens
Weiman
Morin

Nays — 7

Blakeney
Engel
Lingenfelter

Koskie
Lusney

Yew
Sveinson

Debate adjourned.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 105 – An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

Hon. Mr. Lane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have introduced and today I'm moving second reading of an Act to amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

This legislation will deal with the authority of this Assembly to regulate its own members. Specific powers and privileges necessary for the legislature to function, to protect its authority and its dignity are set out in The Legislative Assembly Act. But nowhere does that Act lay claim to all of the privileges that are exercisable. The power to expel does not specifically include the right to expel a member who is convicted and imprisoned for a criminal offence. Such a power is perhaps inherent in section 30. However, I am advised that there is a weakness in this power in that there is a lack of statutory authority for expulsion, particularly when many other powers have been legislated in The Legislative Assembly Act. This legislation will ensure, for certain purposes, that this legislature has these powers.

There has been a question as to the applicability of section 682 of the Criminal Code in the circumstances that have brought this legislation forward. However, there is a legal difference of opinion, and because there are questions, it is the government's view that the legislation should be amended to give certainty in some circumstances described in the legislation.

Precedents from many jurisdictions reveal that where imprisonment renders a member incapable of carrying out his legislative functions, expulsion is justifiable. And I am taking the liberty, Mr. Speaker, of quoting from a paper prepared by the Clerk's office, and I believe it's been submitted to representatives of all parties.

If it is desirable to expel a member on the grounds that the person has been convicted of a criminal offence and imprisoned, then the analysis indicates that the best way to implement this policy is by amending The Legislative Assembly Act and to create a standing disqualification from being a member.

Even the United Kingdom House of Commons which hold all powers possible for a legislature to exercise, under the heading of privilege, has chosen since 1870 to impose a statutory

disqualification on members convicted of an offence and imprisoned.

The circumstances that led up to the need for this legislation have been described as tragedy. I believe that all of us feel that the career of a man with talent has ended, a life has been lost, and families hurt and torn apart. But this legislature must act to maintain its dignity, and to maintain its stature in the eyes of the people of Saskatchewan. I move second reading of Bill 105.

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want at this time to make a few remarks in respect to the comments made by the Minister of Justice. I think all of us here must look at this Bill, not just in light of the matter of dealing with the matter before us, the status of the member from Thunder Creek, but in the knowledge that this is legislation which is being put forward, that it could, indeed, be the law for decades to come.

I think we have to review this law with care and a lot of thought. I say that because how often should this Assembly expect to have to deal with the expulsion of one of its members due to a conviction of a very serious criminal charge? I say, Mr. Speaker, history tells us not very often. In the 79-year history of the Saskatchewan legislature, this is the only time that such an action has been proposed due to a criminal charge conviction. The other expulsion that was in 1917, Mr. Speaker, did not deal with a criminal conviction.

Having said that, I want to indicate that certainly we, as legislators, must in fact take upon ourselves the duty of regulating the affairs of this legislature. I think it is our duty to maintain the integrity of this House and, certainly, all of us will join in doing that. The major question is: how do we do that within the framework of the existing judicial system?

I think that we have an opportunity to maintain the integrity of the House, and when one looks at the basic principles as being enunciated by the government opposite, we find that, first of all, it's in respect to a criminal conviction, an indictable offence, sentenced for two years or more. But the principle that is of concern to us is that the action can be taken to expel a member, or vacate a seat, even before the entire judicial avenues of appeal are, in fact, exhausted.

I think the second principle that we draw attention to is the right within the framework established in the legislation saying or indicating that once, indeed, a member has been thrown out of the Assembly and their seat vacated. But the legislation and the principle indicates it goes a step further, and indicates that such a person is ineligible to run for re-election for the rest of that legislature's term, even if their appeal is successful and their conviction is overturned.

In other words, even if they are eventually found to have been innocent of the charge, they're not allowed to seek re-election prior to the next general election, which could end up being a number of years.

