

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

December 12, 1984

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Winter Works Program

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — My question is to the Premier in the absence of the minister of unemployment. I wonder if the Premier can give the Assembly and the people today full details of your winter works program. I'm not talking about how much money you will spend. I'm talking about the specific guide-lines to tell both employees who's eligible, how and where to apply, and what level of assistance then can expect.

On December 12, in the middle of winter, is it not timely to make these details known?

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Employment will be making an announcement very shortly with respect to all of the details. I can point out to my hon. friend that the entire package is, including highway development, is \$41 million and 5,000 new jobs.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — That's a combination, Mr. Speaker, of \$15 million allocated immediately to the Employment development Agency, and an additional \$26 million to highway construction for brand-new employment opportunities, for 4,500 jobs created by the employment agency plus another 500 jobs created in Highways as a result of both programs being initiated right now.

With respect to the specific details, the minister will be making an announcement in the near future.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Well, supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Do I take it from your repeated reference to the Highways budget — which members of this side of the House will admit has been sorely underfunded and the pot-holes in the road are evidence of that — do I take it from the Premier's comments that the major thrust of your so-called employment program is to simply warm up and dish again to this Assembly, programs and money which you would have spent in any event, in the provincial budget? And do I take that there is very little to stimulate employment in the private sector?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — No, Mr. Speaker. This is additional money that is being spent in terms of the private sector, the public sector, the combination of various sectors in our society, and it encourages the private sector to hire people; and our programs and packages in the past have been very successful. There's a long list of them, and I would be glad to read them if the hon. members would like to see it.

Certainly the new money — the \$26 million with respect to highways is new. It's 500 jobs now. It's 900 more jobs this summer associated with these projects. So it's \$41 million, Mr. Speaker, that has been allocated to job creation now, and 5,000 jobs, and the members opposite don't seem to appreciate it.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Supplementary, Mr. Premier. what is your program to stimulate

employment in the private sector? And I don't think I have to tell the Premier that your success or failure in the private sector is going to determine the success or failure of your winter works program. What have you got in that line for the private sector?

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Mr. Speaker, I've already said that the minister will be making an announcement with respect to the details, and he will in the very near future, and they can wait until then.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — One supplementary. One further supplementary. Will the Premier not admit that, but starting a winter works program so late in the year, Saskatchewan taxpayers are likely to be paying for projects which were under way in any event, and that very, very few, if any, projects are likely to start from scratch on the 12th of December?

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Mr. Speaker, with all respect to my hon. friend, I can use the examples, and I know that it may be difficult for them to appreciate this. But in the case of agriculture, I pointed out, for example, that we've spent in excess of \$150 million new money annually, and they say, well, you need to spend \$1.5 billion more.

We have spent an awful lot of money on job creation in the province of Saskatchewan and many, many programs, and if we had spent more in July, or more in August, they would say, well, you should spend more in December, when we've spent an awful lot of money in programs. And when now we initiate a brand new program — \$41 million — they say, well, why didn't you do that back in February, or March, or July, or something else?

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, they're not going to give me a bouquet for initiating \$41 million in new economic activity. I believe it is important — 5,000 new jobs is important; \$150 million brand-new money in agriculture is important. I don't expect to get credit from the members of the opposition, but I at least expect them to recognize the fact that \$150 million brand-new money in agriculture is important; \$31 million brand-new money at this time is important for new jobs. And I just hope that they would add those up and look at them when they're making a criticism.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Supplementary. Will the Premier admit that highway jobs have nothing whatsoever to do with winter works? My question was about winter works. Will the Premier tell us what you have to create employment in December as distinct from May?

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Mr. Speaker, I have said that it's associated with new economic activity, and if he wants a little bit more detail I will gladly allow the Minister of Highways to respond in some detail.

**HON. MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Speaker, for the information of the hon. members opposite, and I appreciate that they have raised this question, I think some of them should be aware, Mr. Speaker, that the crushing of gravel has to take place, and can take place, during the winter, for projects coming up next summer. Mr. Speaker, there is less stress to the road-beds in the province of Saskatchewan. And further, Mr. Speaker, to jobs, we're talking about creating 500 jobs this winter because of the winter works project, and another 900 next summer. And it does give the contractors a window on the industry of what's coming up throughout the summer.

On top of that, Mr. Speaker, you have to use a multiplying factor of two for every one of those jobs. So, Mr. Speaker, in essence it will be creating a very great deal of jobs in the future.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Social Services and it has to do with your announced cut-backs last March to the recipients who were on welfare.

At that time you announced a work-for-welfare program which you called the Employment Development Program, and promised to inject \$9 million into creating jobs. And under this the clients were required to work for minimum wage, or close to it.

Now, Mr. Minister, my question to you is whether or not you can confirm that one of the non-profit organizations which qualified for subsidies under the program was the Qu'Appelle Hunt Club, located at Ridge Bluff Farms east of Regina. I have the number here in a letter from one of the social workers which says the project was number A-221. I wonder, Mr. Minister, if you can tell us whether or not that was a project which you approved.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Mr. Speaker, first of all, I don't approve the projects. Those are done by the competent officials within the Department of Social Services. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, because there were literally hundreds of projects approved, I don't recall whether that was one of them or not.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Minister, I would refer to a letter of October 31, where one of the social workers is writing to the director of the program, which outlines and in part, I'll read:

The Qu'Appelle Hunt Club project is one of the EDP, or Employment Development Program, job creation projects. Two of my clients had been hired to do the work for that project.

I want to ask you one more time, Mr. Minister, if you can outline whether or not you know what that project was involved . . . what was involved in it, and whether you are aware of it.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't have any knowledge of that particular program. I can take notice if the member wishes.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Minister, I ask a new question. I have here a letter from yourself dated November 29 of this year, a week or two ago, in which you outlined, in reply to a letter of November 7, and you state:

Your letter received November 7 indicated some concerns with respect to your employment by the Qu'Appelle Hunt Club.

And you go on to indicate to that person who is questioning whether or not this is a good project:

I can assure you that this project met the criteria.

Now this was two weeks ago that you knew exactly what the hunt club was, well enough to sign a letter. I demand from you, Mr. Minister, to explain to us what this hunt club is?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, having worked in this position at one time, knows that there are literally hundreds of letters which a minister of Social Services signs in the everyday course of his duties. I don't recall the particular letter, but I can certainly check to see whether or not, in fact, what he is saying is correct.

As I indicated, I don't have any particular knowledge of that program at this point in time. There were over 1,500 jobs that were created through this program, hundreds of opportunities, hundreds of programs themselves, and projects. And, as I indicated, I don't recall this particular one. If the member wishes me to take notice and get back to him, I can do that.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I question whether or not you have forgotten, a man of your background and intelligence would have forgotten about the hunt club. I would ask you, Mr. Minister, the following question: do you know whether or not the hunt club was organized before or after your program was brought into place, and whether or not you know whether one Peter Grady, a former deputy minister of labour and the current chairman of the Workers' Compensation Board is a direct on that hunt club?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Mr. Speaker, I hadn't heard of the hunt club before the member mentioned it today. Mr. Speaker, whether or not one Mr. Grady has anything to do with this particular club, I don't have the faintest idea. As I indicated, the projects are approved through the Department of Social Services officials. They make recommendation to me. I accept their recommendations, knowing that they are competent individuals. I don't know whether or not Mr. Grady has anything to do with this hunting club or any hunting club in North America, for that matter.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister again: in the letter that you signed on November 29th, you said that you can assure the individual who wrote you that you knew about the hunt club and that it met the criteria. You signed the letter. You must have had someone brief you as to who was involved in it, and you said it met the criteria. I want to ask you: have you forgotten that you signed this letter and researched it so that you could write the letter, or are you trying to make us believe that you didn't sign the letter?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Mr. Speaker, I've already answered the question. I indicated that there are many, many letters which I sign on a regular basis daily. I don't recall signing that particular letter. I indicated I will take notice and get back to him, if he wishes me to do so.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Speaker, I will remind the minister, who has simply forgotten about the letter and the hunt club. The hunt club which exists is where a group of elite people go out, mount their steeds, and have a glass of wine. And you, Mr. Minister, have allowed the taxpayers of the province, through one of your own employees, to get money to operate this club.

And I say to you, Mr. Minister, that I want to ask you the following question: whether or not you think that exercising the hunt club's hounds, cleaning the dog pens, building dog houses, and helping the club members mount their horses to prepare for their weekly ride is worthwhile, in your mind?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure whether or not the member is, in fact, suggesting that he is against job creation activities for certain people who might be interested in that particular kind of a job and activity which he has just suggested.

I have no idea, Mr. Speaker, about the nature of the specific activities that go on at that particular organization. I accept the recommendations of my officials that the projects which are approved meet the criteria for the program. If the project that was approved met the criteria for the program, then I have no problem, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I refer to your letter of November 29, in which you say, "Your letter received November 7th indicated some concerns with respect to your employment by the Qu'Appelle Hunt Club." This is your letter — the one you signed.

Now, in announcing the program, you claimed that it would provide welfare clients with immediate and productive employment, substantial work experience, and on-the-job training opportunities.

Having regard to the fact that you have signed a letter with respect to the hunt club, and having regard to the fact that the work performed at the hunt club included exercising the hounds and cleaning out the dog pens and the like, do you feel that that work is the immediate and

productive employment providing the substantial work experience and on-the-job training opportunities which you talked about when you launched this program?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that there are certain kinds of jobs that nobody can benefit from — that nobody can benefit from — that nobody can get any training or skill-development experience. There are certain jobs that, in order words, we should just ignore.

I don't but that, Mr. Speaker. our program had certain clear criteria which were specified. Competent officials in my department are administering that program. They determine whether or not a particular job meets that criteria. I'm pleased that we were able to offer these 1,500 jobs to welfare clients this summer. It's a lot more than was offered to them in the past, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Whether or not the type of employment that I outlined is valuable for somebody, would you agree that a trained electrician would not get any particular benefit, by way of work experience or on-the-job training opportunities, from doing the work which I outlined? Would you agree to that?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the members of the Assembly that I have worked at many, many positions in my life — some of them very demanding, as my position at present is, some very demeaning. And, Mr. Speaker, I want you to know, I want you to know, Mr. Speaker, that I benefited in some sense from every particular kind of a job experience that I had, Mr. Speaker.

And I would never suggest that there is any employment activity, which a person seeks and is successful in gaining, from which they could not benefit.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, please.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — The minister may well know that his department supervisor of the Employment Development Program has been advised that a particular employee who was working at the hunt club was a journeyman electrician of nine years experience; and you have asserted in your letter that it is right and proper for the public to pay that particular person, a journeyman electrician of nine years experience, \$4.50 per hour to do electrician's work. Is that what you are saying?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying is that if a particular job opportunity is made available to a welfare recipient and there is nothing else available, it seems to be reasonable that that welfare recipient should certainly want to take that job and earn a living for whatever period of time the job is available.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Just so I know that the minister is saying: you are saying, sir, that if a journeyman tradesman is on welfare, you are saying that he ought to accept a job at his trade, and I want to underline that — at his trade — at \$4.50 an hour. Is that what you're saying?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — That's what the Leader of the Opposition said, Mr. Speaker. I didn't say that. I'll simply remind the House that the regulations with regards to the employment of welfare clients are the same today as they were under the former administration, and that is that, if there is a job available, then the welfare recipient is under some obligation to seriously consider that job and to provide some reason why they shouldn't take that job. Clearly, this individual took the job.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Does the member for Regina North West rise on a supplementary or a new question?

**MR. SVEINSON:** — I rose on a new question, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Supplementary from the member from Regina Centre.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Will the minister not admit in the Assembly what was confirmed in a letter dated October 31, from a social worker by the name of Doug Taylor, and addressed to the supervisor of the employment development branch, a Mark Brochu, a copy of which I have? Will you not admit what the letter admits, and that is that the employment of Mr. Holtzman in this position is an abuse, and your supervisor asked that the matter be investigated? Will you not admit here what your supervisor said in the letter?

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't have the particular letter that the member is referring to. What I will admit is that the Saskatchewan Employment Development Program, this summer, was likely the most successful job creation activity for welfare client this province has ever seen.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

### Negotiations with University Faculty

**MR. SVEINSON:** — New question, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier, in the absence of the Minister of Advance Education. Several associations in the province, Mr. Premier, who, in fact, depend on government funding, have been placed in a permanent holding pattern. One of these associations involves university faculty members. Recently they have sent out ballots. Because of the lack in initiative shown by this government with respect to salary negotiations, they have sent out ballots to their members requesting input on either strike action or, in fact, holding back marks from students until January 15, giving them only a pass or fail response. I would ask the Premier if, in fact, they are presently at the table with these faculty members and if, in fact, they do approve strike action or holding back marks. Will that initiate some action by your department to settle the situation where these people have seen a zero per cent increase for 1984-85 and only saw 2 per cent in 1983-84?

