

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**June 11, 1985**

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise, pursuant to Rule 11, to present a petition signed by . . . and it may well be that I'm one step late.

Mr. Speaker, I rise, pursuant to Rule 11, to present a petition signed by several hundred citizens of Regina, respecting the construction by the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation of a housing and community centre complex situated at Pasqua Street and 5th Avenue in Regina.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Non-Controversial Bills**

**Bill NO. 107 — An Act to amend The Northern Municipalities Act (No. 2)**

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Controversial Bills, I wish to present the 11th report of the said committee, which is as follows:

As chairman of the Non-Controversial Bills Committee, I wish to report Bill No. 107, An Act to amend The Northern Municipalities Act, as being non-controversial.

**HON. MR. MCLEOD:** — Mr. Speaker, I move second reading and consideration in committee of the whole on the said Bill be waived.

Motion agreed to.

**HON. MR. MCLEOD:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 107 be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a third time.

**Bill No. 108 — An Act to repeal The Municipal Public Works Act**

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Non-Controversial Bills Committee, I wish to report Bill No. 108, An Act to amend The Municipal Public Works Act as being non-controversial.

**HON. MR. MCLEOD:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration in committee of the whole on Bill No. 108 be waived.

Motion agreed to.

**HON. MR. MCLEOD:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 108 be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a third time.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, before moving the next Bill,

I suspect this will be the last time the Non-Controversial Bills Committee will meet. I want to take this opportunity to thank members of the committee who attended, and the Clerk who assisted us in our deliberations.

I think the committee functioned well this year, saved time of the Assembly for matters of controversy, and I suspect many of the Bills that were dealt with in committee were dealt with more thoroughly there than would have been here. So I wanted to thank the Clerk and the committee members before I sat down.

### **Bill No. 110 — An Act to amend The University of Saskatchewan Act**

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Having said that, I wish to report Bill No. 110, An Act to amend The University of Saskatchewan Act as being non-controversial.

**HON. MR. MCLEOD:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that second reading and consideration in committee of the whole on Bill No. 110 be waived.

Motion agreed to.

**HON. MR. MCLEOD:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 110 be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a third time.

### **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time I wish to present the seventh report on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Mr. Speaker, before actually presenting the report I want to address a few comments to the committee and to its report. The report this year will be in a slightly different form. We have, in previous years, just tabled minutes, if that. This year we're going to present a report which will be something that members can keep; take home. You'll be happy to know that the pictures of the committee members are in it. It makes it much more attractive.

In addition, I want to thank the committee members and the Clerk. With one exception, the attendance of members at the committee was exceptional. The members may judge for themselves whether or not a member who sits alone as one member of a caucus can attend everything. But for the members of the government and opposition caucus, the attendance was exceptional. Most members attended all but two or three committee meetings. Those absences were mostly because of illness. So I do want to commend all members on their attendance.

All members took part in the deliberations of the committee. If you hadn't have seen their names, one wouldn't know which side of the House they sat on. All members actively questioned witnesses and took an active part in it. Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank our Clerk, again, who worked actively and energetically with us.

Just a few comments about the report itself. We did not . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I would say to the member from Rosthern that I spoke to the House Leader about the matter, the acting House Leader or someone who felt themselves in some authority over there. Who knows these who's in charge? But I spoke to someone who felt that they had some authority over there, and we were advised not to proceed . . . we were advised to proceed with it now.

The committee did not spend a great deal of time this year on comprehensive auditing. As members will know, the comprehensive auditing system is a system whereby the staff in the Provincial Auditor's office also take a responsibility for ensuring the economy, effectiveness, and efficiency

with which government departments discharge their duties. As it now stands, it is within the ambit of the committee to question witnesses with respect to the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness with which the departments spend their money.

It is not, however, within the ambit of responsibility of the Provincial Auditor to assist us with that, and there's very little logic to that. We believe that the Provincial Auditor . . . I, at least, believe the Provincial Auditor ought to have that responsibility. While governments have not always liked everything that auditors have said when they're given that responsibility, I think the public appreciate that sort of a watchdog. I believe the public feel that the federal Auditor General, who has perhaps the clearest mandate with respect to comprehensive auditing, has performed useful service. I think the public think they're getting their money out of him, and more. And I continue to be an advocate of comprehensive auditing.

It seems, however, the matter is closed with the government caucus because we did not discuss it, and I have had no success in interesting people in pursuing it.

The method of operation which we have used perhaps deserves a comment. We have not always followed this. In the first and second year of our . . . In the first two sessions we tended to strike out a good deal on our own. In the last year we have adopted, I think, a more systematic approach. We begin with the Provincial Auditor's report, have discussed that, have called departments where there's no ready explanation involved, and have listened to their comments. Then, if there's time, we call departments which were not mentioned in Provincial Auditor but which individual members want to ask questions of.

This year, given the late start in the session and the difficulty in determining when the session's going to end — and this is not an easy guess this year — we did not . . . I think it's fair to say they're not calling any departments not mentioned by the Provincial Auditor.

I will not go over each and every one of the issues which arose out of the inquiry. A good many were technical. In a good many places, no real harm had resulted and no real harm could result from the matters complained about by the Provincial Auditor. And in that sense they were technical, and the committee normally extracted a promise from the departments to: go forth and sin no more," and left it at that.

Some issues were substantial — an issue of those with respect to investing for the pension funds. There were two issues here: one is whether or not the legislation permits what is done, and on that I think the committee got as many opinions as there were experts who had the nerve to venture an opinion.

The view of the committee, therefore, is that clearly when that kind of a situation exists with respect to something as important as pension funds, and there's a great deal of money involved, that should be clarified. And it was the recommendation of the committee that that should be clarified.

There is a disagreement with respect to the policy. I and, I believe, my colleague from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg believe that the investment of pension funds in some of those developments is not wise and is somewhat speculative. We believe that's not appropriate with respect to pension funds. But that was a policy issue which we think best debated in the Legislative Assembly and not in public accounts.

With those comments . . . There is one other matter, Mr. Speaker, which we are referring to yourself for determination. I won't go over it in detail, but it involves the right of the committee members, the responsibility of the committee members perhaps, to inquire into the affairs of Crown corporations.

I won't try to improve upon what the question is as raised in the report. The question simply is

whether or not we should be inquiring into the activities arising in the financial year of the last annual report, or whether the responsibility of the committee goes further than . . . is farther than that, and includes the balance of the government's fiscal year. We were not able to resolve the matter in committee, and we therefore followed the normal accepted procedure and refer it to Mr. Speaker, for determination. Mr. Speaker will find that in the report.

With that I'm going to take my seat. If there's any questions or issues arise out of comments made by other members of the committee, I'll deal with that in closing debate.

I should, I guess, as well, as a matter of formality, table, I suppose, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. I move its adoption, I gather. And I have, indeed, now that I've received sufficient prompts from the centre of the floor, I find that I have a motion all typed up . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, I will. I move seconded by the member from The Battlefords:

That the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts now be concurred in.

**MR. MORIN:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to add a few words in seconding the motion by the member from Regina Centre.

I'd like to say that this year the Public Accounts Committee, as in other years, I think functioned in an admirable way, and was very much a bit of a shining light in some of the other committees that go on as a result of the legislature's activity.

The chairman touched briefly on the non-partisan way that we approached things. And in fact, in my memory I can only remember or recall one discussion that sort of got off on partisan aspects, and that was when a member from the opposition and a member from our side argued at quite some length because they didn't realize that they agreed with each other.

The committee handled itself very well, and the chairman conducted things very well. And I'd like to commend him for that.

In terms of the operation of the Public Accounts Committee, I think what we found this year was that the departments themselves operated in a very, very exemplary manner. When items were pointed out to them by the Provincial Auditor, they cleaned them up quickly.

I gather in other years, and in times gone by, there would be a habitual recalling of departments who would fail to clean up their activities from one year to the other. I don't think that that really happened this year. I think the departments were well managed, in most cases, and certainly took the comments of the Provincial Auditor to heart.

There's been a fair amount of concern about the activity of the Public Accounts Committee and the value of the post-mortem that we do on government spending, and I'd just like to say that in view of the way the legislature operates, the review by members of the legislature, in a non-partisan way, of the spending of government is a critically important thing to make sure that we do uncover any problems that may be there, and any administrative problems that are there.

My final comment, I think, would be on the comment by the member from Regina Centre regarding the pension funds. In the past it's been a practice of the Department of Finance to be a member of a group who invested pension funds in similar operations around Canada. That group was not centred here in the province of Saskatchewan, yet it made investments in Toronto or Edmonton or Calgary or wherever, and took pension funds from the province of Saskatchewan, invested them in other areas.

Although it's not clear under the legislation — the legislation is fairly ambiguous on the point as

to the exact procedure that should be followed, and I would agree with the member from Regina Centre that we would hope that legislation would be cleaned up, and that the vagaries of it would be done away with.

It would be our position, from this side of the House, that a very appropriate use of Saskatchewan peoples' pension funds would be to help get projects — solid, secure projects — off the ground in the province of Saskatchewan. There are pension moneys here, should wherever possible be invested here, and that, in fact, we should be looking for more and more opportunities to do that.

So having said that, Mr. Speaker, I second the motion by the member for Regina Centre and would like to congratulate both the Clerk — our Clerk and Mr. James — the staff of the library, who were a great help to us, and all members of the committee who participated and took a great deal of interest in the spending of the public's money.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the report of the Public Accounts Committee. As both speakers before me have indicated, the committee functioned very well. The attendance was excellent from all members. The member from Saskatoon Fairview had a perfect attendance — didn't miss one of the meetings — and we had one member who probably didn't spend more than over an hour in the total time of the meetings sat.

But, Mr. Speaker, through the Public Accounts Committee, all through the different estimates and different departments, I was doing some research on one topic. And that topic was the position of the pension plans in Saskatchewan.