I can give you a "for instance" in respect to the principle that is being brought forward. Let us illustrate the point in respect to the member from Thunder Creek and his particular case. The Conservative government passes the law today, as it is set out, the general principles that it has espoused. It can introduce a resolution declaring the seat of Thunder Creek vacant, even though the member is appealing the conviction.

Suppose, for argument's sake, that the Premier were to call a by-election for the Thunder Creek constituency, say, on February 25th of next year. And suppose that prior to that date the member of Thunder Creek appeal is heard and is successful, and his conviction is overturned. Under this law, under these principles, the member from Thunder Creek would not be allowed to run in that by-election.

I think that we have a duty here to maintain the integrity of the legislature, and I want to indicate that this has been taken under advisement in other jurisdictions. Recently, only two or three years ago, in the Manitoba legislature, an elected representative, Mr. Robert Wilson, member of

the Tory party in Manitoba, was convicted of trafficking in drugs. The legislature at that time took the action of suspending the rights of that member.

By doing that, and that is what we were saying here that the government, the principle that we should be establishing is to maintain our integrity, is that this House should be allowed to suspend a member with the particular circumstances that we face today. That member should, I think, be suspended. The privileges of that member should be suspended. He should not be able to sit in this House or speak in this House. Any of the income or salary of that member should be suspended. All of the prerogatives and privileges of that member should be suspended. But we are firmly convinced that the judicial process should be, indeed, allowed to proceed with.

And here today what we see is not the government adopting a thought-out procedure which was set in place in the Manitoba legislature, which clearly what it does, is do is what we think that the principle that should be established here in this legislature. We feel that just as in the Manitoba legislature, and I want to draw all members to the attention of how it was dealt with in that circumstance, it says:

That where a member convicted of an indictable offence, for which he is sentenced to imprisonment for a term of five years or more, he is ineligible to sit or vote as a member.

And it goes on:

If on the expiry of a time allowed for bringing in an appeal of a conviction, or of any decision of the court upholding the conviction, in an appeal of the conviction, he has not commenced an appeal of the conviction or of that decision, as the case may be; or

(d) If on an appeal of conviction, or a decision upholding the conviction, to a court from which there is no further appeal, the court upholds the conviction, the member is disqualified as a member of a seat, and his seat is vacated.

I think that that is the principle that we should be establishing here, that this House, where anyone is convicted of an indictable offence . . . And certainly we could argue in respect to whether it's two years or five years. I want to indicate to the House that under the Criminal Code it's five years. In the Manitoba legislation it's five years. But that is not the essence. The essence of what we should be doing in principle is maintaining the integrity of this House by suspending the member, not allowing him the privileges of sitting here or being paid, but certainly we should allow the due process of law and justice to take its due course. We have, in fact, an indication by the member in question indicating that he is indeed seeking an appeal. And, if that's the case, we could end up having taken the situation of vacating a seat, the member, in fact, or in the future, being found innocent, and we will have circumvented the due process of the judicial system. I think, I hope it is not the case, but when this legislation is reviewed I think that we have a situation where we have the government members, the Premier, the cabinet, embarrassed.

I think what we are doing in this legislation is trying to put under the rug, once and for all, any further action or potential by the member from Thunder Creek, whether under the judicial system he were to be found not guilty subsequently. And that worries me because certainly we can indeed sustain, as the Minister of Justice said and well we should, the integrity by proceeding on the basis of suspension, and that is what we are urging the government to do in this instance. I think all of us . . . As I said, it does not appear before this Assembly on many occasions, in fact, the first time with a criminal conviction of any member that sat here. And I would say that that is the route that we should be going: a suspension, allow the court proceeding to go through, and only then should we, in fact, be declaring the seat vacant. Thank you.

Mr. Sveinson: — Mr. Speaker, I would at this time like to beg leave of your Chair on a point of

personal privilege. And I have circulated to yourself and your office earlier today . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. There is a question before the floor that is still open, and I think if you would wait until that one is complete then we'll hear your point. If you'll just wait a few moments. The second reading debate is still in process on Bill 105. Is there anyone wishing to speak? I recognize the member for Regina North West.