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Mr. Speaker, I, as recently as last night, have met with the president of the university and the board of governors, and this question never arose. If, and I would confirm with the minister, if negotiations are under way with respect to salaries and associated elements, I won't comment on them or jeopardize the negotiations by commenting one way or the other with respect to one side or the other side.

**MR. SVEINSON:** — The ballot read, "I support withholding all marks until January 15th but making the results available on a pass or fail basis." The other ballot was referring to strike action. The indication I get from faculty members is there hasn't been a very communicative effort by the government, or any initiative shown by the government, to make a settlement with these faculty members. Can they expect that settlement in the very near future, Mr. Premier?

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Mr. Speaker, from my recollection, Mr. Speaker, from university days, the faculty members would negotiate with the university and it really didn't have anything to do with the government. So I suspect the university is in negotiation with faculty members. They will decide where they settle in terms of salaries, benefits, sabbatical, and various other kinds of leave, and that's what they normally do. And government doesn't just step in and say, well you've got to negotiate one way or the other.

So as far as I understand it, it would be between the university and the faculty members in every department or each department, whether it's research, or education extension, or teaching, or whatever.

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## Funding to Municipalities

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — My question is to the Minister of Urban Affairs and deals with . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You have to be responsible for some significant area of government to be asked a question. My question is the Minister of Urban Affairs. It deals with the level of financial assistance which you'll be providing to governments in the upcoming year, and a statement by the mayor of Prince Albert, Mr. Dick Spencer, who was quoted in the P.A. *Herald* as saying that municipalities will receive an even smaller increase in revenue sharing from the province last year, '85-86, than the completely unacceptable 5 per cent they got last year. And he goes on to suggest that the increase could be as low as 3 per cent. I cannot believe a many of Mayor Spencer's stature would make such a comment unless he had the information on reliable . . . from your department.

My question, Mr. Minister, is: in view of the fact that a 3 per cent increase in revenue sharing will mean sharp increases in property taxes, will the minister give us his assurance that, at the very least, local governments will receive a 5 per cent increase in revenue sharing in the next year?

**HON. MR. EMBURY:** — Mr. Speaker, I think I missed a couple of months. we're not in March yet. As you know, the hon. member, we are going through the budget process now, and those types of decisions will be made and announced in due course.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Will the minister give the House his assurance that the municipalities will be given grants sufficient that they will not have to increase the property taxes? Will the minister give us that assurance so that the concerns of people such as Mayor Spencer can be allayed?

**HON. MR. EMBURY:** — Mr. Speaker, as the member well knows, local governments run their own budgets. And if local governments decide to raise the mill rates, they will do so to provide increased service to their people. We, as usual — and we always are — are fair to the municipalities, and we will be again next year.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Employment Development Programs

**HON. MR. BERNTSON:** — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Employment Development Agency, who is unfortunately absent to attend a funeral of a friend this afternoon, Mr. Speaker . . . As the first major initiative of the new agency, I am pleased to tell the House, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Saskatchewan, that this government has put together a \$15 million package for employment programs which will be implemented immediately. This \$15 million package will be divided into two major components: a \$9 million program, a specific package, to be delivered through five departments, and a \$6 million project fund to be delivered through the Department of Tourism and Small Business.

This seasonal job package focuses on two primary aims of the Employment Development Agency: to continue educational efforts aimed at stressing the need to acquire job skills, and to stimulate employment development. I expect that the package will create approximately 4,500 jobs varying in length from three to six months.

Here is a breakdown of the package which will involve municipal government and non-profit community groups, as well as government programs.

The \$9 million package includes \$4 million for municipal winter works, which will create 1,500 to 2,000 short-term jobs through the Departments of Rural Development and Urban Affairs. A further \$2 million will be allocated to the enhanced Saskatchewan Employment Development

Program, focusing a further help to social assistance recipients. This program aims to create 300 to 450 jobs through the existing social services mechanism.

The extended access youth program will be administered by the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, extending its already successful program of youth employment. Extended youth access will receive \$2 million to create jobs for 700 young people for a six-month period.

A \$1 million northern Saskatchewan forestry program will employ 140 people from the North to carry out parks improvements and bush clearing. The New Careers Corporation of Parks and Renewable Resources will handle the delivery of this program.

The second component, the \$6 million projects fund, will be administered by the Department of Tourism and Small Business. Consultations will begin immediately with non-profit community groups to identify project proposals for specific communities. A total of \$2 million has been set aside for such projects.

At the same time, Tourism and Small Business officials will begin discussions with the private sector to identify projects aimed at specific business sectors. Four million dollars will be invested in these private sector proposals.

The \$15 million package I am outlining today, Mr. Speaker, will provide approximately 4,500 direct short-term jobs which will help young people, welfare recipients, and residents of the North. The package was designed for quick and efficient implementation with a local orientation that provides opportunities for municipalities, non-profit groups, and to the private sector.

This initiative follows the recent announcement by my colleague, the Minister of Highways and Transportation, of a \$26 million schedule of seasonal road construction and maintenance work. This package is expected to create 500 additional jobs this winter and more than 900 jobs next summer.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative is the first of a continuing series of employment announcements expected in the months ahead. In the days and weeks ahead, I and other ministers involved will be gathering public input on specific proposals to be funded out of the \$15 million package. This government knows that Saskatchewan people feel as we do about getting people working. With the co-operation of the public, we can achieve our long-term goal of developing full-time jobs, and an overall climate of job security.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot believe that members of the opposite side of the House can be proud of such a paltry and such a later effort as this, for the worst unemployment situation which we have had since the great depression. We have \$15 million, and a goodly portion of that, I suggest, will not create any jobs at all. Some of that is being directed to welfare recipients, and some of that is being directed to jobs which will be created at some time in the future. Fifteen million dollars is utterly and completely inadequate, and you have to have a great deal more faith than I do to believe that 4,500 jobs will be created. Your past efforts have inevitably created a fraction of the number of jobs which you suggest.

In some ways, this is a good news, bad news, announcement. The good news is that you finally got your act together, although it was three months too late. And, of course, the bad news is that it should have been done in September. And, of course, the really bad news is that this will not in any significant way attack the unemployment problem.



And I might remind the members opposition of some of their sterling efforts, some of their successful efforts in years past. In November of 1982, the Premier appointed a jobs minister, also part-time, who announced a winter job creation program later in November. It had two components — a federal-provincial program to create 3,500 jobs at a cost of \$15 million, a provincial program to create 700 jobs at a cost of \$7.5 million. By mid-February, three months later, only 1,300 jobs had been created under the provincial program. we suspect it was few, if any.

Of the 1,300 jobs, which two years ago you said you created under the federal-provincial program, over one-third of those were, in fact, created by the city of Regina.

And I want to quote from the then part-time jobs minister. This is a direct quotation. This is a direct quotation from the newspaper:

Mrs. Smith said she isn't disappointed more jobs haven't been created to date, saying the government is doing reasonably well with creating as many jobs as they did. And she speculated that more jobs had not been created due to a shortage of money in the hands of employers.

Well, if that was a problem in November of 1982, it is doubly a problem in December of 1984. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to remind members opposite of your dynamic six-point creation program for young people announced in March of this year.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — It worked well.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Well, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, I suppose. The House Leader says it worked well. Yes, it worked so well that there are actually 2,000 fewer people under 25 years of age employed now than there were a year ago when you announced the program. Somehow or other this program of yours has, I guess, been responsible for destroying 2,000 jobs for young people. I can only hope that the current program isn't as successful.

There are three points to be made about your program. The rate of unemployment for November, 1984 is 8.7. That is almost a 20 per cent increase over what it was in November, 1982. Then your job target was 4,200 jobs, and you didn't reach it. You didn't come anywhere near it. Now your job target is 4,500 jobs, with an unemployment situation which is vastly worse.

The weak response of this government and the late response of this government to the unemployment crisis is bad news to the unemployed across the province. But it's particularly bad news for the city of Saskatoon, where unemployment is running at 13 per cent. That's high than Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Vancouver. It's even higher than St. John's, Newfoundland.

By the standards of any reasonable observer this government has lost its will and its ability to govern. It is leaderless, directionless, and drifting about the economic currents. The government did not need legislation for winter works in 1982, and it doesn't need it in 1984.

Mr. Speaker, we will have more to say about the job creations program when we resume debate on Bill 2.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, please. Why is the member on his feet?

**MR. SVEINSON:** — I would like to comment on this ministerial statement.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — . . . (inaudible) . . . at this point. Order, please.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### **Bill No. 9 — An Act respecting The Transportation of Dangerous Goods in Saskatchewan**

**HON. MR. GARNER:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move first reading of a Bill respecting The Transportation of Dangerous Goods in Saskatchewan.

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

### **Bill No. 10 — An Act to amend The Environmental Management and Protection Act**

**HON. MR. HARDY:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move first reading of a Bill to amend The Environmental Management and Protection Act.

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

### **Bill No. 11 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act**

**HON. MR. BERNTSON:** — I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

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

### **Bill No. 12 — An Act to amend The Land Titles Act**

**HON. MR. BERNTSON:** — On behalf of the hon. member, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Land Titles Act.

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

### **Bill No. 13 — An Act to amend The Northern Municipalities Act**

**HON. MR. EMBURY:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move first reading of a Bill to amend The Northern Municipalities Act.

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

### **Bill No. 14 — An Act to amend The Planning and Development Act, 1983**

**HON. MR. EMBURY:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move first reading of a Bill to amend The Planning and Development Act, 1983.

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

### **Bill No. 15 — An Act to amend The Wakamow Valley Authority Act**

**HON. MR. EMBURY:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move first reading of a Bill to amend The Wakamow Valley Authority Act.

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

## STATEMENT BY MR. SPEAKER

### **Ruling on Point of Order**

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Before orders of the day, I would like to deal with a point of order that was raised yesterday by the member from Shaunavon. The point of order dealt with comments made by the minister responsible for Sask Housing on December 10th, on page 345. And the particular comment that was made: "I wonder what his motive is, Mr. Speaker."

It also dealt with statements that were made yesterday in question period. In one point the minister referred to as saying: "Mr. Speaker, I'm saying that the only falsehood here are the allegations brought to this House by the member."

And in a different point on page 377, again, that they "found his allegations false."

I would like to refer all hon. members to *Beauchesne's*, paragraph 322 which states:

It has been formally ruled by Speakers that a statement by a Member respecting himself and particularly within his own knowledge must be accepted, but it is not unparliamentary temperately to criticize statements made by a member as being contrary to the facts; but no imputation of intentional falsehood is permissible. On rare occasions this may result in the House having to accept two contradictory accounts of the same incident.

I'd like also to refer members to paragraph 319(3):

In the House of Commons a Member will not be permitted by Mr. Speaker to indulge in any reflections on the House itself as a political institution; or to impute to any Member or Members unworthy motives for their actions in a particular case; or to use any profane or indecent language; or to question the acknowledged and undoubted powers of the House in a matter of privilege; or to reflect upon, argue against or in any manner call in question the past acts and proceedings of the House, or to speak in abusive and disrespectful terms of an Act of Parliament.

(1445)

I find that the point of order that was raised is well taken, and I would ask the hon. minister to apologize to the Assembly for his comments.

**HON. MR. DUTCHAK:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. I accept your direction. I withdraw my choice of words, and obviously I should have used the words "contrary to facts."

I also apologize to the member opposite for my choice of words, and apologize to you, Mr. Speaker, for putting you in the position of a judge deciding on who is telling the truth. And I will pursue that issue outside of this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — The member has offered his apology to the House. Does the House accept his apology? Agreed.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

## SECOND READINGS

### Bill No. 7 – Act to amend The Forest Act

**HON. MR. PICKERING:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a pleasure for me to rise and to move second reading an Act to amend The Forest Act. This Bill, Mr. Speaker, is of housekeeping nature and is introduced to keep legislation up to date. The amendments are all

related to changes to the descriptions of the provincial forest boundaries in the Act.

The Bill contains 14 sections that change words and numbers. Two sections correct typographical errors and two relate to changes in the numbers of square miles contained in two provincial forests as a result of either additions or deletions. Seven sections deal with deletions from provincial forests relating to 13 quarter sections of land. One is of a very minor nature involving a small fraction of a quarter section. Other deletions involve four quarter sections that were found to be patented land — three in the Northern Provincial Forest. One quarter is being added to the Porcupine Provincial Forest.