We have nine pension plans, Mr. Speaker — 19, sorry — 19 pension plans in the Government of Saskatchewan that are formula pensions. Of those 19, 14 of those pension funds do not have funds to cover their obligations. The amount of money short in those pension plans, without taking in the surpluses from the five that do have a surplus, is \$3,084,854,537. That is the actuary figures, and most of them were arrived in 1982 and '83. That means, over the next 30 or so years, that whoever is the Government of Saskatchewan will be required to put substantial funds into the treasury to pay out the pensions of those people who have earned them and have retired from the government.

That deficit of 3 billion plus is only the tip of the iceberg as far as the debt left by the NDP government when they left power in 1982. That debt will continue to grow because the money was not placed into an account that will grow revenue. Fortunately in the last years of the former government, the pension plans were changed to a cash purchase formula where both the government and the employees put their money into the account to gain revenue and interest and pay for the pensions of those who retire henceforth. But those prior, Mr. Speaker, will be a drain on the treasury of Saskatchewan for many, many years.

But if you ask yourself, Mr. Speaker, what happened to that money when it was originally placed in by the person who was getting a pension? They put their funds into the account. The former governments did not match. The former governments only took the amount of money required to pay out to those receiving pensions and put the rest of the money into general revenue of the government and spent it. Basically they spent the pension funds of the citizens who were paying in prior to '82, so prior to the new system, on the daily running of the Government of Saskatchewan.

It was a horrendous debt, Mr. Speaker. It was a debt that they were not honest and told the people about until a couple of years ago when we discovered in public accounts. For an example, Mr. Speaker, the teachers' pension plan — sorry, just a minute — the public service pension plan is \$1,612,810,000 short today. And of course, with the way the system works, that will go up. The teachers' plan is 1,347,720,000, and that continues on.

So, Mr. Speaker, the committee have got all the numbers down. We understand exactly where we are. It was a disappointment to get these numbers and to find how much debt they had left the people of Saskatchewan without telling us, and that the people of Saskatchewan will of course have to repay this each year to make sure the people get their pension.

Other than that, Mr. Speaker, as the two members prior spoke, the committee worked very well. Each member of the committee led off on a different topic and, no matter if they were government or opposition, looked at what the report called for and dug into and made the comments as required.

I think we should comment, though, that the Provincial Auditor, the comptroller, and the departments, when they were named in the auditor's report, immediately took steps to start to correct the problem they were cited for. And I think we must compliment them because they have all, as to the problems that arised last year, when we asked about them this year, we were informed by the comptroller that they were looked after and had been solved, or that they had just about had all the mechanism in to solve them. That is a compliment to the departments of government, Mr. Speaker.

On that note, I suggest that I will be supporting the report because it did cover all the departments.

**MR. ENGEL:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to add a word regarding the Public Accounts Committee and its actions this year, and I think something . . . I wouldn't have gotten up on my feet today if the government members would have made a remark about it, but I just wanted to say that here is one committee that has a chairman that worked overtime. He went more than the second mile to do his job.

And I think that's one reason why the committee functioned as well as it did, Mr. Speaker, because we had a chairman that knew what he was doing, led the debate, and supported the auditor, supported the auditor 100 per cent in decisions that the auditor made. And I think consequently we have a committee that is functioning properly, in spite of some of the notions by some of the members to try and rehash a problem that they lost on in the committee and think they can do it on the floor of the House; and I think he wasn't that successful today, as he wasn't in the committee.

But otherwise I would want to add a compliment to the chairman of the committee, who did an excellent job, and I think it was worth going to the committee and working with the member.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Who was the chairman?

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — It occurred to me, Mr. Speaker, that there might be some of my constituents who might be watching this and not know who the chairman is.

I want to make a couple of brief comments.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — As chairman.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — As chairman, I want to make a couple of brief comments. One of the useful things about this committee is that it . . . Not only do members serve the public, but it is a good education for members who sit on that committee. Members understand the administration of government . . . Members who have sat on the committee for a while have a

much better understanding of the public administration.

Some members, indeed have taken an interest in a particular subject, and that does describe the members from Rosthern, who has taken an interest in pensions. I do disagree with his comments to some extent. There's no question but what the problem is sizeable, and if it's not immediate it is very large.

I think, however, he may be overly generous in suggesting that the government has solved the problem. I think that's not true. I think the problem is yet to be solved. The problem is growing, and it will continue to grow until governments are prepared to bite the bullet.

With respect to past governments, of which the government of which I was a member is only one of three or four, the problems with pensions really did not become acute until the 1970s when pensions were hit with both increased inflation and increasing salary levels. And the moneys which had been put in in previous years were woefully inadequate to cover formula pension plans. So the huge deficits were not so much a question of neglect by previous governments, who can hardly be expected to have envisioned the economic conditions of the '70s, the inflation, and the very large salary increases of 15 to 20 per cent a year.

I want to make one other comment. I think the committee is a very useful committee. I sincerely believe that the public do not feel government is too large; they don't feel it's too small. They don't want larger or smaller government. What they want is more effective government. They want to ensure that their dollars are being efficiently spent.

The work of this committee, Mr. Speaker, does go some distance towards ensuring the tax dollars are efficiently and effectively spent. Its work, Mr. Speaker, would be enhanced considerably if we had more support staff. I want to make an argument now for more support staff. Members of the committee are busy. Most of us sit on a number of different committees, as well as preparing for work in the Assembly. Few of us, Mr. Speaker, have the time to put into the work of the committee that it really deserves. Our work would be considerably enhanced if we had some research staff. Some of the more enlightened legislatures have done this. The Government of Canada has some research staff. We, in effect, really don't have any, and it does lessen the effectiveness of our work.

I would urge members opposite to consider another year providing some research staff for this committee. One of the ideas that was advanced in previous years was to, in a sense, kill two birds with one stone. During the winter months we could pay some compensation to a university student who might be able to give us some assistance.

In the scheme of things it would not be expensive and would provide some, I suppose, academically superior university students with an opportunity to earn some money while they were at university, and would provide some valuable assistance to members of the committee. I thought it was an excellent idea. It has apparently been used in Ottawa. For a very small sum of money we could do something significant for outstanding students, and we could assist the work of the committee, and I would urge members opposite to consider that for another year.

Motion agreed to.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**HON. MR. CURRIE:** — Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of introducing to this Assembly some students from Judge Bryant School here in Regina. There are 21 grade 4 students who are presently seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. John von Osinski, and chaperon, Mrs. Sylvia Paluck.

I hope that you enjoy your tour of the Legislative Building today. I look forward to meeting with you immediately after question period for pictures in the rotunda and later for refreshments. I would ask the members of both sides of the House to join with me in extending a welcome to these young people.

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

**HON. MR. KLEIN:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to this Assembly, Albert Samuette. He's an exchange student from Zambia, who is participating in the student youth science program at Thom Collegiate, which is in my constituency of Regina North. And with him is his host, Barry Pittendrigh. They are seated in the west gallery.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, that when Albert is not studying, he has been a tourist and has seen much of our beautiful province, and one of the highlights, of course, is this visit to our legislature. I trust that they will find their visit with us this afternoon enjoyable and informative, and that they will enjoy the proceedings in our House today. I look forward to meeting with them after question period, and I ask all members to welcome them to our Assembly.

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

## **ORAL QUESTIONS**

### **Old Age Security Benefits**

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Premier, and it deals with the letter his finance minister sent to Ottawa yesterday, portions of which he read in the House. The letter says, in part, and I quote:

Perhaps consideration should be given to restructuring old age security benefits based on income, or amalgamating old age security and guaranteed income supplement into a plan based on income.

In other words, Mr. Premier, your government has recommended that Ottawa end universality of old age security pensions and apply an income test, or a means test, to decide who will, and who will not, get pensions.

Do you agree, Mr. Premier, that this is the clear position which your finance minister has expressed in his letter to the Mulroney government?

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Mr. Speaker, I didn't suggest at all that seniors be subjected to a means test. What was suggested in the letter was, in fact, that we recommend to the federal government that they look at all the options that are available to them, particularly with respect to high-income individuals. And I've expressed it here many times: that in my view high-income individuals should not receive the same benefit as people who are very, very low on fixed pensions.

Now we suggested to the federal government: look at all the options; please take everything into consideration when you're looking at a way to offset this or fix this. And we said we don't believe that low-income seniors should not be protected. They should have protection. By all means they should be protected. We have a little bit of difficulty when we start protecting high-income seniors.

And we said: look at all the programs, look at the incomes, and take a look at that and see what's possible to make sure that you cover the entire bailiwick, and that you protect low-income individuals, but you don't spend a great deal of money on high-income people — particularly those that are making a very adequate income — and that you're not going to be



sacrificing low-income people for high-income people.

And we asked them to take a look at it. And I think other jurisdictions, perhaps Quebec, has asked that they take a look at the same thing to make sure that low-income people are protected.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. And I asked you, Mr. Premier, a direct question: do you deny that the words in your finance minister's letter "based on income" — and that's the direct quote — suggest that some seniors will be getting their old age security pensions and others will not? And you virtually said that. Some people, who you described as high-income, will not.

Do you also agree that in the same letter you suggested that these income-based pensions would help Ottawa reduce the deficit? Do you then concede that your government is recommending an end to universality, and end to pensions going to all Canadians, and introducing a test depending on who has — in your words — a low income and —in your words — a high income?

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — What I am saying, and the Leader of the Opposition, I'm sure, is aware of this, that if the federal government is in a really difficult financial situation, and the country is, why should we continue to provide more and more tax dollars to wealthy individuals? I just don't see that it makes any sense.