Mr. Sveinsson: — I would like to speak to Bill 105, and I realize it's a very humbling experience to be involved in the situation that we're presently involved with in this House, and member who have spoken to the issue have certainly alluded to dignity and principles and the protection of these principles within the jurisdiction of this legislature.

I personally have certainly outlined at great lengths, and questioned the government at great lengths, for the haste in dealing with such a touchy subject for the members of this House. It's not an easy area to debate. I think that when the Minister of Justice rose earlier he expressed it in very humble terms as well. It's not an easy area that the government can come in and deal with legislation that possibly has to be tabled and has to be passed through this House when it deals with the expulsion of one of their own friends, and certainly one of their own colleagues who has run into, over the course of time, some difficulty — and certainly not relating singularly to this case, but it could be other cases, although before this House that hasn't happened, as the NDP opposition alluded to earlier.

I question the motives certainly of the opposition in their position initially to railroad this legislation through the House. Suddenly, they do have questions about the content of the legislation. I stand alone in examining the Bill and request the time that I was given, certainly not by the House, but certainly by procedural rules.

Today or last night, the opposition raises questions to the Bill. Now I certainly have to look at their abilities within their own structure to come in as an opposition and protect the principles of this House. My debate, as was alluded to earlier by the Minister of Justice, was not in an exchange for responsibilities within the House or, as he said through the press, in an exchange for money. My debate was based simply on the principles of this House and how necessary those principles have to be followed in order that this House deal with such difficult legislation.

They, the government, through I suppose an untimely arrogance — maybe they aren't this arrogant at all times; I would sort of outline that position — but certainly did not discuss with this member of the opposition a Bill which if, in fact, it was going to receive first, second, third reading and Royal Assent last Thursday required unanimous consent.

I simply asked: why the urgency? Why should we railroad? Maybe that's not the correct term. We've been discussing arming issues here this afternoon, but it certainly brings the issue to mind, why should we railroad such touchy legislation through this House? This cannot be looked upon as short term, a short-term solution if, in fact, legislation is placed before this House. If we were dealing specifically with a single case scenario, maybe we could have acted more quickly. I don't know. But we're debating legislation which becomes law of this province and, until amended, would in fact govern any action of any member in this legislature who would thereafter commit a crime that would, in fact, receive a sentence of longer than two years in duration.

I would simply say that on behalf of all the members that I feel that the innuendo that the special sitting has created was unfortunate, very unfortunate, simply because of the nature of the debate that we are faced with in putting this legislation through the House.

I'll try to keep my comments short and to the point. But I think that over this particular legislation, this government has been holding the House at hostage since last Friday. We chose not to deal with any other, any other business in this legislature. We came in, and many MLAs from around the province, I'm sure, came in understanding that this legislation was the legislation on the Table, the legislation to deal with, but certainly not with the understanding that other business in this House would not be dealt with. Other business

was not dealt with. This Assembly has been held hostage by this government simply because of a Bill they felt should have gone through this House last Friday. They were unprepared to deal with other legislation. Their single-minded obsession with ramming through a piece of legislation that carries far-reaching implications, Mr. Speaker, is a blatant disregard for the tried and the true principles of parliamentary procedure, particularly when they decide not to consult other members of the Assembly.

If their proposal deal with a single-case scenario, as I mentioned earlier, that would certainly be one thing. But it doesn't. It deals with long-standing legislation that this province will have to deal with for a long time to come and, hopefully, will never have to deal with again.

But to implicate legislation, Mr. Speaker, that deals with such broad-sweeping powers to a government, that is something I feel that does need proper consideration by any of us and all of us in this legislature.

While the issue is being considered, why not proceed with other issues that are, in fact, as important or possibly more important in the minds of some of the residents of this province? The government chose not to. They adjourned debate. They chose not to proceed.