Three sections deal with additions to provincial forests relating to nine quarter sections of land. One section and a quarter of land are being added to the Duck Mountain Provincial Forest to make the forest and park boundaries coterminous. Approximately three quarters are being added to the Northern Provincial Forest. One quarter is being added to the Porcupine Provincial Forest.

As mentioned at the outset, Mr. Speaker, in my remarks, these amendments are of housekeeping nature to keep the legislation as current as possible. I would ask that all members of the legislature support this Bill.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this Bill, an Act to amend The Forest Act.

**MR. THOMPSON:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have staff that have not finished going over this Bill and we would like to study it a little bit further, and for them reasons, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lane that Bill No. 2 — **An Act to establish the Employment Development Agency** be now read a second time.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying earlier in response to the ministerial statement, it has become apparent in the months since the federal election that this government is one the verge of collapse. It is leaderless; it is directionless; it is ineffective; and it is bankrupt of anything that looks like a sensible program.

Mr. Speaker, it's one of the signs of a government which is bankrupt of policy that it moves the program. This is no less than the third time that unemployment has been reorganized. In November of 1982 we set up a part-time jobs minister under the now Minister of Education. She was noticeably unsuccessful. We then set up a brand-new department, advanced manpower and education, made him responsible with glowing title and an even more glowing promise. The situation, as we know, since then has deteriorated markedly. We now have yet another part-time jobs minister with another agency.

I read for the benefit of members last night, and I'm going to repeat the comments of Petronius Arbiter in 210 B.C., who summed it up so well:

We trained hard, but it seemed every time we were beginning to form up into teams, we would be reorganized. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing, and a wonderful method it can be fore creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency, and demoralization.

And all of those are present in spades in the government ranks.

As soon as a page is available, Mr. Speaker, I shall be asking one of the pages to deliver one copy of this to each government member and to the opposition members if there is any left over. It seems government members do need the wisdom of the Greeks of 2,000 years ago.

The twin crisis facing the people of this province, unemployment and falling farm incomes, should have been addressed in September or October at the very latest, not in December. The Premier and his assembled heavy artillery met in a cabinet planning conference in September to assess the results of the federal election.

The Premier emerged after that three-day conference to announce to the waiting masses that the problems we face had been revealed to him and he would share that revelation with us. He told us that unemployment and falling farm incomes were the problem and promptly dropped from sight for two months, only to emerge on television two months later in front of the PC convention. I suppose these days the Premier has to go to that body to get a safe audience who will applaud him.

Where was he for two months? Why did it take him so long to do something as simple as appoint a minister to be responsible for unemployment — the unemployment his government has been largely responsible for creating through the mismanagement of our economy?

Many defenders of the PC faith will say, ah, but the Premier was keeping in touch with the people. He doesn't spend all his time in his office. Mr. Speaker, no one can argue with the need to keep in touch, but I think the time has come for the people of this province to demand that the Premier spend at least some time in his office. He has 55 Progressive Conservative members, 25 cabinet ministers in addition to himself, and who knows how many ministerial assistants to help with the job of keeping in touch.

Mr. Speaker, the challenge of leadership involves the exercise of judgement in allocating one's time among one's various responsibilities. For the Premier to allocate all his time in keeping in touch, and none of his time to appointing a jobs minister in order to ensuring that a program is developed in a timely fashion, shows that our Premier is failing and failing badly. He lacks confidence in his ability and the ability of his cabinet and back-benchers to help him keep him in touch. In over two months he can't persuade anyone, apparently, in his cabinet or caucus, to face the growing crisis of unemployment.

So where are we headed now? At this point it's anybody's guess. But there are a few points that should be kept on the record. number one, since March of 1983, this government has had a minister responsible for employment. Let me read from the March 1983 news release by the Premier:

There will be a new Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, which, I quote, '... will be responsible for any new employment initiative such as student employment.'

The release goes on to say about women:

Responsibility for employment issues will rest with the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower.

Mr. Speaker, it seems obvious to me that somewhere between the minister's office and the minister's chair around the cabinet table, the Minister for Advanced Education and Manpower, the minister responsible for new employment activities, dropped the ball. And because the Premier has spent so much time handling his public relations functions on behalf of the

Progressive Conservative Party, he failed to notice that his minister had dropped the ball. So where are the new employment initiatives coming from the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower? Who knows? What we do know is that we now have the Minister of Justice and jobs who gives orders to his colleague, the Minister of Manpower, who has dropped the ball.

Mr. Speaker, the situation faced by Saskatchewan families is desperate. over the past year this government has created 4,000 new jobs, with all its new programs and pro-business atmosphere. I want to remind our new unemployment minister that he now faces the challenge of matching the job creation record of the previous New Democratic government, anti-business government, which created 9,000 new jobs per year — 9,000 new jobs per year for 11 years — 100,000 new jobs in all.

This government has 1,000 fewer jobs after having been in office for two years. And just in case there's any doubt about the long-term job creation record of the previous NDP government, I want to remind members of this House of a statement made by the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower in this House in April 1983. He said:

Approximately 9,000 additional skilled workers will be required annually to meet the manpower needs of the province.

The minister said back then that jobs were being created at a rate of at least 9,000 skilled workers, without taking the unskilled into account. Mr. Speaker, we now have the fourth minister to come forward. The Minister of Labour initially had responsibility for jobs. He was as successful at that as he was in dealing with the working people of the province.

The responsibility was then shifted to the now Minister of Education, the minister of social services at that time, and she was even less successful. The responsibility was then sifted to the Minister of Advanced Education and Manpower, who also fumbled the responsibility, and it's now been given to the minister of jobs.

I want to say that the initial effort of the minister of jobs is anything but impressive. The program which was announced today bears all the hallmarks of something that was thrown together very quickly by creating jobs which are short term — produced no long-term benefit.

It also has all the hallmarks of a program whose goals have been exaggerated. I think you have to have a great deal of faith to believe that there really will be 4,500 — that it will even be 4,500 — short-term jobs created. The obvious implication is that they are short-time. By spring there will be none of this left, and we will be back in the desperate situation we are now.

Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the present government is presiding over an unemployment crisis and has responded in a fashion which on the one hand is weak and ineffective, on the other hand is uncaring and insensitive. The agency to be created . . . The agency created by this Bill now being debated will do nothing that the government could not have done for itself last September.

I and my colleagues will not be opposing the Bill. The Bill is virtually irrelevant to the problem. There is no reason to vote for it or against it. If there comes an opportunity to express an opinion on this government's abysmal record of job creation — only tiny Prince Edward Island has done worse — we will use that opportunity, and we will use every opportunity available to us.

At this point in time with respect to this Bill, it really doesn't matter. We will not be opposing it.

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

(1500)

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lane that Bill No. 1 — **An Act respecting the Security of Farm Land in Saskatchewan** be now read a second time.

**MR. ENGEL:** — Mr. Speaker, at the close of my remarks today I will be moving an amendment to Bill 1. Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Agriculture presented this legislation for second reading yesterday, he began by taking the Assembly, to use his own words, "on a brief walk through history."

Today I would like to begin my remarks with a brief walk through reality. For the benefit of the minister and his colleagues, I think the reality of what's out on the farm land — that needs to be discussed.

Just what kind of problems are Saskatchewan family farms facing today? How serious and how widespread are these problems? These are the kinds of questions which the PC government should have looked at in depth before introducing this legislation, and they are certainly the kinds of questions we as legislators must answer here before we can truly judge this Bill.

The latest figures available suggest that Saskatchewan farmers saw the value of their production drop by \$653 million this year — a \$653 million drop in the farmers' value of production in one year, Mr. Speaker. Let's try to put this size of the loss into perspective.

Mr. Speaker, that loss is seven times greater than the entire budget of the Department of Agriculture in any one year. The loss the farmers suffered this year is seven times that of the entire budget for agriculture. Mr. Speaker, we're not talking about peanuts; we're not talking about a small problem. And I wish the Devine Conservative government would realize the magnitude of the problem the farmers are facing.

According to the Farm Credit Corporation, 16 per cent of Saskatchewan's farmers, 16 per cent or 8,800 farmers are in severe financial stress. The Farm Credit Corporation's definition of severe financial stress is that the farmer's interest payments and long-term payments exceed 40 per cent of his sales. That is what the Farm Credit Corporation defines as serious financial stress. Interest rates are one of the chief causes of this widespread financial stress.

Last year in Saskatchewan farmers paid more than \$400 million in interest on their debts — \$400 million, Mr. Speaker, paid by Saskatchewan farmers in interest to their banks. That has become the number one input cost in farming today in our province. Some may find this hard to believe, but it's true. Interest payments now take more out of the pockets of Saskatchewan farmers than fuel or fertilizer or any other single input cost. Rising debt charges, increased fuel, fertilizer, and other input costs, coupled with the low commodity price, are putting more and more and more of our family farmers out of business.

In 1984, 50 farmers will actually declare bankruptcy. That, however, is just the tip of the iceberg. Between 300 and 400 more farmers have been forced out of business in 1984 by foreclosure or seizure actions on the part of the financial institutions.

By the government's own admission, Mr. Speaker, between April the 1st and November the 30th of this year, there were 271 notices of foreclosures served against our Saskatchewan farmers, and that number deals just with foreclosures on farm land. It doesn't include seizures of equipment and livestock.

I've quoted these figures, Mr. Speaker, to try to make the government members opposite realize that we aren't dealing with a short-term insignificant problem. This isn't the case of a few inefficient or greedy or poor operators, as the Devine government would try and make us believe it is, that are getting themselves into some temporary trouble.

Mr. Speaker, since 1971 when I first entered this legislation, I believe that this is the most serious question we have to face in this Chamber. What we are dealing with today is a question of survival of thousands of Saskatchewan family farmers, 8,800 according to Farm Credit Corporation, and in many ways a question of survival of rural Saskatchewan.

What would happen to rural Saskatchewan if a few thousand family farmers went down the tubes and were replaced by large corporate farms? How many rural communities would go down the tubes shortly thereafter, Mr. Speaker? It's the position of this caucus, it's the position of the New Democratic Party caucus that public policy in agriculture must have one underlying and one fundamental goal — to keep the largest number of people in farming, to keep the largest number possible in farming, Mr. Speaker.

Our rural communities would die, and without those rural communities a quality of life in our province would be drastically reduced. Saskatchewan can't afford to let one more farmer go down the tubes. That's our position, Mr. Speaker, but unfortunately it's not the position of the Minister of Agriculture. It's not the position of the Progressive Conservative government. In fact, the government is led, Mr. Speaker, by a Premier who has long expressed a desire to rid rural Saskatchewan of many of their family farmers.

Members opposite, members opposite, and especially the Premier, may not like to be reminded. Members opposite may not like to be reminded of this, but Saskatchewan family farmers will never forget what he said about them, never.

I refer to the winter of 1977, the issue of the *Business Review*, and to an article by Dr. D.G. Devine, professor of agricultural economics, University of Saskatchewan. What did the future premier have to say about Saskatchewan family farmers? Let me quote:

Realizing that most of our food is produced by less than 20 per cent of the farmers who tend to be good businessmen as well as producers, society may not wish to support higher food prices or producer security so that the non-productive 80 per cent of the farm population can live in this country at a profit.

Those were the words, Mr. Speaker, of a man who today is our Premier, a man who is trying to build a Montana-style province. He would develop public policy which would eliminate up to 80 per cent of its Saskatchewan family farmers. He's been working at it since 1977, and this year, Mr. Speaker, he wants to bring it to fruition. All Saskatchewan people should study Bill 1 and the other agricultural policies of this PC government in the context of that statement of principle from the professor who's now our Premier.

And, Mr. Speaker, he's not alone, he's not alone at those kind of statements. His friends, the bankers, are saying the same thing. What about one friend of the Premier's, a Mr. John Murphy? John Murphy of agricultural services for the Royal Bank of Saskatchewan said, John Murphy said that 2,000 acres of land are now required for a viable, full-time, grain farm. The criteria means that the average Saskatchewan farmer, 9,600 acres, according to the 1981 census, is not big enough to make optimum use of equipment and to produce a living wages.

Citing figures from a recent Farm Credit Corporation study, Murphy said there are 12,000 farmers in Saskatchewan with total sales less than 15,000 and 23,000 more with sales between 15,000 and 70,000. The first group aren't real farmers by any definition, he told a group of journalists at a Saskatchewan reporters' association seminar.