I mean, it's one of the reasons that I've endorsed tax reform. And I have the Premier of Manitoba enforcing tax reform; the Premier of Alberta, and the Premier of British Columbia saying the tax system is not fair. If high-income people are one, not paying their share, and high-income people are getting more and more tax dollars, and high-income people are being rebated, and at the same time, low-income people need more, it seems to me a fair request that we say to the federal government — and my western colleagues agreed; the premiers of the four western provinces — let's take a look at the whole tax system and make sure that it's fair. Because most people today believe that it is not fair; that very, very high-income people are not paying their tax; very, very high-income people are getting rebates or getting tax dollars, and they don't need it. And they'll really admit, Mr. Speaker, that they don't need it.

So we're saying to the federal government: take a look at the whole system. Take a look at how we tax. Who's taxed? Is it fair? Is it simple enough? Is it overcomplicated? And particularly, and as the Minister of Finance pointed out, protect the low-income people. But to do that, you don't necessarily have to give a bunch of money to people that have all kinds of money on one hand and two, aren't even paying any income tax on the other. And I think it's a fair request, Mr. Speaker, to have the federal government look at the entire system to make sure that we're not just rebating the rich.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. You have conceded that you want to do away with universality, that you don't want to pay money to people with high-incomes, in your words. And that, of course, does away with universality.

What we're now anxious to find out is: where will you draw the line? Will you draw it, as you did yesterday in your resolution, with \$12,000 a year income for single people, and \$18,000 a year for families? Are those people who have the high incomes who you want to deprive of their full pension benefits so as to provide more support for lower-income people? Are those the people?

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, a fair income tax system taxes people, and it should tax people, the more income they have. And that's precisely what we're asking the federal government to look at. Look at a fair tax system.

And when you're allocating benefits to individuals, at least you can consider their income tax

that they pay, what kind of income that they're in. And if people are making all kinds of money, are we going to start taxing the middle income to subsidize the rich? I don't think that's fair. And we've asked them to look at that and say: please look at the income tax system; at least give it some consideration when you're designing your system of compensation for low-income people.

Let me make it very clear; we believe that the low-income seniors, particularly, should be protected. And we said that and we recommended it. We also recommended that our tax system needs to be reviewed, and I'm on record — the western premiers support me — that we have to make sure that the wealthy people pay their fair share, and for heaven sakes why should we ask the general taxpayer to subsidize the wealthy? We don't think that it's a good idea.

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Much as the Premier wants to talk about the income tax system, I want to talk about pensions, and that's what the question was about.

And I ask you again: with respect to your doing away with the universality of old age security pensions, are you drawing the line at \$12,000 for income for single people, and \$18,000 a year for couples, as your resolution did yesterday? Is that where you draw the line, saying that those people are wealthy, or where do you draw the line?

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Mr. Speaker, the lines are drawn with the progressive nature of income tax, and you know that. Any income tax system, if it's working fairly, taxes people with more and more income. That's the way it works.

What we have recommended to the federal government is: please take a look at all your programs. You've got a whole basket of programs. We suggested one other alternative that they could look at. And then we suggested some other things that they could consider to make sure that we are not taking good tax dollars and putting it to people and giving it to people that have a great deal of income. And it gradually goes up and up and up, and the wealthier they get, it would seem to me, that the less the public has to be concerned about giving them money.

And as you go up and up and up, I think the taxpayers and the seniors of this province would say it's more important that the money go to the low-income people, not to the wealthy. And we've said to the federal government, please give consideration to that. Okay?

I mean, in our province we gave very, very serious consideration to seniors, and you know that. We gave a 100 per cent increase in one year.

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

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — One supplementary, Mr. Speaker. That's an interesting argument against the flat tax, saying up and up and up goes the income tax.

But I don't want to talk about income tax or flat tax. There will be an opportunity for all of us to talk about that. I want to talk about the old age security pension and your proposal that universality be removed — that the rich do not get in, in your words.

And what I am asking you, Mr. Premier, is: who do you call rich? Are the rich today the same people who were the rich yesterday, who you were taking away indexing from — those with \$12,000 in income who are singles, and \$18,000 who were couples? That's who you said were rich yesterday. Are they still the same people today who will suffer this income test for their old age security pension?

And what I am asking you, Mr. Premier, is: who do you call rich? Are the rich today the same people who were rich yesterday, who you were taking away indexing from — those with \$12,000 in income who are singles, and \$18,000 who were couples? That's who you said were

rich yesterday. Are they still the same people today who will suffer this income test for their old age security pension?

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Mr. Speaker, that's what the Leader of the Opposition says that I said, and I didn't use those figures at all. And when the federal government looks at the entire package and the mechanism that is available for seniors, we could find as people become wealthier and wealthier, if they're got a pension of 75 or \$80,000, then why should we be subsidizing them? And as it gets up and up and up, well they've received less and less and less.

So we're saying to the federal government, please look at it all. I few look at income in pensions, we obviously have to look at the tax system. If we look at reform, maybe we can make it fairer. And Mr. Speaker, in my view the Canadian taxpayer wants to see tax reform so that we can have lower average taxes for middle-income people, and to make sure that wealthier people pay their fair share, and that low-income people get protected. And that's exactly what we've recommended.

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

**MR. SVIENSON:** — Just a short supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I think the Tories in this country have an interesting dichotomy they have to face. Recently Michael Wilson is on record as saying that government investment vehicles will be indexed so that investors in this country can receive a fair return on their government investment.

I would like to ask the Premier if he supports that dichotomy of the federal finance minister, and if that will happen in this province.

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what I support. I support the full income protection for low-income seniors in Saskatchewan and in Canada.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order. The member rose on a supplementary.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier, and it has to do with the resolution that was passed by your government yesterday that said in essence that a means test should be applied that would restrict any individual who is a senior over 12,000 to have de-indexing.

I wonder why, Mr. Premier, you would look at those seniors over \$12,000 a year as the place to make those kind of cut-backs, and why you wouldn't look at corporations, for example, in the federal budget, who were given \$2 billion. Why wouldn't they be looked at by your government as a legitimate area to raise the needed taxes to solve the deficit problem? Why would you try to take away \$1.6 billion from the senior citizens and give 2 billion to the oil companies? Why would you do that? Why is that the only area you look at?

(1445)

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted that the member raised the issue with respect to taxes on companies, particularly oil companies and the revenues that they contribute, and in terms of big oil companies that could be taxed. If the federal government follows our view, they'll never make so much money in the history of the country on taxing individuals, or taxing companies, and taxing railroads, and taxing oil companies.

The number one tax contributor today — above income tax, above sales tax, above anything else — is the oil patch; 25 to 30 per cent of our revenues coming in are from the oil industry. The energy business in this province is the big number one contributor — above income tax, sales tax, and the rest of it — and we're receiving revenue like we haven't received it before from the

oil business, which pays for schools and roads and hospitals, Mr. Speaker — all those things.

One other thing, big companies . . . how about railroads? How about railroads in the province of Saskatchewan? Mr. Speaker, we are getting 19 to \$20 million a year more out of the railroads than the previous administration got. That's what the Government of Saskatchewan is doing. That is a large increase. And do you know what happens, Mr. Speaker, that kind of money . . .

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

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Supplementary to the Premier. In a letter he quoted during question period yesterday, he talked about proposals that would be an alternative to the de-indexing, and basically talked about a means test that would have said indexing or de-indexing was all right for those over \$12,000. Would the Premier now table that letter that he was quoting from so that members of the opposition and the public of Saskatchewan would have a copy of that letter to debate and to see whether or not the public agree with the concept included in that letter?

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I read the letter. It's in the proceedings of the legislature, and if the hon. member realized what went on in here, he'd know he'd have a copy of it already. So he's got it. I read it, quoted it, and I'll reiterate what we said. We said that the federal government should: one, protect the low-income people, and you voted against that; you don't want to protect them, obviously. And we said, two, that you should look at all kinds of mechanisms to make sure it's protected. And three, make sure that you're not in a position where you're going to provide more and more tax dollars to very wealthy individuals.

**MR. SVIENSON:** — The discussion today, Mr. Speaker, has been on indexing, and earlier in the debate I just indicated that Michael Wilson is on record in Ottawa indicating that government investment vehicles should be indexed to return more money to those investors who are the wealthy in our country, who support these vehicles. We have this kind of vehicle in Saskatchewan recently with the Saskoil bonds and the SaskPower bonds.

The Speaker, or the Premier, is on record suggesting that he doesn't agree with indexing pensioners. I ask him: does he agree with indexing the investments that the people of Saskatchewan are making, the wealthy in Saskatchewan are making, on SaskPower and Saskoil bonds? I must also indicate that Saskoil bonds are currently indexed, in that the profits, some of which are returned to those wealthy investors in Saskatchewan . . .

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the hon. member asked a question with respect to bonds in Saskatchewan. They are, one, very . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . indexing and bonds . . . indexing and bonds. Bonds in this province are very, very popular. I believe that the oil bonds are popular for two reasons — probably three reasons: one, people really enjoy participating in Crown corporations in Saskatchewan. They're never had a chance to do that, and the facts is that they can do it now.

The bond itself, the first 10 per cent's guaranteed. And then depending on how the company goes, they can receive more. This last year the return was 13.3 per cent on Saskatchewan energy bonds, which was absolutely first class, because of the performance of the energy business; performance of the company because of management, good personnel, good labour relations — all the rest of it. It returned to the people of Saskatchewan who invested, 13.3 per cent.

Now we are going to be offering more bonds to the public. We are soon going to be offering a new power bond. There will be other bonds and various kinds of investment instruments offered to the public of Saskatchewan. And from my experience, they're only too ready to participate and to share in it.

**MR. SVIENSON:** — The simple question is: are you planning to index government vehicles for those who invest in them, at the same time not supporting the indexing of old age pensioners' pensions?