Farmers in the north-east are still waiting for a federal share of moneys to, in fact, dig themselves out of a situation which isn't pleasant, isn't pleasant, the same people that the Minister of Agriculture said were being ignored by the federal government. I'm just trying to outline a situation here, Mr. Speaker, that I felt didn't require single mindedly dealing with one issue.

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. You may have opinions about what should come before the House and what should not. But the item that is before the House is Bill No. 105 and your comments should be restricted to the provisions of that Bill.

Mr. Sveinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My point is that the normal legislative procedures in dealing with this legislation, or any other legislation, should be honoured and should be recognized by this House at all times. And the British system is . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. I've just told the member that the subject for discussion is the Bill, not the process of the House. And if the member has comments on the Bill, we'd like to hear them now.

Mr. Sveinson: — Well, with respect to Bill 105, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the intent of this particular piece of legislation is necessarily to distance this legislature as quickly as we can from one member from Thunder Creek. I think the intent has a far more broad implication. And I would ask that the situation that we're looking at today be looked at as possibly a single case scenario, and that the situation that's outlined, that created the situation we're in right here, the debate on Bill No. 105, that the part of the Act, the motion to eliminate the member from this House, be considered in a fashion that will maybe allow justice to be seen through to its logical and its procedural end.

I support the idea that we remove from this member his abilities to function as a legislator, and certainly his remuneration that he would receive if he is functioning as a legislator. But I suggest to the government that the due course of law has not yet been completed, and if this member has to be removed from our Assembly prior to the due course of law finding its completion, I feel we're eluding and we're . . . The principle, basically, of justice is being severely eroded with the confines of our House.

It's a situation where, after the process is completed, if the member and the conviction are

upheld, I don't think anyone in this province, or anyone in this legislature, would have any problem with vacating the seat immediately. But I do have some difficulty, with the legislature challenging the justice system and suggesting that we should hold court in this House and vacate that seat prior to the member from Thunder Creek receiving the hearing that he will get as a result of a system of justice in this country that is very – excuse me, I just have to take a drink – is designed, Mr. Speaker, to protect the integrity of the individual.

I feel, if we take a course otherwise, that we're setting a very dangerous precedent. I also have some reservations about the term, the two-year limitation that the government would place on the Bill if, in fact, the resolution and the resolution of this Act are to vacate the seat. I think that other jurisdictions with their five-year limitation, the five-year conviction, is a more reasonable course to take. And I think that certainly in the debate that will follow on the issue that is before this House, that reason would possibly dictate that that situation be changed.

We have to come into a compromise with respect to this Bill. We just heard the reply from the opposition, and they have some difficulty with that area. I think the government, in its wisdom, could live with a change that will allow the member from Thunder Creek to, in fact, if his conviction were overturned, return to this House with a slate and a reputation untarnished. I'm certainly not defending anybody in this case. I just suggest that it does pose difficulties for the legislature, and for the government, in fact, if the member in question does find, after an appeal through the due process, that he's found not guilty. And it has happened in the past, Mr. Speaker, and it certainly could happen again.

It's a situation that I know they're having difficulty in dealing with it. It's something that's just not a very easy situation to either sweep under the table or continue debate on. Both routes were open.

I suggest to the government that under the circumstances, that the compromise that will allow the member at least status and only status if the conviction were overturned, has some merit. Unlike the NDP, I certainly do not support their position, or even question the government's position on any involvement in the situation before the House.

I don't think – and I know that there is no complicity in the case. I suggest to the government that there is no involvement if, in fact, he is not vacated from the legislature and his seat is not vacated, that that doesn't implicate them and their involvement with him as a cabinet minister and as a former colleague. I think there's a fear that somehow he will be entrenched and tarnish the reputation of this government if, in fact, that seat is not vacated. I don't agree that that is necessarily the case, and I certainly would hope the people of Saskatchewan would not hold this government, or even suspect this government of any complicity in the case that this legislation is dealing with.