How many farmers was he talking about, Mr. Speaker? How many farmers was he talking about? Twelve thousand farmers. Not the 8,800 that the Farm Credit Corporations says are in trouble. The members opposite, and especially the Premier, may not like to be reminded, but the Saskatchewan family farmers will remember. The Saskatchewan family farmers will remember.



So, Mr. Speaker, I've talked about the extent of the problems facing Saskatchewan family farms today and the need of a comprehensive policy to help them. If we do not get that comprehensive policy, the very survival of rural Saskatchewan, as we know it today, is in jeopardy.

The Devine Conservative government has long promised a comprehensive plan to help family farmers. During the 1982 provincial election campaign they promised again and again to preserve and protect the family farms. Among other things they promised to fight to keep the Crow rate. We all know what happened to that promise. Then in January of 1983, both the Premier and his deputy announced with great fanfare — the then minister of Agriculture — that the Progressive Conservative government would open the provincial treasury to protect family farms. What have farmers received so far? a lot of talk and a lot of baloney, Mr. Speaker, but not very much from the provincial treasury.

Last spring's budget bragged about the PC government's farm operating loan guarantee program — the farm counselling and assistance Act, as they called it. They bragged about the operating loan guarantee program. This program was supposed to help family farmers get the operating cash they needed to get their crops in the ground this year. That program, Mr. Speaker, has been a monumental failure.

The first tip-off was that only \$4 million has been put in by the provincial treasury for the PC government to back these loans. Four million dollars, when the PC government had provided more than 97 times that amount in one single loan guarantee to Husky Oil of Alberta. Ninety-seven times as much for one oil company as for all the farmers that were in trouble.

Then, as farmers applied for help under the program and were approved and took their loan guarantees to the banks, what happened, Mr. Speaker? What did the financial institutions do? They laughed them out of the banks; they laughed at them. They told them again and again, and more and more farmers have come to us all summer long. The provincial loan guarantee was so limited it wasn't worth the paper it was written on. I remind Saskatchewan family farmers of this only to make one point: that the PC government has made big, extravagant promises before, promises which, after examining it and carefully looking at them and evaluating them, proved to be of little value.

This Devine PC government is one which likes to raise expectations, but it never delivers. It never delivers. Another example of this was the promised assistance to flood-ravaged farmers in north-eastern Saskatchewan. Last June, the Premier promised more than \$20 million assistance and demanded that the federal Liberal government match that number for a total of \$40 million — \$40 million dollars for north-eastern Saskatchewan and not one of them would have needed Bill 1. But what did they get? The Devine government delivered a measly 47 million of their promise.

(1515)

And what about the Mulroney government? Is Regina putting pressure on them to live up to their \$20 million commitment? Are you putting pressure to get the \$20 million? Not at all. The Mulroney government says that it will do no more than match the \$7 million contribution from the province. And you haven't heard a squeak from the members opposite. You haven't heard a murmur, and they laugh. It maybe sounds like a laughing matter to you, but it's not a laughing matter to the farmers of north-eastern Saskatchewan. This is another case where the PC government raised expectations, and it failed to deliver. I remind farmers of this because it's vital, it's vital for them to consider the real impact of Bill 1.

Mr. Speaker, as an example of this, I would like to refer you to what the Premier said when he was talking to the wheat pool on November the 29th. And he said that . . . "The Big Spenders," is the headline in the *Western Producer*, 29/11/84. And Devine said:

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The government is prepared to put millions more into agriculture and will introduce some programs this fall in the legislature.

Let me repeat that. He said:

The government is prepared to put millions more into agriculture and will introduce some programs this fall in the legislature.

While considering new programs, he said, the government also plans to look at existing programs to make sure the money is well spent.

He's going to look at existing programs to make sure that the money is well spent. Is he going to do like the federal ministers did, and have a person out reviewing and saying, we're spending 700 million too much on farms? What is he going to review? Where are the programs? Where are the Bills that are going to put some cash up front so that the moratorium legislation is going to work? "Where is the money?" the farmers are asking.

I'm glad the Minister of Agriculture quoted from the Premier's TV extravaganza in this House yesterday, because the Premier's promise in that TV speech is also an important part of the background farmers must have before judging this piece of legislation. And the Premier said, and let me quote:

This government will not allow our farm families to be chased off or forced off their land because of a bad crop. They will not lose their land (are the words the Premier used).

I heard him say that. That was the promise, Mr. Speaker. The member for Meadow Lake says, good, and so does the Minister of Agriculture. In the throne speech they added to that commitment, Mr. Speaker. The Premier and his government made this promise to the Saskatchewan family farms:

My government intends to introduce in this session comprehensive legislation to provide security for viable family farms jeopardized by uncontrollable costs, burdensome debts, and the impact of adverse weather conditions. My government is not prepared to see the security of the family farm endangered by short-term difficulties.

Here again, a clear promise. No mincing of words, Mr. Speaker. A clear promise. When farmers first heard these statements from the Premier, they became hopeful. They were hopeful. they thought that finally this Conservative government was understanding the seriousness of the situation, and the need for action. They said, finally this government understands the plight of farmers; finally they understand.

That feeling of hope and optimism lasted only until they saw this Bill, until they realized that this Premier and this government had once again failed to deliver on a clear, straightforward commitment.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's family farmers are bleeding financially, and this legislation offers them a torn bandage. To call this legislation a family farm security Act flirts with the laws of fraud.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. ENGEL:** — I want to make two key points about the legislation now before us, and they are the two key points that we hear again and again as we talk to people all around the province about Bill 1.

Number one, this legislation fails to provide one dime from the provincial treasury for Saskatchewan family farmers. This PC government spends tax dollars at the rate of \$8 million a day, yet it can't find a penny for farmers in Saskatchewan. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been given away or put at the disposal of the big oil companies, and other large foreign corporations, but where is the money for farmers? Where is the money for farmers?

Without some kind of cash injection for our farm economy, Mr. Speaker, Bill 1 is meaningless, Bill 1 is worthless. It will amount to nothing more than a stay of execution for a limited number of financially pressed farmers. It will solve nothing, Mr. Speaker. When the 13-month moratorium period is over, hundreds of farmers will go down the tubes.

We're not alone, Mr. Speaker. The NDP aren't the only ones that are saying this.

Pool Official Sceptical of Farm Bill.

The *Star-Phoenix* on the 12th. The 5th of December:

A bill introduced in the legislature Tuesday to halt foreclosures on farm land will do nothing more than delay the inevitable, according to Saskatchewan Wheat Pool director and vice-president, Avery Sahl.

"Delaying the inevitable for 13 months won't help farmers," Sahl said in an interview from Regina, adding the most effective course of action would have been an interest rebate program similar to that offered to home owners.

That's from Sask Wheat Pool. There isn't even an attempt in this Bill at debt adjustment or debt write-downs. As I said a few moments ago, the number one cost for many farmers is interest. But this Bill makes no provision for rewriting of the high interest debts farmers are facing and farmers are strapped with.

It should be clear that this legislation is not a debt moratorium, Mr. Speaker. Bill 1 is not debt moratorium legislation. It is a foreclosure moratorium only: in other words, throughout the 13-month period that a farmer's land payments are still due and must all be paid, with interest, when the moratorium period has been completed.

Sask Wheat Pool put their money where their mouth is. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool is expected to pay its members \$15.5 million in cash dividends this year to tide them over the current economic crisis. Under the Pool's proposal, the members would be paid a special emergency dividend of \$5.2 million, the first of its kind since 1966, on top of a regular cash dividend of \$10.3 million.

They know how serious the problem is. They are extending themselves to make good and to help the farmers out. But where's this government at? Where's this government at? The pool put their money where their mouth is. Where are these boys opposite? Where are the boys opposite?

It should be clear that this legislation does not protect the farm unit: is the second problem, Mr. Speaker, I was talking about. Banks can still seize a farmer's assets such as his equipment, his livestock, his stored grain, his bank account, his crop insurance cheques, you name it. None of these are protected by Bill 1. And how is a farmer a viable farmer, as defined in this legislation, if the bank seizes his tractor, his combine, his livestock, or his money?

This is exactly what the banks have been doing in recent months. With the price of farm land falling and the procedure for taking a farmer's land away from him rather complicated, the banks have been shying away from seizing the land and instead have been going for the equipment

and the livestock and to other assets which they can turn into cash.

That's what's happening out there. But this Bill doesn't deal with that problem. Even with all these failures, some farmers might be willing to say, "Well, an eighth of a loaf is better than no loaf at all. At least they won't be able to seize our land for 13 months. It's not much, but it's something." Those farmers, I suggest, should take a closer look at this Bill and at this legislation, because even when it comes to this narrow, ineffective, objective, the legislation fails to deliver. It doesn't even provide farmers with a true foreclosure moratorium on land.

As I've said again and again, and I repeat here today, this legislation contains loopholes large enough to drive through the main branch of the Royal Bank. And I'm sure the banks had a hand to play in drafting this Bill. I'm sure the banks had a hand to play in drafting this Bill, Mr. Speaker. In spite of their attempts to pretend that they're upset by it, under this law — under this law, Bill 1 — a bank will be able to seize a farmer's equipment or livestock, make his farm a non-viable unit as defined by the legislation, then move in to seize his land more quickly than they could under the existing law.

I repeat, in many cases this law will be used by the big banks to foreclose faster than they do now on family farmers. And it's just not New Democrats who are saying this. The head of the Canadian Bankers Association in Saskatchewan, a representative of the Royal Bank, have both stated publicly that in some cases this law will allow the banks to foreclose faster than they do now.

And I refer to an article in the *Leader-Post*:

Farmers who believe the provincial government's new farm security Bill means a one-year break from interest payments will only end up paying interest on interest, according to bank officials. John Murphy, manager of agricultural services for the Royal Bank, said, "Anyone who ignores mortgage payments will only end up further in the hole. The Royal Bank's lawyers have reviewed the Bill and found nothing to support the idea that there will be no interest charges during the one-year freeze on foreclosures," he said. "He would be paying interest on interest," Murphy said. "We're going to delay foreclosures on a broad scale because . . ."

Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. Let me read that last paragraph again.

"We are not going to delay foreclosures on a broad scale because of this act." he said.

And that is what their friends in the banks are saying. Is that the PC government's definition of protection? Is that legislation which they expect Saskatchewan's family farmers to support and thank them for? I tell them now, Mr. Speaker, it isn't going to happen.

In the fall of 1981, a former government introduced a similar Bill with respect to home owners. At that time the PC opposition bitterly opposed it and demanded again and again in this Assembly: where is the money, they said, where is the money? Remember that, Mr. Speaker? Day after day they would say, "Where is the money?" And the home owners began asking that too. The government paid for its decision to opt for a foreclosure moratorium without the rest of the package.

For that experience, Mr. Speaker, our party learned a lesson, and it seems the PCs didn't. But don't worry. Come the next provincial election, I'm sure that the farmers of Saskatchewan will teach the PC candidates that lesson — the lesson that moratorium legislation cannot stand alone. It has to be part of a package which puts cold, hard cash into the hands of Saskatchewan farmers. It has to be part of package which does something meaningful about the interest problem.

And it's proposed by other. I'm not the only one that's making that kind of proposal. "The Pool Wants Interest Rates Cut," is an article in the *Leader-Post*.

The pool says interest rates on farms loans are much higher than farmers can afford, and the federal and provincial governments will step in with subsidies. Government subsidies should reduce interest rates on farm loans to 7 per cent, according to a new policy on farm financing accepted by delegates of the 65,000-member farm organization's annual meeting. Farmers should also be able to pay off existing loans with money borrowed at the subsidized interest rate, according to the pool. It is imperative that priority be directed by both levels of government to current debt restructuring and interest relief mechanisms which will ensure the long-term preservation of the family farm unit.

So, according to the pool. Otherwise, without that, Mr. Speaker, a moratorium is nothing more than a Band-Aid solution which does nothing but postpone and compound the problems.

(1530)

For all these reasons, Mr. Speaker, our caucus will be proposing a number of improvements to this Bill. We will be demanding that the moratorium cover and protect the entire farm unit, including equipment and livestock, not just the land. We will be demanding that this government introduce a long-term proposal to deal with the serious problem of the interest rates being paid by family farmers. And we will be demanding that this legislation put some cash into the hands of family farmers.

If these changes are accepted, Mr. Speaker, our caucus will support the Bill.