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Mr. Speaker, those bonds are tied to the performance of the corporations. If they do well, the people who invest in them do well. So we are . . . they understand what the investment vehicle means; they've got a minimum, and they know that that's there; and then if the company does well, they can even do better. And they find that a very acceptable sort of investment, and they're only happy that it happened. I suppose one of their big concerns is that some day, down the road 25 or 30 years, the opposition might get back in and take it all from them.

### **Countervailing Duty on Canadian Hogs**

**MR. ENGEL:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the Minister of Agriculture, and his answer is going to depend on when we get back or not, Mr. Premier.

My question is the Minister of Agriculture, and it deals with a decision that was made today by the U.S. commerce department that it will uphold the countervailing duty on Canadian hogs. This disastrous decision, Mr. Minister of Agriculture, will increase the duty on hogs. It's not only that they're going to maintain it, but they're going to increase the duty on Canadian pork from \$9 per hog to \$11 per hog, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, that disastrous decision will drive prices for Saskatchewan pork producers even lower than it has been in the past month, and it will drive many Saskatchewan producers out of business. What action do you propose to take as a result of this decision?

**HON. MR. HEPWORTH:** — Mr. Speaker, hon. member, certainly this is something we've been watching for some good long time, and we're all well aware of the June 10th deadline. I suppose now the issue will become one of what will the United States International Trade Commission report within, I think, 45 days is the time frame that they have to report back on.

But recognizing that it is a serious problem out there, a very serious one for our hog producers, I this very morning have telexed the Hon. John Wise, indicating to him our dismay at that decision, offering once again any assistance that my department or myself can be in terms of putting a strategy in place to deal with this, or in fact any other measures that he might deem appropriate. I've raised it with him before. I know he has had it on the agenda in the trade talks with his counterpart, but I have telexed him again to raise the issue.

Secondly, this very day, officials from my department, as well as other provincial agriculture and trade departments across the country, as well as federal officials, are meeting in Regina. That is one of the several issues that are on the agenda, and hopefully we can see some resolve and, in fact, have the strategy to deal with the question. I guess what I can say to the hon. member is we are well aware of it. We've sent a telex to the minister. Officials are, as I said, meeting on that issue and others this very day. What the outcome will be, I cannot say at this point in time.

**MR. ENGEL:** — New question, Mr. Minister. The Premier of Manitoba has met on two different occasions with governors of the states affected, trying to lobby there as well. Our Premier is sitting silent on the issue.

But the other question I have, Mr. Minister: the pork producers of Saskatchewan, pork producers across Canada, are going down to Washington on June 25th to lobby the federal government in Washington. Will you support this group, and will you also be helping these producers to defray some of their expenses to make their case in Washington on June 25th? Let the pork producers speak for themselves in this case. Will you stand behind them, and will you help them with their travel costs?

**HON. MR. HEPWORTH:** — Mr. Speaker, and hon. member, certainly we're very supportive of our pork producers, and in terms of what might be done financially, that hasn't been raised with

me particularly. But I can report to the hon. member, in fact, that the chairman of the Pork Producers Marketing board here in Saskatchewan came with myself and the chairman of the Beef Stabilization Board last week, at our expense, to go to Ottawa to talk about tripartite red meat legislation. And by their very presence, I would suggest to you, they were lending support, not only to our case, but for ourselves, to their view of how the world should unfold. And they made it abundantly clear that markets are their first priorities, so certainly we met with them on numerous occasions; we've in fact taken them with us to Ottawa, and we're 100 per cent behind them.

**MR. ENGEL:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Premier. I don't know how we've gotten into this position. The Prime Minister and President Reagan left Quebec City after the blarney summit that all Mulroney had to do is pick up the phone.

Would you call him and tell him to pick up the phone to his friend Ronnie Reagan and see if they can correct this situation, a situation that is affecting so many pork producers in your province. Would you do that much? — yes or no is all you need.

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Mr. Speaker, over the last few months this administration, with the support of the Premier of Manitoba and Alberta and British Columbia, are now lobbying the federal government on a daily continuing basis for freer trade and open common market between the United States and Canada. Most of our trade takes place between the United States and Canada. We believe that's a major market for us. We are lobbying the federal government.

I also have individuals in Washington lobbying there. They are advising me on who is the best people to talk to. We are doing everything we can to encourage a good, solid attitude between Americans and Canadians. And believe me, the American consumer and the American purchaser and the American markets feel much, much better about Saskatchewan under this administration than they did the previous administration.

#### **Cut-back of Teachers at Southend, Reindeer Lake**

**MR. YEW:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education. Yesterday, the elementary school at Southend, Reindeer Lake was closed because parents withdrew their children to protest the severe cuts in teaching staff planned for their school next fall. The school, Apitowkuisan School, has been instructed to cut its teaching staff by 25 per cent next fall. And I'm sure, Mr. Minister, the quality of education delivered will deteriorate.

Can the minister please assure the Assembly and the parents at Southend, Reindeer Lake, that she is attempting to find a way to prevent these kinds of drastic teaching staff cut-backs and deterioration of education for the North and for this community.

**HON. MRS. SMITH:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm aware of the situation as it is at Southend. I am also aware that there has been a decline in the student enrolment since last year, which more than likely accounts for the drop in teachers.

I am of the understanding, Mr. Speaker, that the board made a decision — most of it due to declining enrolment — to have a look at the entire division and where the declining enrolment was coming from, and the reductions would be made accordingly.

I can tell the member from Cumberland that we are in discussions with the board to do with their budgeting and to do with their deficit position. But I would also remind him that any decisions to be made with staffing — the hiring and dismissal of teachers and where the teachers will be placed — is totally a school board decision.

#### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

### **Additional Funding for Opportunities '85**

**HON. MR. DEVINE:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to make a brief statement with respect to an employment program, and an addition that we'll be making today.

In my view, Mr. Speaker, a nation's youth is not only the hope, but the foundation, of its future, and this is no less true for a province, and certainly a province like Saskatchewan. Any province that can provide opportunity and challenge for its youth today will be able to fulfil its responsibilities and add strength tomorrow, and particularly, to provide vision to confederation in the years to come.

No province in this country has a better record than the province of Saskatchewan in opening up the future for its younger generation. Nineteen eighty-two, 1983, and 1984, the best employment record of all the provinces in Canada was in our province of Saskatchewan.

In Saskatoon and Regina in that same time period, '82 and '83, had the best job creation record of all of western Canadian cities. In fact, in 1984, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan was the only prairie province to experience a growth in population.

(1500)

Well this government is determined to see that this tradition continues. In March we announced a Canada-Saskatchewan Opportunities '85 joint program with the federal government that provided \$8 million for summer employment, particularly for young people. No joint federal program has been more enthusiastically received anywhere in Canada. By the end of May, some 4,420 applicants had been approved for funding in the Opportunities '85 Program, and some 7,850 jobs have been created. The program was a tangible demonstration of the harmony between federal and provincial governments, and it was so evident at the first ministers' conference . . . quite evident at the first ministers' conference held in Regina in February of this year.

Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to announce that Saskatchewan has provided an additional \$3 million for student summer job creation in 1985. We regard this as a particularly positive gesture in this, the International Year of the Youth. The additional \$3 million will help create even more summer jobs for university, technical institute, and high school students in the province of Saskatchewan. It will assist more students in gaining career-oriented or practical work experience this summer, while at the same time assisting them in financing their future education.

This government believes, Mr. Speaker, that the \$3 million in additional provincial funding for Opportunities '85 will help create as many as 3,000 additional summer jobs for students in our province, in addition to the almost 8,000 that have already been approved.

This means that with Saskatchewan's additional 3 million in funding, almost 11,000 summer jobs will be created for the province of Saskatchewan and its students. I would rank and compare this with any other province in the country, Mr. Speaker.

This additional funding will enable us to approve the majority of jobs requested by employee applications when Opportunities '85 was initially unveiled, and on employer applications that were received prior to the May 4th cut-off date, and that will be met with departmental approval.

As I noted earlier, the response by both students and employers to the initial \$8 million program has been overwhelming, and it was the kind of response that deserves a little bit of further comment. I believe the response was a real indication of the state of this province and its people today. People in Saskatchewan are moving forward, and they like it.

It shows that two very large segments of our population, students on one hand, and private industry employers on the other, are people of dedication and determination and co-operation. They are people of initiative and innovation. We asked them for advice with respect to the kinds of things we believe would be workable in creating jobs for young people in the province of Saskatchewan. They gave us good advice, and we listened and followed up, and the jobs speak for themselves. These are people worthy of this province, and the Government of Saskatchewan is only too pleased to be able to offer this further commitment to enhance those desirable and admirable qualities of the people of Saskatchewan.

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

**HON. MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, we welcome the additional funding which this government is putting into summer employment. Just as we welcomed in January their winter works program, we now welcome, some six weeks after the universities have closed, their summer employment program.

I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that the response was overwhelming. Anybody who offers a job in Saskatchewan today gets an overwhelming response, and I am sure that members who have been able to put applications in the paper and get a call for applications knows this response.

But, Mr. Speaker, stripped of its rhetoric, we welcome the proposals by the Premier. We understand why they're coming forward. The recent unemployment statistics showed that Saskatchewan was numbered third in Canada — Ontario first, Manitoba second, Saskatchewan third.

Mr. Speaker, in no year for at least 12 years has Saskatchewan been third. I understand that the government is responding to this deplorable record, and I am glad they're putting more money in, and I hope more young people get jobs as a result of it.

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

#### **Bill No. 111 — An Act to amend The Statute Law to enable Urban, Rural and Northern Municipalities to Broadcast Radio and Television Signals**

**HON. MR. MCLEOD:** — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Hon. Minister of Urban Affairs, I move first reading of a Bill, An Act to amend The Statue Law to enable Urban, Rural and Northern Municipalities to Broadcast Radio and Television Signals.