I know that in past experience when this scenario was initiated, rather than government members discussing the issue, I think there was actually a very aggressive – probably that's not the right term – but the issue, when it came up, fell on deaf ears. And I can say that of every member of the government who, in fact, was ever asked about the case on any occasion. So that complicity that this opposition has tried to relate to this government in the last four or five days, I don't think, and I certainly don't take seriously, but the implication has been made. And I believe just because the member would, in fact, remain as part of this House doesn't necessarily, until after the appeal process, doesn't necessarily involve him or, in fact, tarnish the government in any respect or, in fact, members of this House who sit here and decide on this legislation.

That's a great fear I can appreciate for the government who are looking at an election likely before the appeal process will likely be completed. But sometimes a short-term process will often be a long-term process. In other jurisdictions – I'm sure, in the Manitoba situation with Robert Wilson, he maintained his office. He lost his privileges as a legislator, and he lost his remunerations as a legislator. But until the appeal process was completed, he did maintain an

office in the legislature. And that legislation, I think, should offer us some guidance. I'm sure they went through the same trials and tribulations that this House is now experiencing as a result of having to come in here to legislate against a member who, for whatever reason, has lost the confidence of the public and this House. And I would just hope that the government, respecting this particular section of the Bill, will, in fact, follow the course of reason.

I have had a great deal of input from people all over Saskatchewan on the merits of the Bill and on the merits of the legislation we're discussing today, and it seems to me that the opinion out there that I hear most frequently is: let's stand on the side of reason on this issue; let's not run off half-cocked and provide legislation that even wherever down the road we may have to encounter it again, we'll create the same consternations that we have to deal with in this House today.

Mr. Speaker, it's a difficult area to find a legislature in a position where compromise may, in fact, be reason. I don't think any member of the opposition in this House will, in fact, deny a reasonable and a consistent approach to the legislation we're discussing here today. I believe that the member for Quill Lakes just enunciated a position that outlined that that reason be followed. And I would beg of the government that, with respect to this legislation – and I'm sure you've all heard from people throughout your constituencies throughout the province whose consideration is no less than yours because of the complexity of what's happening here today, who have begged of us all to approach the legislation we're dealing with here today with the dignity that the Minister of Justice alluded to, and with the responsibility that each and every one of us has to live with as a legislature in this House.

This will become precedent, I'm sure, for other jurisdictions. I know every one of us has had out the cases that have been aired recently involving criminal action. We've been back to 1917 in this debate. The question of length of sentence: in the case of this legislation, one Gilles Gregoire from Quebec would still sit as a member. And as I alluded to earlier, maybe a single case scenario is what we should be discussing in this House. I don't know any of us in this legislature who would stand for a colleague who is convicted, tried, and served time for sexually related crimes with children. I think we have to keep that in mind.

We don't expect this to happen, and I don't think we expected it to happen. The decision of the government has been to pass legislation that'll govern forever the rules if, in fact, this happens again. I think we've got to look at it in great depth, Mr. Speaker, in the days that follow, before this legislation becomes law, and make some very hard decisions on exactly the course that the government and the House will take respecting legislation, or whatever is required to deal with this situation.

I see, Mr. Speaker, it's near 5 o'clock. I would like to read into the record – I'm just trying to locate some information. I can wait till after supper, in fact, to read into the record some of the input that I've had questioning the direction that this House may take. That input has come from children, ranging from 11 years old, to citizens in this province who are well into their eighties. So it's an area that interests not only this House, as I've mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, but certainly involves every citizen in this province because of the nature of the legislation that we're dealing with.

I don't still see any necessity for haste in dealing with an issue that will have such a monumental impact on this House.

I suppose you could allude, if you would like, to a situation where one of the members of this legislature were to be involved in an automobile accident where, in fact, he would suffer injury that could, in fact, place him in a situation where he would be unable, Mr. Speaker, to deal with his constituents on an every day basis or, in fact . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order, please. Being 5 o'clock this House stands adjourned until 7 p.m. this

evening.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.