So it gives me a great deal of pleasure at this time to move, seconded by my colleague, the member for Pelly:

That all the words after "that" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

That Bill 1 be not now read a second time because it is inadequate to meet the severe financial crisis faced by Saskatchewan farm families, and that the subject matter of the Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture with instructions to prepare for presentation to the Legislative Assembly a Bill or Bills which would provide for the following: a moratorium on foreclosures on farm land; a moratorium on seizures of farm machinery, but reserving the rights of repairers; a moratorium on seizures of livestock; a moratorium on seizures of other assets and inventories necessary for farm operations; a guarantee that any administrative boards or bodies established with respect to the subject matter of the Bill be truly representatives of family farmers and farm organizations; and a reduction of effective interest rates on farm loans to 7 per cent; and further that the Standing Committee on Agriculture report back to this Legislative Assembly in seven days.

I so move, seconded by the member for Pelly.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

The debate continues concurrent.

**MR. LUSNEY:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to be able to join my colleagues in debating this Bill. And it's surprising that the government opposite didn't come up with a Bill that would do some good for the farmers of Saskatchewan.

The number one industry in this province, Mr. Speaker, the number one industry in this province,

and they continually tell us that, that agriculture is important, and yet they come forward with a Bill that is actually going to do nothing for agriculture.

And all the members know that, Mr. Speaker. They know that this problem did not develop overnight. It's not one that they weren't aware of. We told them about this problem last spring. We told them about the problem over a year ago. They knew it was coming. The farmers knew there were problems out there. The business people knew that there were problems developing, that there was a crisis coming on, and yet, Mr. Speaker, this government ignored it, year after year. They ignored it for the last two and a half years. They could have acted last spring. That would have saved a lot of farmers, Mr. Speaker. They could have taken some action last spring, but they didn't take it. And it certainly isn't because they weren't made aware of it. It certainly isn't that they weren't made aware of it, Mr. Speaker.

One would have to say that they probably didn't do anything because they didn't want to. They didn't really want to do anything for the farmers. That's why they totally ignored the crisis in agriculture.

The Premier of this province, Mr. Speaker, went on television this summer, and he was going to make some big announcements. He was going to tell this province how well it was doing, and how well everybody in the province was doing. And he did some of that. He tried to tell them how well they were doing. The only problem was that I don't know how many people believed him, because if you went to rural Saskatchewan, if you went to the urban centres, many people were employed in the urban centres. The farmers were feeling the pinch, and yet, here the Premier was telling them that they are all doing so well, and they really shouldn't be complaining because their government was doing everything that was necessary, and they were going to be doing better than ever before.

Well, Mr. Speaker, winter is here, and as some of the members opposite say, "There is so much more we will be." Well, they've said there's so much more we could be in the election campaigns in '82, and now they're saying, "There's so much more we will be." Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe there is so much more there will be. The only problem is there are going to be very few people that will be able to participate in that new-found wealth that they're talking about. There are going to be very few people that are going to be able to participate in that. It certainly isn't going to be the farmers. It won't be the farmers because they've decided now that they aren't going to really support the farmer. And this Bill, I think, is a clear indication of that.

Mr. Speaker, the position that this government has taken with this Bill is not one that would be concrete, that would show that there is some way that the farmer can survive, he can be salvaged, and that he can continue to produce food. No, they've put forward a Bill, Mr. Speaker, that is actually going to allow the farmers to lose their land. It's going to allow them to lose their land, and as the member and the critic for agriculture, the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg says, it's a short cut to foreclosure. And that, Mr. Speaker, I believe is exactly what it is.

Mr. Speaker, they could have used a number of methods for helping one of the major industries in this province, and it is a major industry in this province. Governments have never had difficulty in finding funding when it came to assisting large corporations, be it Manalita Coal. I didn't hear of any difficulties in coming up with a guarantee, loan guarantee for them. No problems for some 89 million, I believe it was. There was no problem finding something like 390 million loan guarantees for Husky Oil. And I suppose they consider that an important industry in the province, and I won't deny that oil is an important industry in the province. I wouldn't deny that, Mr. Speaker, and the minute they ask for money this government has money for them.

They had money to give the oil companies a tax holiday, hundreds of millions of dollars going to the oil companies. They had money for that, and they didn't appear to have any difficulty in finding the money for the oil companies. But when it came to the farmers, they all of a sudden have some difficulties. They say that this is one industry that shouldn't be salvaged, that

shouldn't be helped. The oil companies should be helped, the coal companies should be helped.

This government is no different, Mr. Speaker, than the federal government. If it comes to a large corporation, be it Chrysler or be it Massey-Ferguson, or be it Dome Oil, or Husky, or anybody else, there is no problem finding money. When Dome was in trouble — and it wasn't Dome that was in trouble it was the bank that was in trouble — the governments found money for that. They had to bail out the banks. They bailed out the banks. But now that the farmers are in trouble, what are they doing? Are they bailing out the banks? Well, Mr. Speaker, they are again. They're going to help the banks acquire land in this province. They are going to help the banks acquire land in this province because the farmers have a debt with the banks. They have loans with the banks, and this Bill is not going to prevent any foreclosures of farm land in this province, Mr. Speaker. It is not going to prevent any foreclosures in this province.

And the member opposite, the Minister for . . . the member from Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker, says, "Give us an explanation how this is not going to prevent foreclosures." Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not very difficult to figure out. Every farmer in Saskatchewan figured that one out. All they had to do was listen to the details that are in the Bill, the different clauses, and they know what it's going to do for them.

And they are saying that it is not going to do anything for the farmers that are in trouble. It won't help anyone that is financially in trouble. All it's going to do is delay the inevitable because the banks are saying that they are not going to quit charging interest. They're going to continue to charge interest. The principal amount is still going to be there. And the clause in the Bill that says that there is going to be a board set up . . .

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — A Tory board.

**MS. LUSNEY:** — And as my colleague says, a Tory board. And it will very likely be that. There is going to be a board set up that is going to decide who a viable farmer is, and who isn't. Mr. Speaker, if that board decides that a farmer is not viable, then that's going to mean that this Bill is no longer in effect. They can circumvent this Bill and still repossess or foreclose on that farmer. That is what this Bill says, Mr. Speaker, so it really doesn't prevent foreclosures for 12 months, and it still leaves an opening for the banks to do exactly what they are in the process of doing now.

Mr. Speaker, some of the members say we don't understand the Bill. Well, it's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that many of the back-benchers haven't looked at that Bill when they looked at it in caucus — if they did. And they didn't tell the minister that was presenting this Bill to this House, the Minister of Agriculture, that it will do nothing for the farmers in their areas.

And there are many farm members here that, if they talked to their farmers, they would realize that this Bill is really not going to help anyone. It will not get anyone out of debt. It will not even help them to continue farming for next year or the year after that. That, Mr. Speaker, is all that this Bill does.

The biggest problem today, Mr. Speaker, that is facing farmers is cash flow. They need money. And why do they need money, Mr. Speaker? Not because they are poor farmers or inefficient farmers or poor managers. They need money because the price of wheat is down. There's no relationship between the price of the product they produce and the cost, the input cost, that they have on that farm, Mr. Speaker.

And one would only have to look at what happened to them when the interest rates went up. I think that was the biggest culprit that's facing, that created the problems for the farmer today. When interest rates went up, nobody expected that they would go up to the level they did. And when you've got a 1 or \$200,000 loan — and for simply figuring we'll use a \$100,000 loan — and if you borrowed money at about 8 or 10 per cent, you had it within your budget that you can

afford to make that payment.

But when interest went up to 18 and 20 per cent, that individual had no choice as to whether he could stay on the 8 per cent interest. he couldn't do it, actually. It was a floating rate that went up. And all of a sudden that individual found himself having to pay twice as much for interest, twice as much as what he thought he was going to have to pay when he made that loan. And that, Mr. Speaker, I think one would say that, as one of the members opposite says, is bad.

Well I believe it is bad, because if a government was responsible, any government that has control of money in this country, they would say that banks should not be allowed to increase the interest any time they pleased and put people out of business, or put people on welfare, or virtually destroy companies, farms, and individuals.

(1545)

Because that is what these governments today allow. They allow the banks to do exactly that — destroy anybody simply by increasing interest rates. There was a time, Mr. Speaker, when one thought that only the Mafias that had control of a lot of money were charging that kind of interest rate. Today, Mr. Speaker, that has turned around, and we see banks and governments charging that kind of interest rates.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Gouging.

**MR. LUSNEY:** — Gouging the public, as my colleague says. And they certainly are. They have no sympathy for the hard-working individuals of this province or of this country. They continue to gouge, and it's probably by design, and I'll get into that later, Mr. Speaker.

One of the other problems that faced farmers, along with interest, was the increase in the cost of equipment. And, Mr. Speaker, a good example was an article in *Union Farmer*, and it gives you a comparison of what a John Deere tractor was in 1974 and what it is in 1984.

In 1974, a 125 horse-power tractor was \$17,540. In 1984, Mr. Speaker, that same tractor is \$67,321. A combine, Mr. Speaker, in '74 is \$12,380; in 1984, \$47,800. A half-ton truck, Mr. Speaker, back in '74 was about \$6,400. Today that same truck is \$14,000.

Mr. Speaker, that is what has happened. That is why the farmers are facing the kind of problems they are today — not because of poor management on the farms, but because of things that they could not control.

And all the time that interest went up, the equipment costs went up, repair costs went up, fuel went up, and this government surely didn't try to stop it. Freight rates went up because this government also didn't try to stop that, didn't put an effort into trying to save the Crow rate for the farmers.

And while they allowed all of this to happen, Mr. Speaker, the price of grain that the farmer produces did not go up. And somehow the governments of this country, the banks of this country and all of those who apparently have the power in this country, the control the majority of the money, are saying that there's no reason why we should be helping the farmer. If he's a bad farmer, he should just leave the farm.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government really did nothing to help. And even today there still don't seem to recognize that there is a problem out there because they aren't doing much to help alleviate the situation that's facing the farmers. Other organizations have realized there is a problem. We've got the wheat pools. The wheat Pool realized there is a problem, and this year they decided to pay out \$15.5 million in dividends to the farmers — 15.5 million they're going to pay in dividends to the farmers to try and help them a little. And the Wheat Pool is only a farm



organization, and it's limited to what it can do. But it is trying. It recognizes that there is a problem out there, and it is trying to help the farmers.

Surprisingly enough, Mr. Speaker, even the Palliser Wheat Growers, friends of the government, realize that there are problems out there. And, Mr. Speaker, I'll just quote what a member of the Palliser Wheat Growers said. They say:

Because producers can't control prices, costs must be brought down.

And I'll continue, Mr. Speaker.

We need cuts in costs of \$5,000 to \$10,000 per farm, or the financial squeeze on farms will continue.

That's what the Palliser Wheat Growers are saying, Mr. Speaker. And yet this government ignores yet another organization that is trying to put, very clearly, the problems that are facing Saskatchewan agriculture.

The Farmers Union realize there is a problem, another farm organization. And they're saying that:

Both federal and provincial governments don't seem to realize we have a disaster of major proportions on our hands. The farm system as we knew it is in danger.

That's what the farm union is saying, and they are right, Mr. Speaker. The farm system as we know it is in danger. As the minister said in his statement, I believe he said there was something like 1,000 foreclosures that were being acted on. That indicates to you just what is happening in agriculture today.

And all of these organizations, farm organizations, realize that, Mr. Speaker. They realize there are problems out there, and they are trying to indicate to the government what the problems are. And they are even saying what some of the solutions might be. But does the government act on any of those? No, Mr. Speaker, they totally ignore it.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture, they realize that there are problems. And they are saying the failure to provide adequate measures now to relieve the financing and cash-flow problems may well result in the need for some debt adjustment programs in the future. That's what the Canadian Federation of Agriculture is saying, Mr. Speaker.

I'm afraid that as long as we have a Conservative or a Liberal government in this country we are not likely to see debt adjustment. We are more likely to see so few farmers left in this country that then we will find that our food costs are going to be a lot higher than they are today. We will no longer have a cheap food policy in this province. We will have the corporations controlling most of the land, the banks, the Chase Manhattans, that are borrowing money to governments that are going into deficit positions. They are going to be the ones that are going to control the provinces and the countries.