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

#### **Bill No. 112 — An Act respecting Liens in the Construction Industry**

**HON. MR. LANE:** — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill, An Act respecting Liens in the Construction Industry.

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

### **ROYAL ASSENT TO BILLS**

At 3:08 p.m. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bills:

Bill No. 54 — An Act respecting Apprenticeship and Qualification for Certification in Certain Trades

Bill No. 9 — An Act respecting the Transportation of Dangerous Goods in Saskatchewan



Bill No. 01 — An Act to incorporate The United Community Funds of Saskatoon Foundation  
Bill No. 03 — An Act to amend An Act to incorporate The House of Jacob (Beth Yakov) of the City of Regina  
Bill No. 82 — An Act respecting Credit Unions  
Bill No. 44 — An Act to amend The Venture Capital Tax Credit Act  
Bill No. 61 — An Act to amend The Department of Revenue and Financial Services Act  
Bill No. 62 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of The Department of Revenue and Financial Services Amendment Act, 1985  
Bill No. 77 — An Act to amend The Tobacco Tax Act  
Bill No. 78 — An Act to amend The Corporation Capital Tax Act  
Bill No. 84 — An Act to amend The Horse Racing Regulation Act  
Bill No. 88 — An Act respecting the Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of The Department of Finance Act, 1983  
Bill No. 89 — An Act to amend The Heritage Fund (Saskatchewan) Act  
Bill No. 90 — An Act to amend The Rural Municipality Act  
Bill No. 92 — An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Consequential Amendment Act  
Bill No. 96 — An Act to amend The Agrologists Act  
Bill No. 97 — An Act to amend The Critical Wildlife Habitat Protection Act (No. 2)  
Bill No. 98 — An Act to amend The Management Accountants Act  
Bill No. 99 — An Act to amend The Crop Insurance Act  
Bill No. 101 — An Act respecting the Profession of Optometry  
Bill No. 68 — An Act to amend The Vehicles Act, 1983 (No. 2)  
Bill No. 107 — An Act to amend The Northern Municipalities Act (No. 2)  
Bill No. 108 — An Act to repeal The Municipal Public Works Act  
Bill No. 110 — An Act to amend The University of Saskatchewan Act

His Honour then retired from the Chamber at 3:12 p.m.

### POINT OF ORDER

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday during question period the Premier quoted extensively from a letter which he referred to as a letter to the federal finance minister. We were a little surprised that after question period that document, that government document, was not tabled, and in asking for it today the Premier refused to table the letter. I would wonder, Mr. Speaker, if you would make a ruling now, based on *Beauchesne's*, page 115, paragraph 327, under "Documents Cited," section (1). And I will quote from it:

A Minister of the Crown is not at liberty to read or quote from a despatch or other state paper not before the House, unless he is prepared to lay it upon the Table.

It seems to be very clear that having quoted from the document he is required to . . . has no option. I would ask you to now rule on that, Mr. Speaker, because it's so clear. I would ask for a ruling at this time.

**HON. MR. MCLEOD:** — Mr. Speaker, if it will help at all in your ruling, I will assure you and assure the House that the Minister of Finance will have no problem in tabling that letter during today's sitting. It's in *Hansard* right now, as a matter of fact. In any case, it's been read by the Premier. But we will have no problem in tabling the letter if that's what his wish is.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, please. Order. In paragraph 327 of *Beauchesne's* it does state that there is a requirement if you quote from a document that the document be tabled. And the Acting House Leader has offered that the document be tabled. So I believe that satisfies the point of order.

### MOTIONS

**Resolution No. 5 — Federal and Provincial Assistance for Family Farms**

**MR. ENGEL:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The resolution before this Assembly is:

That this Assembly urge the Government of Saskatchewan to implement immediately a major comprehensive emergency farm assistance plan providing provincial financial assistance to the most hard-pressed family farms which are suffering from low commodity prices, high utility rates, property taxes, and interest charges, poor weather conditions, and an unsympathetic federal government.

Mr. Speaker, when the House convened last fall and a major, major portion of Saskatchewan, and in my constituency in particular, was suffering from the severe effects of the drought, this resolution was one that should have been debated and should have been acted on.

(1515)

But this spring we're finding ourselves facing conditions that threaten even further the conditions of the family farm. Last fall we were calling on the government to establish a drought relief program similar to the one that we had set up four years prior to that. As early as March 27, back in 1981, our provincial government acted immediately and provided financial assistance to give relief to farmers in towns and villages that were adversely affected by drought conditions that spring.

But this government decided that they didn't need to act on behalf of farmers. The 1981 drought program provided financial assistance that depended on the severity of the particular farmer, rather than just on a per-cow figure like your government did.

If a farmer was very hard-pressed, he could buy hay at \$25-a-tonne subsidy, no matter how much hay he bought. He got \$10 per tonne to move feed grain. He got 5 cents a mile to ship his cattle. He got financial assistance to improve his wells and provide a better water supply.

And yet this government's action creates headlines like this, Regina *Leader-Post*: "Cattlemen are furious as the government agrees to import more beef." And another headline from Maple Creek: "Government has 'no courage.'" Let me read this one into the record. The *Leader-Post* on the 8th of June, headline was: "Government has 'no courage.'"

Maple Creek — The federal government showed "no guts" in its decision to allow an additional eight million kilograms of subsidized European beef to enter Canada this year, says the president of the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association.

"This is a mistake," said Neil Jahnke, a straight-talking rancher from Gouldtown in southwestern Saskatchewan. "They showed no courage, no guts" (are his words).

And Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that things haven't changed. A Tory's a Tory's a Tory. The provincial government has no courage, has no backbone, and no wish to help the farmers that are suffering a severe plight this spring. And I think it's time we have some action.

I'm not going to take a long time today discussing this very serious issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I want to reiterate that farmers' net income hits a 14-year low — 14 years since farmers that are suffered as low an income. If people aren't nervous, says an agricultural statistician, they should be. Inventories are a way down — way down, Mr. Speaker.

And just let me cite some figures from this article. In terms of total net income, Saskatchewan was the worst off of the three prairie provinces. Alberta saw its total net farm income drop 22 per cent to 259.8 million in 1984, while Manitoba's increased from 54 million in '83 to \$324.5 million

last year. Did you notice that? Alberta's dropped, Saskatchewan's dropped the most, but what happened in Manitoba? Good old Pawley Manitoba, NDP Manitoba, their income on the farms increased from 54.8 million to 324.5 million — an increase in farm income.

That's no accident, Mr. Deputy Speaker — that's no accident. That's a government where Herb Pawley and his agriculture minister, Sam Uskiw, have programs in place that are working. They had a financial program that works. The article goes on to say:

On a national basis, total net income to farmers increased 19 per cent on a national basis, but Saskatchewan's was the worst in 14 years.

A 14-year low under this government and this administration.

The government claims that we have a program in place. We have taken our counselling and assistance, and we've got our programs in place so no land will be taken . . . a Farm Land Security Act in place. But are those programs working, Mr. Minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Are those programs in agriculture working?

Another article on the 11th — that's today — a very timely article I've clipped here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the article is entitled "Banks Win Majority of Farm Foreclosure." The banks win. Isn't that something. Here is a foreclosure legislation that when it was introduced I said, has loopholes big enough to drive the Royal Bank through. And what are the results? The banks win the majority of farm foreclosures.

Bank spokesmen say the stats show the board is acting responsibly, but the Leader of the Canadian Agricultural Movement says it proves more has to be done to save indebted farmers.

More needs to be done. This board was . . .

Set up in January, the Farm Land Security Board is responsible for investigating farmers that are facing foreclosures. It decides if the farm is viable and if the farmer is making a reasonable effort to meet its mortgage obligations.

The board then makes a written recommendation to the Court of Queen's Bench which is hearing the foreclosure case and its recommendation is to be the court's primary consideration.

At the end of May, the board sent 14 recommendations to court favouring the farmer and (Mr. Deputy Speaker), 30 reports favouring the lender . . .

Fourteen favour the farmer, and 30 the lender. Boy, isn't this government behind the farmer. Isn't this government anxious to save the farmer when two-thirds of their recommendations go to the banks, and so consequentially their farm land security legislation didn't work.

In an attempt to improve it we said it should include farm machinery and farm livestock, and it should include his cash receipts. But no, you decided not to.

We then urged you to include a write-down provision. Those 30 that the banks had the ruling in their favour, if the board would have had the power like they do in Manitoba, if that board would have had the power to look at his farmer's assets and say to the bank, how much are you going to lose if you foreclose on this farmer; and if the board would have said, we're going to lose on this \$300,000 deal, we're going to lose \$80,000; and if they then would have turned around to the farmer and said, if you get a \$80,000 credit, will you be able to make it; will you be able to make it; and if the farmer could approve it, that with an \$80,000 write-out he could make it, he'd still have his land.

But not here in Saskatchewan he doesn't. There's no write-down provision. And it wouldn't have cost anybody any money because the banks are going to lose that kind of money on their foreclosures anyhow. And that would have protected the price of land, it would have protected the farmers that are farming, and it would have given a chance, and the banks wouldn't have lost a cent. But this government decided they weren't going to act in favour of the farmer.

The only mention of the money that this government had was the cost of administration. And I think the government is hard pressed to answer the farmers, why they're not on the farmers' side.

There's many, many other areas that I could mention. Interest on indebtedness alone, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Saskatchewan, is \$401 million; 17 per cent — 17 percent of a farmer's expenditures are indebtedness. Fuel and lubricants amount to 16 per cent of \$366 million. The need for credit is out there. And yet this government set up a farm counselling and assistance plan where the counselling and assistance, according to the Minister of Agriculture, costs us 5,000-and-some dollars alone last year.

And what results did we get? The farmer got a letter from the board, he took it to his bank, and the bank laughs at it. I had farmer after farmer calling me. I've had two calls today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from farmers that say, we were approved by the farm counselling and assistance plan, and the banks and the credit unions refuse us — were refusing us.