Mr. Speaker, another good article here is from the Farm Credit Corporation, and they indicate that there are a large percentage of farmers going bankrupt. Every month and every year there are more and more farmers going bankrupt. But they do say, however, that such statistics are a poor gauge of farm failures since many more farmers dump their assets or simply leave the farm without declaring bankruptcy. And, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the number of farmers that are going bankrupt, I think the Farm Credit Corporation is right when they say that that is only a small percentage of the ones that are really leaving the farms, because many have buckled down or buckled into the banks, and they have said, you can have it. We can't fight you any longer. We receive no help from anyone. So they just sign over their farms to the banks and they leave the farms. That, Mr. Speaker, is what is happening in Canada today. That's what is happening in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, StatsCanada says Saskatchewan farmers have been hardest hit by the downturn in agriculture commodity markets during the past year. That's what StatsCanada is saying, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan has been the hardest hit. And they have been saying this, Mr. Speaker . . . It's an article that came out in May of 1983. And this government is trying to tell the farmers of Saskatchewan that they weren't aware of a problem that existed in rural Saskatchewan, a problem that existed in agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that this government ignored the problems that farmers face. they ignored them because they really didn't want to do anything. And why didn't they want to do anything? Well, Mr. Speaker, what are the banks saying today? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And as one of the members opposite, the member for Moosomin, I believe it was, said that he doesn't care what the banks say. Well, Mr. Speaker, he doesn't care what the banks say. Well, if they didn't care what the bank said, they why didn't they help the farmers a year ago? Why didn't they help the farmers a year ago?

What the banks are saying, Mr. Speaker, what the banks are saying is that farm families have to realize that in hard times, some lose their farms. They should not blame themselves but should draw closer with a strong resolve to make a new start. That's the feelings of the bank, Mr. Speaker. That's what the banks are saying. you are going to lose your farm; it doesn't matter. All you have to do is just pack your bags and go look for something else and make a new start. We'll take over your farm. You can go to the city, you can go on welfare, or you can do what you like. They really don't care. They just say when the hard times comes, hard times come, then you've got to be prepared to lose everything you've worked for.

And it's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that it seems hard times only come under Tory governments. The last time farmers were losing their land to the extent that they are today was back in the '30s. And, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I remember some of those times. I remember some of those. Maybe a lot of the members opposite don't. But what they should do is maybe read part of history, read what happened and maybe listen to some of their parents and grandparents and find out what happened in the 1930s, and how many farmers were tossed out on the road allowances, when the sheriff would come in and pack everything they owned, put it on the road allowance and say this is where you're going.

This is what the banks are saying should be done now. Hard times are here. you should be prepared to lose your farm once again, and pack your bag and go look for something else. That's what they're saying, Mr. Speaker, and that's what this government is prepared to accept. That's what this government is prepared to accept. And it is doing that, Mr. Speaker, while at the same time that the banks are saying the farmers should be prepared to leave their land and look for something else.

We have a report here that says American banks were collectively the world's most profitable last year, the world's most profitable last year. And it goes on to say, Canadian banks came out on top. Well, Mr. Speaker, while the banks are doing better than they ever have, and Canadian banks are doing better than any other bank, even, then, Mr. Speaker, why does the Government of Canada, why doesn't the Government of Saskatchewan say that some of this money should be shared by the people that work hard, feed this country, feed people in other countries? Why don't they say that some of that should be shared? And if hard times are here, there's no reasons why the banks shouldn't feel some of that problem, too, why they shouldn't participate in that kind of recession.

Mr. Speaker, the banks should be prepared to participate in the recession, too. But they aren't, Mr. Speaker. They are making higher, larger profits than they ever have at a time when everybody is going bankrupt. Farmers, small-business people, they are declaring bankruptcy and the banks are registering some of the highest profits ever, Mr. Speaker, and why? You would think this government isn't really doing anything that will tell the banks that they should lower

their profits some.

Well, I suppose one good reason why this government wouldn't want to get on the wrong side of the banks are the donations that they receive from the banks, Mr. Speaker. One can go down the long list here: Bank of Montreal, Bank of Nova Scotia, Imperial Bank of Commerce, Royal Bank — all contributed \$30,000 a piece to the PC Party. And there's a list of other ones that contributed amounts like \$10,000, \$14,000, \$5,000 and so on — a long list of all the financial institutions in this country, Mr. Speaker, donating to the PC Party.

(1600)

And I suppose it's no wonder why this government will not act against anything that might hurt the banks a little, might bring their profit margin down just a bit. They wouldn't act against it, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, the banks really aren't concerned about what's happening to agriculture in Saskatchewan, although agriculture has probably been giving them more money collectively than anyone else in this province, in interest rates. But the banks are saying interest on farm mortgages is still charged.

So they are saying that even though the problems are there, even though the government supposedly put in a Bill that's going to prevent foreclosures, the interest is still going to grow on that principal amount that the farmer has borrowed at the bank. So what is a debt moratorium or . . . Pardon me. I shouldn't have said a debt moratorium Bill, because that's not what it is. It's a foreclosure moratorium Bill. What is a foreclosure moratorium Bill going to help the farmer who realizes that in four months or six months or 12 months, if it went that far, is going to have to pay the principal amount of his payment plus the interest this year, Mr. Speaker, how is he going to pay that interest for this year, plus the principal, plus another year's interest 12 months from now? How is the farmer possibly going to pay double that interest 12 months from now?

This government didn't address that problem. They didn't come up with something more in that Bill that would address the problems that are really facing farmers, would address what's happening in agriculture, and put some money into the hands of farmers so they could go make their payment on machinery they may have. They could possibly go and pay the bank a certain amount.

But the minister says that what this Bill is going to do is give the farmers an opportunity to go and restructure their financial situations somehow. Well, Mr. Speaker, when the bank is on the verge of foreclosing, one would have to say that this didn't happen overnight as I mentioned before. The bank was talking with that farmer for the last two years. They were looking at ways to restructure his financial situation. And they arrived at the conclusion that there really was no way to do it without additional cash coming into the hands of that farmer. And this is why they are prepared to proceed with foreclosure.

So, Mr. Speaker, this Bill will do nothing for the farmer. It will do nothing for the farmer. All it's going to do is just delay the inevitable. And there isn't one single farmer that is in trouble with the bank today that will have any opportunity to restructure his loan with the bank because it's past that point now.

What we need is cash. We need money in the hands of the farmer. We need it either through a payment of some sort — and we have made some suggestions in the amendment, Mr. Speaker; we have made some suggestions — or he needs it in a interest subsidy. And they are prepared to provide all kinds of subsidies and royalties for the large companies, Mr. Speaker. Why can't they find a few million for the farmers and at least help them out with the interest?

Most farmers today that have the loans that are putting them in trouble now would be able to survive, would be able to make their payments and make their interest payments, their principal

payments, if the interest rate was at a reasonable figure. Seven per cent is one that was mentioned. And if it was 7 per cent, Mr. Speaker, instead of 18 per cent, I know there are a good number of farmers in my constituency that wouldn't be facing the kind of problems they're facing today.

And if this government was really interested in helping, they would go out there and they would say to the farmers, we are going to write down that interest. We will give you an interest rate that is going to help you, that is going to keep you on that farm and will help you meet your obligations financially.

But, Mr. Speaker, a Bill, what's been forwarded here today, really does no good because while it presumably prevents foreclosure on the farm for 13 months . . .

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Maybe.

**MR. LUSNEY:** — . . . it really doesn't help, and as my colleague says, maybe. It really doesn't help the farmer that's going to have his equipment repossessed. It's not going to help the farmer that's going to have his livestock repossessed. It's not going to help the farmer that's going to have some of his grain seized. And that's happened. The government itself has done that. The banks have done that. It isn't going to help any of those farmers, Mr. Speaker. What we need is something that is going to help those farmers, that is going to help them continue farming.

One can look at some of the charts and some of the news articles that come out, Mr. Speaker, and it says, "Farm Figures Paint a Grim Picture," and it shows you just what interest rate — the one item that is hurting the farmers, the interest rate — what it is doing to farmers, and what they would need from the bushel of wheat in order to be able to continue operating and to have an operation that would, at least, pay the cost of production. And, Mr. Speaker, what they would need for that bushel of grain, in order to break even and make a little bit of money, is \$6 a bushel. But, Mr. Speaker, we don't hear this government saying that we should be getting more for our grain, and get it now.

The federal member for Yorkton-Melville has introduced a parity Bill that would go in this direction, that would help somewhat. But what did the Liberal government do previously? They let that Bill die on the order paper. And he's going to introduce that Bill again, Mr. Speaker.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — And it will die again.

**MS. LUSNEY:** — And as one of the members opposite says, from the government side, that Bill will die again. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that indicates just what the government really thinks of the farmer and of agriculture. That's what this government thinks of the farmers and of agriculture. They say that a Bill like the parity Bill, or any Bill that would help farmers, should die on the order paper, and it should never be implemented, because that's what the banks are telling them. "Don't help the farmers; we want their land, and we're going to get it."

Mr. Speaker, an article here that I'm going to read — and my colleague quoted some portions of it — and it says, and to continue from the 80 per cent that the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg was talking about, in that same article it says that:

Maybe things sound tough, but perhaps all rural people don't have to be farmers, or at minimum, there might be a less expensive means of maintaining a rural population.

Mr. Speaker, that is what a member of this government has said in the past. He has also said that:

Society may not wish to support higher food prices or producer security so that the non-productive 80 per cent of the farm population can live in the country at a profit.

Mr. Speaker, that is what this article says. And who, Mr. Speaker, wrote this article? Well, it is none other than a former professor, an economist, and now Premier of this province. Eighty per cent of the farmers are non-productive and shouldn't expect to live in the country a profit. Mr. Speaker, that is what the Premier of this province believes. And because the Premier of this province believes that, that is the direction that this government is following.

They want to get rid of 80 per cent of the farmers of Saskatchewan. If they didn't want to do that, Mr. Speaker, they would have brought in a Bill that would have saved those farmers. And it's not because they aren't productive. The majority of these farmers have been on that land for years and years, generation after generation, and they certainly did to a good job. They produced food. They fed their families. They fed everyone in this country, and they produced enough food to even feed people in other countries. That is the kind of farmers we have in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

But yet it came to a point where the farmer is financially strapped, not because he was inefficient and non-productive as the Premier of this province once said, but because of circumstances beyond their control, because of high interest rates which they couldn't set, high equipment costs, high fuel costs which both the Liberal and Conservative governments encouraged, and low cost for the product that the farmer produced.

And again, Mr. Speaker, because the farmer had no control over either end, he winds up in a situation he's in today. And this government doesn't do anything about it. They bring in a Bill that is actually going to do nothing for the farmer at all. It may give some of them a few months, and then eventually this government, along with the banks, are going to realize what they have been talking about all along, that they want to get rid of the majority of the farmers in this province and only save a few of those viable ones that they think are viable and should continue to farm.

And what's going to happen to all the other farmers, Mr. Speaker? Are we saying that those farmers should go to the city on welfare? Are they prepared to pay welfare for people that are now making a living for themselves, for their families, and yet able to feed others in this country? Are they saying that those people should go on welfare now?

Mr. Speaker, I think it's a shame that any government would allow something like this to happen. And they are hoping that somehow somebody else is going to bail the farmers out, at least some of the farmers. And Otto Lang said in an article, that there is going to be a billion dollar payment from the grain stabilization fund, and I suppose the Minister of Agriculture is hoping that somehow that billion dollars of the farmers' money will be turned back to them and that they won't bother the minister any more.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I certainly hope that the billion dollars does come back for the farmers, because they were investing into that fund just to protect themselves against this kind of situation. They invested in that fund because they knew that if things got tough, that if they had crop failures — and this year there is a severe case in Saskatchewan. We've had crop failures in the South because of drought. We've had bad crops in the north-eastern part of this province because of excessive rainfall. And those farmers now should be getting that money that they have been putting into the fund so that they can continue to operate — again, not because they were poor managers, but because of something they couldn't control.

Yet neither the Liberal government nor the Tory government now seems to be rushing to get this money back to the farmers. They are sitting on it and they are saying, "We want 80 per cent of you off them farms; we want 80 per cent of you off the farms, so we're going to hold back long enough until the majority of you are gone, and then we'll make a pay-out to those that are left."

(1615)

That, Mr. Speaker, is what this government is hoping for, because it certainly isn't doing anything to prevent that from happening. And I would only hope this government will come to its senses and realize that the problem is very serious, that it is going to hurt many farm families. And it is going to hurt not only farmers, it is going to hurt business people, small-business people in the rural communities; it is going to hurt the industry that we have in this province; it is going to hurt a lot of people, Mr. Speaker. And I would only hope that the Minister of Agriculture and the Premier of this province would realize how serious and how severe the situation is, and they would pass the amendments that we have proposed, implement them into their Bill, and make this a Bill that is going to help farmers and is going to keep agriculture strong and viable.

. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture seems to think that this doesn't make sense. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it does make sense. I think it makes sense because if we don't help the farmers, we are going to have very few farmers left in this province. And it is time that someone did make sense, and it certainly should be time that this government made some sense and put forward a Bill that is going to help farmers, not put forward a Bill like they did that is really going to do nothing for agriculture.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would only hope that the Minister of Agriculture would be serious for a short while, be reasonable, be realistic, and exercise or at least show a little bit of compassion for a very important industry in this province and move on the amendments that we have proposed, move on the amendments that we have proposed. I think then we could say, or at least I would certainly be prepared to say, that the minister did something good, did something that would help agriculture.

But if they don't, Mr. Speaker, one can only say that this government is not interested in agriculture, is not interested in what happens to the biggest industry in this province. Its interest is with the banks and with the people that control the money, and to in the people that do the work. That, Mr. Speaker, is what this government will be telling us if they don't move on these amendments.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can only say in conclusion that if they take the course that they are on now, certainly the farmers of this province are going to remember that, and many of them I'm sure, are going to remember that now, because it's almost too late to help them. But if this government puts some effort into it, maybe they would say that we do have a government that is worthy of holding 56 seats. But in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, we certainly do not have a government where that is worthy of holding 56 seats in a province like Saskatchewan, a province of hard-working people and a province of people that don't want to go on welfare but want to continue working. Thank you.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. JOHNSON:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to enter into the debate on Bill 1 today. As a member for Saltcoats, I'm proud to stand here on behalf of the farmers. I've sat here for about two and a half years listening to some of the rhetoric that comes out of the opposition and I still have yet to understand, going into my third year, what they're all about.

Before I start, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to go on record in congratulating the Minister of Agriculture in his great, fine talent of finding the middle of the road with Bill 1.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. JOHNSON:** — The middle of the road approach in a very, very serious problem. The member from Pelly that has just spoken in this House bays and says that farmers need money. Well I'm sure they do. I don't deny it. I'm a farmer and I need money. But so does small business, my friends.

. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg seems to think that debt moratorium would be the whole answer to all these problems. And he stands up in this House saying continually that we've got to save the large machine companies because that seems to be all he-s hung up on. He manages, in his total Bill, of Bill 30 to indicate a total debt moratorium, and to me and to us, it would mean a total bankruptcy to all the small businesses out there. I think any farmer in this country would agree with me that he has borrowed money, or went into debt, in good faith. And we've had some problems in the past few years. But the last year that we've just been through have brought in some very serious problems with the drought that has just passed.

The member from Pelly must never have borrowed money before because, obviously, he says that, "Just because I got into trouble, I shouldn't have to pay the debt." Well I think there's a whole lot of small-business people out there who I represent, and they're thinking the same thing. They're thinking that if the farmer doesn't get any money, then I'm absolutely going to be broke. So I would just say that this Bill was going to give some much needed breathing room where people can get together, the lenders and the banks, and I'll be getting into that as I get on into my address.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the agriculture critic for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg uses their everyday scare tactics as they usually do in this House. And I really question their approach of using scare tactics and negatives rather than positives in this House, and outside the House. And they continue to preach gloom and doom, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The way the opposition goes on in question period and in the House in their debates would sometimes lead you to believe that they are questioning the intelligence of people. And I would suggest that there's people out there that watch you on television and that they're gauging you, and you'll find out.

They call for another election. Well, if we had another election in the next while, I think they would be all gone.

The people out in the farm sector, I think . . . I believe, that this Bill No. 1 is going to give the lenders and the farmers and the government, time to look at where we've been and where we're going. I think the bankers and the lenders have to sit down with their farmer friends, in consultation, and talk about some sensible refinancing. So all I say to them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is: boys, you better get at it and get with it and get your house in order, because it's that time of the year.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to indicate to you that I've sat here for a couple of years, going on three, and I don't hear nothing positive coming out of the opposition. Nothing positive. It don't matter what we come up with, or how many millions of dollars we put into the sector — business sector and farming sector — they've always got a negative to whatever is positive. They have a terrible ability to mixing politics with common sense, and that would be their biggest problem, I would suggest.

Mr. Speaker, showing some of the irresponsibility that we do get out of the opposition, the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg says the government should simply pay out \$30 an acre to all the farmers in Saskatchewan. Well on a quick calculation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that come into . . . They can buy these Japanese calculators that they work real well, and if they put that time \$30 an acre, it comes into something like \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion. And all I say to them is: come on guys, let's be realistic.

The Leader of the Opposition, about two weeks ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or a week ago, made some reference to the need for a western grain stabilization payment to be triggered out. Well I would like to inform him that I, being a farmer out of Spy Hill, Saskatchewan, I've already, in fact,

got two payments out of the western grain stabilization already this year. I don't know where he gets his material, or who does his research for him, but I would suggest that maybe he should look for a new one.

The federal minister has also indicated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the formula is being changed, in fact, and he indicates — the new federal minister — indicates that there's going to be a large payment made out in the spring of 1985, so that will be some cash in the farmers' pockets.

There's another tactic the opposition tries to keep on insisting in this House, is that this government has not helped farmers in any way, shape, or form since 1982 or, in fact, before that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'd like to just read into the record some of the things that we have done.

Number one, Mr. Deputy Speaker, counselling and assistance for farmers — that you well know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the banks simply chose not to participate in. The banks simply never participated in any form. The dug their heels in on the program and they wouldn't participate with the government on this. And counselling assistance was brought in last spring, as you well know. And maybe had the banks had some compassion then and wanted to go along with the program . . . And the opposition have said in this House that it was a total failure, and I don't think it was a total failure, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think it was a well thought out counselling and assistance program. But if the banks don't want to participate with the guarantee that they had, as rich as it was, I don't reckon that they would. I would suppose that that's why we ended up in this problem that we are today. And maybe, had they went along with the counselling and assistance program of last spring, we may not have been in this position debating Bill No. 1 in this House today.

Agricultural Credit Corporation. Many advancements: 3,900 farmers enjoying much more benefits than were every enjoyed under the old FarmStart program.

Farm purchase program. Very, very, very, very successful program that's been copied by many provinces throughout Canada and, in fact, some of the United States people across the border, our American friends, have interest in the farm purchase program and have been up here trying to find out how it works. And we have 3,500 young farmers and beginning farmers in the province of Saskatchewan enjoying the low rate of 8 per cent for five years and 12 per cent for the next five years.

A very, very successful program, I'll say again, Mr. Speaker, just so that the opposition will hear — 3,500 clients, and those figures would be probably updated by now.

Home quarter tax rebate — \$14 million; Crown land sale policy; irrigation assistance; education tax removal; fuel tax — provincial tax removed on fuel tax. And I could go on. I've got 20 or 30 of them, Mr. Speaker.

I guess the one program that we recognize now, of late, would be the drought program that probably covers three-quarters of the province. And I think I have some figures around here that I'll probably bring up later on the drought program and what's been paid out.

Let's go back to . . . If they want to throw blame to government sand to other people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really believe had the NDP addressed the issue back when they should have, back in 1980-81, even '79, when interest rates started to rise 18 and 19 per cent, the farmers probably wouldn't have been in the box that they find themselves in today.

(1630)

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what did they do then? they done absolutely nothing. No, Mr. Speaker, they spent money like a bunch of drunken sailors. They went into the land buying



business that eroded the price of land in this province something like we've never seen before, and we're suffering from that very program right today in 1984.

They were buying used holes in the ground, potash mines, all over the country; uranium business, \$600 million; they were busy advertising the family of Crown corporations. Mr. Speaker, it's easy to understand how farming had got into this bind.

in 1979 and '80, the input costs were rising rapidly and the interest rates were rising rapidly. Farmers started to work on a little smaller profit margin. The government of the day chose to do nothing. They were busy out there in their little world of sending out social welfare cheques, and buying mines and buying land. And now we find ourselves in the 1984 drought that just happened to have been the straw that broke the camel's back. We now hear them hollering, "Don't pay your debts any more." That's what their Bill says. Don't pay their debts any more.

I really can't see how you can solve your problems by not paying your debts. like I say, I think most farmers out there are responsible people and want to pay their debts. And when they made them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they fully intended to in fact pay their debts.

Let me go on to talk about some cash flow for next spring. Hard, cold cash, I hear the opposition saying. Well, the changes in the formula in the western grain stabilization will, in fact, put large, large payments in the farmers' pockets next spring before seeding. Cash is already coming in, as you well know, from the lower fuel tax increases that weren't imposed on farmers in the West since the new federal government got into power in Ottawa. Cash will be coming from the final payment on grain this fall, and it's been rumoured around that some 60 to 20 cents a bushel is going to be paid on the final payment.

And number four, I would congratulate the minister of crop insurance for his positive change in crops insurance, and for his quick pay-out in 1984. I see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we must have hit a nerve over there, and I would like to think of our Bill No. 1 as being The Farm Land Security Act, and I think we should talk about that in that context. We shouldn't even be talking about debt moratorium, because when you talk about debt moratorium you get everybody excited, and I think that's why the banks are acting irresponsible because they know what debt moratoriums can really do. They've been through them before.

I think The Land Security Act is just a much needed breathing room for farmers and bankers to get together and get some refinancing done; and given that all the things happen if the cash inflow for next spring comes true to form, then I'm sure that we're going to get out of this dilemma that we find ourselves in.

I heard some of the opposition members using the names of John Murphy today, Mr. Royal Bank, agricultural. Last summer I was at the summer fair talking to a bunch of the Holstein people down at the barns. We were discussing the situation on drought. And the same John Murphy chose to make the statement in front of a bunch of cattle people that nobody should help the farmers. "There isn't any room for help on the farmers. Let them go broke. They're big boys." That's what John Murphy has said. That's what the Royal Bank is saying. He says, "You can't prevent all the farmers from going broke. They made their bed, let them sleep in it." And that was his attitude in July, and I don't think it's changed all since.

Mr. Speaker, I think the lending institutions have chose not to co-operate with us when we introduced the counselling assistance program. I think they could have really helped had they walked into that program with some common sense and some compassion. But they said the guarantees weren't near rich enough for them. But on the other hand, I keep on reading in the papers where foreign countries, they take a bath for the . . . something to the tune of writing off their losses at 50, 60, 70, 80, and even to 100 per cent. I think they sold one place in Brazil the other day for about 32 cents. I don't know whether that was in Canadian money or American money or what it was.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, I think they're holding this up right now, in this day, with headlines like this, Mr. Speaker, in today's paper. The Regina *Leader-Post* says, "Royal Bank Put New Farm Mortgages On Hold in Saskatchewan." I think that irresponsible of the banks. I think the banks are in there to lend money at a profit. And I think once the Bill gets passed and through the House, I think we'll find that the banks will be on side and, in fact, back in the money market where they should be.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. JOHNSON:** — Let me make another observation about lenders. Again, back to the counselling and assistance program. They, like I said before, Mr. Speaker, they dug their heels in; they wouldn't co-operate in the program. I hear the NDP saying that the program was no good. Yet, Mr. Speaker, I've had visits with people that were turned down by the program, never got any advance, and they tell me in my office here in the legislature that they enjoyed and appreciated the counselling that they got — a much-needed counselling. And I think that as we go into this Bill and as the Bill proceeds out there, we'll see a whole lot more of counselling of farmers. And I think that they maybe need that.

I think they need to get a greater understanding. They need to get a greater understanding of each other. I think the banks . . . The lenders and the farmers need to get together and discuss their problems on a more solid ground, if I may say. If they choose not to address the problem, and not advance credit to farmers, well, I would think that it's about the most childish act I've seen.

Now, I would like to read for a minute, Mr. Speaker, if I may, into the record again something that our Premier read in this House the other day, some of the things that we've done to date, Mr. Speaker, that is hard, cold cash — hard, cold cash that went into the farm community: \$13 million at the \$48 a head, half of our share of the province; 1.5 million for moving cattle to pasture; 0.5 million for well construction, new wells and new water for the province; \$7.5 million hard cash for the north-eastern farmers that were flooded out, and more to come for those fellows from the federal government, I understand; some \$24 million in Farm Purchase Program; again \$35 million in natural gas distribution; \$69 million dollars, Mr. Speaker, into the gas tax for roads; \$7.5 million counselling and assistance program, and I think that's risen somewhat; for something like a total of \$150 million that's went into the farm sector.

And again the NDP, we hear them saying, Mr. Speaker, "You do nothing for farmers." Well, here's some more hard, cold cash.