So this government was no help for farmers. It has no help for farmers that need money to pay for expensive fertilizers and chemicals. It has no help for farmers that are faced with high fuel bills, and the price of fuel has tripled. And yet what does this government do to those farmers? If that farmer can't afford a new vehicle and decides to buy a used one, they stick him for the 5 per cent extra. They get their dirty fingers into his bank account to get another 5 per cent off their education tax.

The farmer loses \$375 a year on his property rebate. He loses another 300 to \$325 on the elimination of the home quarter tax rebate. He loses the money that he has to pay on the education tax on used vehicles. And on the farm land security, 30 per cent of the farmers had a stay of execution; 60 per cent of the farmers lost their land. And you call this a government that is anxious to help farmers?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the plight is serious. But why did I introduce this legislation today? On Friday we brought before this House an emergency resolution that would deal with the plight that farmers are facing as far as grasshoppers are concerned. On Friday we were going to debate it. The Speaker ruled that that problem was in order. But the government, with their majority, decided that that problem, that plight facing farmers, isn't an important one.

So today I raise this issue that this Assembly urge the Government of Saskatchewan to implement immediately a major comprehensive emergency farm assistance plan providing provincial financial assistance to the most hard-pressed family farmers. And the farmers that I want to talk about are the farmers that are facing a dilemma because of losing their crops. This government isn't willing, this government isn't willing to put up 50 per cent of the cost for chemicals.

Alberta decided that if the farmers needed to spray their grasshoppers they could get 50 per cent of their chemicals paid, no questions asked. They save their bills from May 1 to November and submit them at the end of the year, and they get 50 per cent of the cost of their chemicals.

I've had farmer after farmer call me and say, what can we do? I've sprayed my crop twice. Another one today said he sprayed a third time, and the grasshoppers are still hatching. What is he going to do? The hatch didn't all happen at once. And this government has decided that

those hard-pressed farmers will not get any financial help.

You've announced a program, you've announced a program for R.M.s, and the R.M.s are in total confusion. There's disarray there. Some R.M.s in my riding have sprayed their grasshoppers on their roads. They've hired aircraft to come in and spray it. Others are rigging up some truck-mounted sprayers to spray the ditches. But that little 66-foot road allowance every mile one way, and every two miles the other way, Mr. Speaker, is a very small percentage of the land that needs covering, very small percentage of the land that needs covering.

And I think today we should have the government members stand up in debate of this resolution and tell the farmers in my area that I can't afford to buy them more spray, tell the farmers that couldn't get a loan from their bank or their credit union in spite of being approved by their board, and tell those farmers what they are supposed to do; tell those farmers how they're going to save their crop when the grasshoppers are that thick.

Thousands of grasshoppers per square metre, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't know if you've ever seen that many grasshoppers in the Shellbrook area or not, but I am sure if you would you'd be anxious to see something done about it because it's serious.

(1530)

You can't step on a field without killing 100 grasshoppers. There's that many grasshoppers out there. They're thick, and they're growing, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're only a quarter of an inch long today. How big are they going to be in a month from now, or two months? And by the time they are an inch and a half long have you ever figured out how far those little guys can fly — and without refuelling? They'll go all the way up to your country where there is some green. And they'll go out and eat your crops. And they'll lay their eggs this fall, and next year we'll have grasshoppers all over Saskatchewan because this government isn't willing to spend a little money on spray to get them where they're at, to get them where they're at. And I think a stitch in time saves nine.

You're waiting for us to deal with the problem of grasshoppers in your area because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can assure you there's not going to be one PC elected in rural Saskatchewan where there's grasshoppers. There's not going to be one PC elected where there's grasshoppers because they say the government should be helping, the government should be helping.

Now there's another point, there's another point that needs to be made, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is on the chemical that we use. Back in the time of the wheat midge and in the time of the Bertha army worm, a decisive government made some decisions and allowed some chemicals to be used that weren't licensed, that weren't licensed. And the farmers are telling me that surely we can make an exception to our licensing provision, and use some chemicals that work.

Now farmers are spraying every third and fourth day down in our country. They'll spray, and three days later they'll hatch and they've got to spray again, and within two weeks those farmers have sprayed three times. And that costs 275, 265, just for the chemical — just for the chemical. And the question I pose today is: why not license a chemical similar to Dieldrin, or like dialdrin, that would put a one-shot spray down and they'd get them. They'd get the grasshoppers.

And the farmers are saying we need something like that to control them. If we don't look at some new chemicals and provisionary spray for an exceptional problem, we're not going to be able to lick it — we're not going to be able to lick it. And this is a serious problem, and I think action needs to be taken. We've done it in the past, and I think it's time we get the jump on the 'hoppers — we get in there and we decide to spray with chemical that will work. The problem is serious and I think that this government should take action.

On June the 4th your Tory friends in Alberta announced that they will provide 50 per cent to bona fide ranchers and farmers the cost of chemical. They expect to spend \$6.6 million to spray the grasshoppers in Alberta. The program requires farmers to submit an application form and receipts to their local department of agriculture field men, or agricultural service board. Purchases made between May 1 and November 30, 1985 will be eligible to be subsidized. And they list a whole list of chemicals that are covered in that province. Even if farmers have to spray two, three, and four times, or maybe even more, their entire purchases will be subsidized by 50 per cent.

There's going to be no limit on the amount of money a farmer will get. Not only cultivated farm land is covered, but they're covering range land, Indian reserves, Hutterite colonies, and also any spraying done by farmers on road allowances and highway ditches. The Alberta Department of Agriculture estimates that on average the chemicals will cost \$3 an acre, and they're planning on spraying 4 million acres — 4 million acres.

Saskatchewan has an awful lot more land, and I estimate that the cost, if we're going to subsidize grasshopper spray in Saskatchewan, will be anywhere between 12 and \$16 million. And I think that is peanuts compared to what the cost will be if we don't get involved in and cover the spray. I'll make it as serious as I can, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

That this Assembly urge the Government of Saskatchewan to implement immediately a major comprehensive emergency farm assistance plan providing provincial financial assistance to most hard-pressed family farmers

...

And into this you can read:

... those farmers that are suffering so severely from the plight of grasshoppers.

I so move, seconded by my colleague from Shaunavon.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Chairperson, or Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to become involved in support of the motion put forward by the minister from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg which deals, I believe, very effectively with the problems facing farmers, in particular farmers in south-west Saskatchewan, where our constituencies are situated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not only a problem of the cost-price squeeze that was in place at the beginning of the year, but as the year goes on, and we have now two Tory budgets — one provincial and one federal, that we're having to face as farmers — we're finding that even though income, as my colleague has mentioned, has dropped substantially over the past year, that the tax burden on farmers is increasing, and increasing very significantly.

I want to point out just a few areas, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where we believe the government is not only not doing what they should in order to help farmers, but is actually acting at a detriment to the farmers.

We see the first proposal of this government, the provincial Government of Saskatchewan, to have the most massive tax increase on property that we have ever seen in the history of this province. With the removal of the property improvement grant, which effectively takes \$375 out of the pocket of every one of the 60,000 farmers in the province, we are seeing a major shift of taxation onto the backs of the farmers that is not based on income.

This increase in property and property tax has nothing to do with income. The farmers will have to pay this increased tax even though their income is dropping fairly significantly in the past two years.

We see, as well, the removal of the rebate on the home quarter of the education portion of the

property tax, which amounts to in the majority of cases, the average of \$200. The area of the flat tax which was introduced by this government, another increase for . . .

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** — order. Order, order. The motion specifically says, “property tax.” I would ask the member to stay on the motion.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, we’re talking about hard-pressed financially strapped farmers, and I would say that tax increases are directly related to the motion. And I’m sure that if you think about it, as a farmer, you would understand that in talking about the plight of farmers and the financial crisis they now find themselves in, a major portion of the increased burden on them is the result of the federal and provincial budget and the tax increases. And if you’re saying this has nothing to do with the farmers’ problem, the farmers of the province don’t understand that, when what the government should be doing, in fact, is cutting the property tax that the farmers have to pay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is clearly what a New Democratic government would do. A New Democratic government would remove the education portion of the tax on land in this province right across the board, and would be a tax saving of thousands of dollars to the farmers of this province.

They would look at the possibility and, in fact, introduce a fuel rebate program that would allow farmers to have their fuel cut by 32 cents a gallon. And what we are seeing the federal government do in fact, Mr. Speaker, and you will be well aware of it, is increase the tax on farm fuel by 9 cents a gallon as of September 1st. And you add this on to the other taxes, an average farmer who uses 4,000 gallons, that will be a direct tax increase of \$360.

Now when you add these up, what the federal and provincial government has done for each of the 60,000 farmers in this province. That’s the legacy that the Tory governments, provincially and federally, have given to the farmers of this province.

Now if you could say that these millions of dollars that are being taken out of farmers’ pockets would be given back in programs, then you could explain it to the farmers, possibly, although they would say it would be much more responsible to take the massive profits from the oil companies or from resource companies or from banks or from railway companies, and use that to help the farmers. But what they are saying is that even though they are taking millions of dollars out of the farmers’ pocket, there is no program for them.

I say to you that in the area of grasshopper spraying program, similar to the one that was introduced in Alberta which would pay the farmers 50 per cent of the cost of their spray, that program will cost the treasury of Alberta \$6 million — \$6 million we’re talking about in terms of a program that would help out literally thousands of farmers in Saskatchewan.

The problem has gotten so bad that there are emergency meetings of the R.M.s in south-west Saskatchewan — meetings of the R.M.s in south-west Saskatchewan which are passing resolutions which would go some distance to deal with the problem created by the Minister of Agriculture.