I would like to touch for a minute on the recent sale to Bulgaria, and also that will help a lot of farmers in the province of Saskatchewan. Something over another million dollars went into the farm community out of that sale. And I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, the member for Souris-Cannington, for his very apt way of selling, not 50 head like originally planned, to the Bulgarians, but, in fact, having an excellent sale of 430. And again the NDP say we do nothing.

I would like to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward myself to going on a trip to Bulgaria in the next few days, and to see how the cattle are adapting to that country over there, and promoting more sales, more sales and bigger sales to our Bulgarian friends.

I'm really appalled, Mr. Speaker, at the banks' approach to this Bill No. 1. The attitude they've taken — and I've already showed you the headlines in today's paper, but there is a cutting out of the same paper, and it comes out of the Winnipeg Canadian Press, and the report says, Mr. Speaker, the report says, "Banks Tough on Small Business."

Winnipeg (CP) — Many small businesses in the four western provinces are getting

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short shrifted by their bankers, and the problem has gotten worse during the recession, says the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses in Winnipeg today.

I'd also like to just take a moment in a paper that I have here. The banks were prepared, Mr. Speaker, to lend money to farmers in good times. When cash flow problems develop and crop failures occur, banks need to be responsible and responsive to the need of farmers, and foreclosures are not the answer. The banks' action of holding Saskatchewan up for . . . are, in fact, holding Saskatchewan farmers up for ransom.

They benefit tremendously of doing business with Saskatchewan farmers, and they have in the past, and they will in the future. Agriculture is a good investment, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Mr. Speaker, if the bank . . . Are they telling us that . . . I seem to be having a problem with the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg baying at the moon. If I may, Mr. Speaker, finish the phrase: is the bank saying that they would trade us for a . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, please. Order! There are so many people visiting in the Chamber that it is almost impossible to hear, and I would ask for decorum.

**MR. JOHNSON:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll start again on the last sentence. Is the bank saying that they would trade us off for a couple of Mexicos or another Canadair? Or how about Brazil or South America?

I would like to just close on a warning note to my friends in the opposition, to Snow White and the seven dwarfs: the people of Saskatchewan are gauging you on your actions in this House. And by some of the phone calls that I'm getting, you're not doing all that hot out there. your position on the dairy Bill last summer left something to be desired, and number two, your position on The Farm Land Security Act and your position on saving the large machinery companies.

I'd just like to close this off a little bit, Mr. Speaker, by saying that we all know the problem well. We need the solution. We need co-operation, I think, between the lenders and the farmers and the government, and we'll all come out the winner.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I would just close by saying maybe a little bit of failure is the price we have to pay for success in this country. So, Mr. Speaker, with that I would just saying in closing that I will be supporting the Bill. Thank you.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to express my appreciation to the Minister of Agriculture for introducing this Bill which we are debating today, An Act respecting the Security of Farm Land in Saskatchewan.

The Farm Land Security Act, I believe is a Bill that will, in fact, offer a very rational common sense approach as a first step towards resolving the many problems that exist in our agricultural sector today in the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize when I say a common sense, rational approach. I think, Mr. Speaker — in fact, I don't think, I know — that it's paramount that that approach be taken by government, not just on this Bill, an agricultural Bill, but in all of the proceedings of this House, that all members act responsible and are not radical.

(1645)

What appalls me, Mr. Speaker, and has never cased to appal me, has been the NDP in opposition with the absolutely ludicrous ideas that they throw out in debate. They throw no

positive solutions out to a government that would welcome positive solutions coming from either the sole Liberal member in the House, who would take but a month and a day to conjure up one idea, the eight members in the NDP opposition, who have rambled here relentlessly all day long and have not struck up one positive solution that we could include, that we could included in this Bill. Not one thing, Mr. Speaker. And of course, Mr. Speaker . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, please.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just about to say that either the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg or the one Liberal member in the legislature need not concern themselves. My voice is larger than both of your combined.

I want to remind, Mr. Speaker, the House and the people of Saskatchewan that this government truly represent agriculture. For any of you that have every taken a look at the Assembly map that's in your desks, you will find that in this caucus we have 20 members that are farm members — 20 — and only five lawyers. And I don't say that with any degree of malice towards lawyers. But when you consider the NDP in opposition and look at the figures there, about 37.5 per cent of their caucus are lawyers, and there's only three farmers — and only three farmers. Think of the statistics: 37.5 per cent of the caucus are lawyers, and only three farmers over there. So I would say, Mr. Speaker, that this government on this side of the House has a fairly good representation of farmers, and we should be able to put together some pretty good legislation. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, we have with this legislation. We truly represent agriculture.

And I'm going to get, Mr. Speaker, very quickly to what the critic for the agricultural department, the hon. member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, wants us to do with that legislation, and I'm going to come to that. But before I do, Mr. Speaker, before I do, I want to draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, and the members of this House, some evidence. I want to show up some evidence here that will support the statement that I made earlier that we're not getting common sense and rational ideas from the NDP. We're not getting any ideas from the Liberals, but, in any event, we're looking for those and they haven't come yet.

And I've taken a look at some of the NDP resolutions. Now, if I were an NDP member in the House, Heaven forbid, I would be so embarrassed I don't know who could drag me into this Assembly.

Now, take a look. Let's just take a look, Mr. Speaker, at some of those resolutions. When I look at this one, and I see at the bottom, I see at the bottom, Mr. Speaker, it says, carried . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Now you want to hear your own resolution, all right? It says, carried. The NDP want to limit farm size introduced by a creative use of the tax system. They want to, by way of a creative use of the tax system, limit farm size, limit farm size in a time when farms are having difficulties, needing to expand their operations, expand production. And what do the NDP want to do? Limit the farm size. That's what you want to do. And that's in your resolutions. And that's not something that was just debated, but was carried. That was carried.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't say that they totally disagree with some of our policies as it relates to our direction in agriculture, but it says, Mr. Speaker, on land tenure, Mr. Speaker, it says here that the NDP support the right of farmers to own their own land, also to have security of tenure in situations of lease or purchase. That was carried, and that happens to be one of our policies.

Now then, your membership obviously agree with us. The member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg laughs. He holds his hands over his face, and that's a good idea;; you look better that way. But in any event, it's in your resolutions. And your party agrees with this government, but you members, supposedly representing your own party, do not.

What else does it say? Legislate a farm protection Act to place a limited moratorium on foreclosures or seizures. That is carried by the NDP at their resolution — carried, a limited

moratorium on farm land seizures. It's there in black and white.

Then, Mr. Speaker, when they have, through their own party, their own resolutions agreed with exactly, exactly what this legislation does, exactly what this legislation does, they stand here in the House and oppose it. So, Mr. Speaker, I just fail to understand how the NDP can be so irresponsible in the House . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Now, the Liberal member is . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order. Order, please. Order, please.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't mean to help the members in opposition, but . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, please. I had just called for order and before I'm back on my chair I hear the same people hollering again. And I am going to ask for decorum.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your ruling. And I guess I would just say that the members in opposition should learn that it only gives me breathing room and more time to roam every time you're talking. So every time I get sat down . . .

Now what else, Mr. Speaker? I'm trying to indicate to this House that the NDP are radical, they are irresponsible, they do not understand the common sense responsible approach put forth by this government in this legislation.

And what else does it say? It says here that:

The provincial government should implement an inheritance tax to discourage the maintenance of large units, the tax to be based on value of land assessment for beneficiary with a possibility of tax being non-applicable if value of beneficiary is below prescribed limits. (Imagine.) Government programs should be directed toward creating greater equity between farmers. And the provincial government and the SARM should investigate the possibility of a progressive property tax for municipal purposes based on farm size and productivity.

On farm size and productivity. When they need to expand their operations and expand productivity to meet the problems that they're being faced with, the cost-price squeeze, you want to limit it. And that's in your resolution.

And not only that, Mr. Speaker, but my seat-mate, the member for Shellbrook, indicated in the House himself in the throne speech, and you can read it for yourself on page 222, and the member for Shellbrook says, and I'll quote:

I'll just stop there for a moment. I'd like to read one of the resolutions that was passed at the '84 NDP convention. "The provincial government and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities should legislate the possibility of a progressive property tax for municipal purposes based on farm size and productivity."

You know, this means that if I produce more on my farm than my neighbour does, I should be taxed higher. I don't agree with that. An NDP resolution, 1985. It was carried. I feel we try to encourage our people in Saskatchewan to be productive, not non-productive. I believe we need production in this province, or rather in this part of the world, to keep up with the increases in costs.

That's why my member, sitting beside me here now, says, and he's absolutely right, Mr. Speaker.

Now the Leader of the Opposition is there and I'm glad to see him there. I always feel good

when he's in his seat when I'm speaking, notwithstanding the fact that he's looking through the classified ads right now. It could be he's looking to see if he found his name in the obituary column.

In any event, what are his statements, Mr. Speaker? Again, to show how radical and insane some ideas can be, he said:

Our position with respect to interest rates is that the first steps ought to be taken by the federal government.

Now that was the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, the member for Elphinstone, speaking on interest rates on April 2, 1980. Now is that why the NDP did absolutely nothing to protect the farmers of this province in the 1980s, early 1980s, prior to our becoming government in 1982, when interest rates were at 18 and 19 per cent? Is that why they did absolutely nothing? I suggest it is, because of the direction set down by the Leader of the Opposition.

Now then, Mr. Speaker, I want to now come very quickly to the most appalling suggestion ever put forth, in this session at least, by the critic of agriculture for the NDP, the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, he has offered up an amendment to our legislation, an amendment.

And what does it say? And I read directly, Mr. Speaker, from the amendment:

That Bill 1 be not now read a second time and that the subject matter of the Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, here is a member, and here is a member for a party that has been asking this government to come forth immediately on behalf of farmers, with some kind of relief. We have come forth with a Bill, Mr. Speaker, that will save farmers from losing their land — some 500, I'm told, immediately, who will be saved. And what does the NDP agriculture critic want to do? He wants to put the Bill on hold for six months or longer. He has switched positions 100 per cent. "Put it on hold," he says, "Put it on hold." He doesn't want to deal with the Bill now. He wants to refer it to a standing committee.

And how often have we heard the NDP in opposition criticize this government because we were talking the time to review a matter, set down a solid policy? Oh yes, review this, review that. What now is the agriculture critic saying for the NDP? Take the legislation and stick it on the back burner for six months and study it.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker . . . And the critic for agriculture keeps hollering, "Seven days, seven days," and I hope that's how long he's praying to live. Now, Mr. Speaker, seven days is how long the NDP intend to hold this legislation up just in debate in this House, let alone how long it would take to be discussed in the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

And one has to ask the NDP: when did you people, in 11 years of administration, ever put anything into the Standing Committee on Agriculture? Never. Not once. And you ask us to put this into the Standing Committee on Agriculture. You'd do that, Mr. Member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, because you haven't done your homework; your party hasn't done your homework. This government has. The Progressive Conservative has done its homework. We have talked to the farmers.

What I can't understand . . . Now I could understand, Mr. Speaker, an NDP position coming from the sole member of the Liberal Party in this House. I can understand that: backing the bankers, backing the multinational machine companies, backing the multinational oil companies — those

people that they have, like the former premier of this province, on Husky Oil board of directors — backing those people. I can appreciate that coming from the member from Regina North West, the one Liberal member, but not coming from the NDP. They have traditionally been a party that was opposed to multinationals, but not any more.

So here we have, Mr. Speaker, in concluding, here we have a legislation, a piece of legislation that was drafted very responsibly by the Minister of Agriculture, by discussion with farmers, wherein he has . . . If anyone wants to read, and I know that the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg used the same print as I did: "Pool Wants Interest Rates Cut." It's the *Leader-Post*, Saturday, November 24. And that they're asking for, what the Pool are asking for, is exactly what that Bill is going to do — exactly. And the quotes are there. And the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg again laughs and he puts his hands over his face. If you'd just keep them there.

In any event, you know, headlines: "Throne Speech Offers Hope for Farmers." Way down in the *Globe and Mail*, "Devine Pledges Action on Jobs, Farm Security." All of those things have been accomplished in the legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know one could go on and on. But to conclude, I will just say this: that member has been asking for this government to put cold, hard cash up front in the farmers' pockets or "cash on the dash," as the saying was once mentioned in the House — cash on the dash.

I want to remind, Mr. Speaker, in my final comments, that the Agriculture budget under this administration is some 40 per cent higher than it was under the NDP administration — 40 per cent higher. And as our Premier has said many times, 150 million new money.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, please. Being 5 o'clock this House now stands adjourned until 2 p.m. tomorrow.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:01 p.m.