And I have here a letter to the minister from the Rural Municipality of Val Marie, dated June 7th which . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I will be tabling it, and which the minister has received, dated June 7th, 1985. And it’s addressed to the Hon. Lorne Hepworth, Minister of Saskatchewan, Room B43, down in the basement, Legislative Building, Regina, Saskatchewan. And there’s the reason why he’s in the basement — because that’s the priority they give to agriculture in this province. And the letter goes on to say:

Dear Mr. Minister: I am enclosing for your perusal a copy of the minutes of a joint

spring ratepayers' meeting held last evening. As you can no doubt imagine from the resolution on page 2, grasshoppers formed a very exciting part of the meeting.

In view of the fact that officials of your department in 1983 urged municipalities to adopt by-laws placing the responsibility for spraying of grasshoppers on road allowance to adjacent property holders to minimize the cost to municipalities, I refer to a meeting in the research station in Swift Current where Mr. Lloyd Harris, one of your department officials, was in attendance, as well as a representative from various chemical companies.

And in view of the fact that many municipalities in this area adopted such by-laws, would it not seem to fly in the face of the recommendation of your department to announce a program such as the one you announced last week?

This is coming from a joint ratepayers' meeting of some 150 farmers who are saying to you, Mr. Minister, well you don't have a responsibility to deal with the upper echelons of the R.M., you have a responsibility to deal with the farmers at the grass roots level.

And what you are saying, and I go on:

It would seem to us that you ought to have known that many municipalities are in no position to assume any cost because of your by-laws.

One lawyer has advised that in his opinion this municipality would be in contravention of its own by-law should it assume any responsibility for spraying of the grasshoppers.

And they conclude by:

We urge your government to rethink its position as concerns assistance for grasshopper control and bring it into the line with the program in Alberta.

Your attention is drawn to the resolution 2, passed at last night's meeting.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to take an opportunity to read two of the resolutions that were passed at that meeting by the joint ratepayers' meeting of the two R.M.s. And I will be tabling this as well. The minister would already have it, but for his benefit will read it into the record. And it has to do with the outbreak of grasshoppers.

It's moved by the reeve of the Climax Rural Municipality, and the resolution reads:

Whereas a drastic outbreak of grasshoppers is expected in the area; and whereas the cost of spray for the control of grasshoppers is very expensive; and whereas the farmers' revenues are down;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Government of the province of Saskatchewan, the Dominion of Canada, be called on to assist farmers by providing a policy to reimburse the farmers for 50 per cent of the cost of chemicals used in the eradication of grasshoppers.

Now this is from two R.M.s. And since that time I have had calls from three other R.M.s in my constituency who are asking you to carry out a similar program.

There was one other, I thought, interesting resolution passed that dealt with the removal of the property improvement grant, and this too has been sent to the Minister of Agriculture. And it deals with the announcement that the property improvement grant would be removed,



which adds to the economic plight of hard-pressed farmers.

And this was moved by the resolutions committee and seconded by Arthur James, one of the ratepayers in the R.M. Pardon me, it was moved by the resolutions committee and seconded by Barry Brown, who is a councillor on the Climax Rural Municipality.

And it says:

Whereas the provincial government in its recent budget announced the removal of the property improvement grant and the home tax assistance program rebates which will effectively mean increases of about \$500 in the 1985 property taxes paid by farmers in our municipality; and whereas the taxation of property for education purposes rather than income tax is an unfair system;

Therefore, be it resolved that we urge the provincial government to reinstate the property improvement grant and the home quarter tax assistance program, and that we encourage the province towards removal of the cost of education from property tax.

And that was carried unanimously.

(1545)

And I want to say to the minister that these resolutions with an NDP government would be passed by a New Democratic cabinet which would eliminate the education portion of the property taxes . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the minister says that the farmers are asleep. That's what he says from his seat. He says, we can get away with it because the farmers are asleep. He says that from his seat. And I would say to him that he should stand in this Assembly, stand in this Assembly, and say that farmers are asleep when they're passing resolutions like that.

Because I say to you, Mr. Minister, that there's a reason you're in the basement, why you're going to stay there until the first chance the farmers have to kick you out as Minister of Agriculture in the Weyburn area — because that's one of the hardest-pressed areas in the province today, and you have done nothing as minister to help out the farmers.

So I say to you, Mr. Minister, that having encouraged the R.M.s to pass by-laws that does not allow them to spray for grasshoppers, I say that it is unfortunate that you now take no responsibility for the problem that R.M.s now find themselves in.

And there's a reason why you're dumping this political hot potato on the backs of the locally elected governments. And that's what you're doing. The political pressure to help out the farmers who were coming to your office, and you know what you did rather than go to cabinet and fight for the farmers of this province? Do you know what you did? Do you know what you did, Mr. Minister? You didn't go to cabinet and fight for money for farmers. You know what you did? You made an announcement that dumped the responsibility on the backs of the locally elected R.M. councils. That's the spineless Minister of Agriculture we have.

And I say to you that this will come back to haunt you because R.M.s around the province are passing resolutions which are calling on you to do the honourable thing and go to cabinet with a proposal to get some money for farmers. You haven't done it.

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

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — In question period we asked you whether or not you had taken a proposal to cabinet, and you wouldn't respond. And that means only one thing: that you

haven't done it. And I would urge you to stand in this Assembly today on this most important issue and outline a program that would call on your government to carry out a program to help hard-pressed farmers.

And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will take my seat and ask the Minister of Agriculture to now rise and announce a grasshopper program that would have some meaning for the farmers.

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

**MR. PETERSEN:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I listened to comments from the members opposite very carefully, and as usual I tend to agree with the comment just made from one of the members in their seats that it was, as usual, drivel.

And not only was it drivel, it was negative — completely and totally negative. Members of the opposition completely ignore . . . absolutely and completely ignore the things that the provincial government has done for farmers over the past three years, and things that the federal government has done for farmers.

When you take a look at one of the first things . . . One of the first things that this government did upon taking office was to remove the gas tax. I'm going to have to go right . . .

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** — Order. The only . . . Order. The only tax reflected in the motion is property tax. I would ask the members to stay on the motion.

**MR. PETERSEN:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When you take a look at the programs that the opposition is being critical of by introducing this motion, one should go back to all the positive things that this government has done, and among them are the gas tax. I accept your ruling that perhaps it's a bit out of order, but it did help farmers that got caught in the cost-price squeeze.

You take a look at the rural gasification program, helping to cut costs for farmers — that helps farmers. The prairie drought assistance program, Mr. Deputy Speaker — that assisted farmers. The opposition has been standing here this afternoon trying to imply that the province of Saskatchewan has done nothing for farmers. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is an untruth. It's just not true. The Government of Saskatchewan has been implementing programs. The Government of Canada has been implementing programs.

And I'd like to bring your attention to a couple of things that the federal government has done for farmers. They brought out a western grain stabilization payment to farmers. That, Mr. Speaker, amounted to millions of dollars. The federal government, in its recent budget, announced \$500,000 off capital gains, tax free.

Co-operation between the provincial and federal governments, Mr. Speaker, has never been greater. Take a look at our crop insurance program, the Saskatchewan-Canada crop insurance program — \$258 million went out to farmers last year. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if that is not helping farmers, doing things to assist them during tough times, I don't know what is.

When you take a look at a number of positive programs, Mr. Speaker . . . You take a look at our farm purchase program, trying to assist young farmers out there who are caught in tough times . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I'll agree there's low commodity prices out there. The world markets aren't that great. And I agree with the opposition when they say that. It doesn't take a genius to figure that out. If you're a farmer, you know it.

We tried to get young farmers started, tried to help them take over the family farm, gave them 8 per cent money — 5,000 young farmers that we have helped, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The opposition comes out and says, land bank forever. Well they didn't help very many young farmers own their own farms. As a matter of fact, during their administration we lost 10,000

family farms — 10,000. We're down to 67,000 farmers. It was almost 80,000 when they took office. That's the trouble, Mr. Speaker. Those people in the opposition tend to play with figures. They tend to try to mislead the public. They use scare tactics, the most disreputable tactics possible. And they're trying to do that again today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I may take my place, I understand there are some students who my seat-mate would like to introduce. Would that be possible?

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**HON. MR. MUIRHEAD:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is with pleasure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to introduce to you, and the members of the legislature, 40 students from Davidson high . . . of Davidson School. They are grade 6, I understand.

They are accompanied with their teachers, Glen Winkler and Sel Norberg. They are also accompanied by their chaperons, Mrs. Marion Bessy, Mrs. Marlow Phillips, and Mrs. Donna Walker.

I ask the members to join me in welcoming them to the Assembly, and I thank them for coming. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

### MOTIONS

#### **Resolution No. 5 — Federal and Provincial Assistance for Family Farms (continued)**

**MR. PETERSEN:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I was saying, there are a number of programs that the federal government and the provincial government have implemented to assist farmers. When you take a look at our Farm Credit Corporation, federally, trying to get farmers started out on the farm, reducing the interest rates that are charged on loans that helps farmers, that's a \$5 million saving. If you take a look at the federal government's fuel tax rebate, 4.8 cents a litre, that's nearly \$40 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The capital gains tax exemption I mentioned earlier, that'll save just about \$50 million for farmers.

Reduction in freight rates. We're going to talk about costs here. Freight rates. We all ship grain. It costs money. We've got lower freight rates, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a saving of \$29 million. We've had assistance programs in the province funded partially by the federal government. They kicked in \$7.5 million into the north-east flood assistance program, just about \$30 million into the prairie drought assistance program.

And the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg says nothing has been done for those farmers down there. Shame. Shame, I say to you. That's terrible. Read a little bit. Take a look at the numbers. You can't ignore millions and millions of dollars that have been poured into this province. You just can't. And yet I understand you are.

When you take a look, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the positive programs that this provincial government has put into place, I don't think the opposition has got a leg to stand on. We believe that the Saskatchewan farmer is the backbone of the country. Agriculture is the backbone of the country. The members opposite can't disagree with that. Maybe we should go through this one sentence at a time and ask them what they agree with and disagree with.

They agree that farming is the backbone of the country. Right. No argument. They also have to agree, Mr. Speaker, they also have to agree that we have introduced programs that would assist that agricultural sector.

They talk about grasshoppers, and they make fun of those people who come from the north country, up in the North. Your own seat was just being derided, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. He mentioned wheat midge. Yes, there was a wheat midge problem. The provincial government put funds forward to help in research against wheat midge, trying to find out how we could combat it.

But I don't think, and I don't think any of the members of this House would think, that the provincial government should be totally responsible for spraying every acre that every farmer has. I have wheat midge in my territory. You don't see me asking for a great hand-out from the provincial government to go spray the wheat midge. It's my responsibility to look after myself.

We've done that with grasshoppers, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I hear the member from Quill Lakes talking about the oil companies.

Earlier today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in question period, the Premier pointed out to the opposition that taxes coming into this government that go to assist programs for farmers . . .

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** — Order. Order! I've asked members on both sides of the House to keep their comments on the motion before them.

**MR. PETERSEN:** — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that being the case, I'd like to move the following I'd like to move an amendment, if I may. I'd like to move that this Assembly amend the motion . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Thank you. I'd like to move an amendment:

That the motion before the Assembly be amended by striking out all the words after "Assembly" and substituting the following:

Commends the Government of Saskatchewan and Canada for their positive actions in implementing programs to assist farmers during the present cost-price squeeze.

I so move, seconded by the member from Moosomin.

(1600)

**MR. ENGEL:** — That motion, I think if you would look at your rules, would be out of order because it changes the intent of the motion. The motion talks about hard-pressed farmers, and this motion says you're commending the government, so it completely changes the intent of the motion.

I find the motion out of order.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** — Order. Order. I find the member's point of order not well taken. Order.

I'd refer the members to paragraph 773 in *Beauchesne's*, Page 233, and amendments like this have been found in order previously in this Assembly.

The debate continues.

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

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it pleasurable, of course, to rise and speak to this motion as amended.

I want to pick up on some of the comments, if I might, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that were made by the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg when he referred to the grasshopper situation and that

we hadn't taken sufficient action in that regard. And he spoke to that as he addressed this motion.

I want to raise some humour, if I might, in the sense that here a couple of days ago, he was referring to these grasshoppers as being an inch long, and today they're only a half an inch long, and they're now half as big as they were before. So it could be we're getting control of the problem.

In any event, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it would be fair too to make a comment with regards to the member for Shaunavon. When the Minister of Agriculture made a comment from his seat, which is quite often done in the Assembly, and he made a comment about the member over across the way being funny, and so on, and laughing, and the member for Shaunavon turned that right around to indicate that, you know, the Minister of Agriculture thought the farmers were, you know, were laughing over this matter or funny or something, and taking it completely out of context. So I take exception to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think that that needs to be corrected.

And I have the opportunity to do that while I'm on my feet. You know, if you want tout it in the context of lying, I suppose I can lie on my feet as well as you can . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, well I . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right, if you want to put it in that context. And you chose not to, so I chose not to.

Now let's talk, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the grasshopper situation. Let's talk about the grasshoppers. What have we done about grasshoppers? Let's take, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a quote from the *Maidstone Mirror*: "Program to battle grasshoppers."

Agriculture minister, Lorne Hepworth, recently announced a program to help Saskatchewan farmers in their battle against grasshoppers. "Our government will not let grasshoppers destroy the crop and eat into farmers' incomes. We are understanding a grasshopper control program which is unprecedented in the history of Saskatchewan. The grasshopper situation is a major concern which requires action of this magnitude if it is to be properly controlled," Hepworth said, "and the government substantially reduces financial cost to the municipal councils."

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan under the leadership of our Minister of Agriculture, the member for Weyburn, has in fact taken this issue . . . He's taken the bull by the horns, to use that expression, and he has a situation that has threatened agriculture in this province under control.

What I find ironic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the members in the NDP opposition have such little faith in a government which they've never recognized, and that is local government. They should remind themselves that there are three levels of government: federal, provincial, and local governments — local governments.

The local governments are prepared, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to pick up their share of the responsibility and take on the fight hand in hand with the provincial government. There is a situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is most welcome in the province of Saskatchewan where two levels of government join forces to fight a situation — grasshoppers in this case.

Now that's being done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it's being done very effectively. The program, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is all-encompassing to say the least.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — All-encompassing.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — Well, the member says, all-encompassing, and I suppose the member for Quill Lakes would like to know just, you know, how encompassing the grasshopper program is,

and I am more prepared to tell him just how all-encompassing it is.

Arrangements have been made, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and for the information for the member for Quill Lakes, with the Canadian Pacific Rail company to pay for work done and arranged by R.M.s. Also an agreement has been struck with the CNR and they will co-operate in municipalities which will control programs for the entire municipality.

Parks and Renewable Resources is all under control, and contact people have been established. Irrigation canals, in most situations it is not recommended that chemicals be applied closer than 25 metres by ground equipment or 50 metres with aerial equipment to water bodies not wholly confined within an individual's property boundaries, so those parts of our province in regards to irrigation canals.

PFRA pastures as it respects grasshopper control, is being will managed as well. We will co-operate to the fullest extent possible in any grasshopper control program established by a municipality if all the farmers in the affected areas participate to obtain maximum control.

Further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Indian reservations, as well, will be covered under the comprehensive grasshopper control program as announced by the Minister of Agriculture, notwithstanding the fact that there is still one further program which is part of that comprehensive program, and that is the Department of Highways.

The Minister of Highways has given his assurance that that department will cover 100 per cent of the cost of spraying on Department of highways road allowances.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question as to whether or not this government has adequately addressed the grasshopper situation in Saskatchewan, I believe, is well answered, and it's well answered, and it's well answered in the affirmative. We have . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, I don't know. The member for Athabasca is talking to me from his seat, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I don't know whether they have grasshoppers on the great lakes in the North or not, but if they are they should be getting off of there fairly quick. All right. There is . . . That's right. Now, then . . .

The other thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I want to touch on — this motion as I read it, it was read into the records. The member for Assiniboia and Gravelbourg laid it out quite nicely. We have amended it. What is it really talking about?

It's talking about whether or not this government and the federal government are doing anything to assist farmers in their economic crisis. And they talk about the crisis being because of bad weather conditions, high interest rates, grasshoppers — which I've just covered, and surely you don't want me to go over that again. Those issues are the ones that you have identified in your motion.

Well let's talk about interest rates, and let's ask the people of Saskatchewan by way of this motion, what did an NDP government in 11 years in administration ever do about high interest rates? Absolutely nothing. You did nothing with regards to high interest rates. You were not able to address that question in 11 years in office. And yet you have the audacity to stand in this House and introduce the motions that you have to condemn this government, and to condemn the federal government for their so-called inability to manage the affairs of agriculture I the province of Saskatchewan. Now that's audacity.

With regards to interest rates, we don't need to go through the whole list, but we all know that this government has introduced programs unprecedented by any other government in the history of this province for its agricultural sector.

Let's talk about what we've done in terms of a percentage and compare that to what the NDP did when they were in power. The agriculture budget today in Saskatchewan is 54 per cent

higher than it ever was under their administration — 54 per cent higher. And we say that, and you have to ask yourself, well where did you get the extra money, like over \$150 million of new money into agriculture?

One of the places we got it is right through our corporate rate structure, which the Minister of Finance is proud to indicate to this House is the highest in Canada. I believe it's twice the corporate rate that you have in Manitoba — twice the corporate rate. So we're able to take those moneys that we get from those multinationals that you hate so badly and we're able to put it into agriculture — 150 million new dollars — 54 per cent.

So do I ever hear any of you ever talk about that? No, not at all. You never talk about the fact that we have done more for agriculture than any minister under an NDP government has ever done in the history of this province. Ever.

You had a farm fuel rebate program, supposedly to help the farmers in easing the cost-price squeeze, which you raise in your motion. And what did you do with it? Well you had one minister, Gordon MacMurchy, who took it off. And if that wasn't enough, you had another one, his name was Edgar Kaeding. He used to represent Saltcoats riding. The he took it off. So you had two ministers of agriculture that took away a farm fuel rebate program.

And you're quiet on that. Sure you are. You want to forget that. There's a few things in the past you want to forget, and those are some of them.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's no point in my standing here and going down the whole list . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, that's right. The NDP applaud that because they don't want to hear me go down a whole list of accomplishments in agriculture — a tremendous accomplishment by this government in agriculture — because it far supersedes whatever the NDP were able to do.

And, Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that needs to be brought to their attention before I take my place. When you take a look at all of the provincial programs, the federal programs, and add them up and see what they come out to as a benefit to the people of Saskatchewan . . . to the farmers in Saskatchewan, and I just want to share that with the members, just for their information. If I take a look at the totals: provincial, 161.3 million; federal, 161; stabilization insurance, 636; for a total of 959.3.

Now then, average that per farmer. And what is that worth per farmer? It's two point . . . 2,443.9 provincially; 2,439.4 federally; and 9,636.4 for the stabilization and insurance; for a total of \$14,519.70 per farmer.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — And you say we don't do nothing for farmers.

**MR. BIRKBECK:** — And we don't anything for farmers — 160-some-odd million dollars in new money, a budget 54 per cent higher than yours, and those kinds of benefits per average per farmer. And on top of that we're on top of the hopping grasshopper control. Right?

So, Mr. Speaker, what needs more to be said? We now rest our case on that. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

(1615)

## **PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS**

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mrs. Caswell that Bill No. 53 — **An Act respecting Freedom of Informed Choice concerning Abortions in Saskatchewan** be now read a second time.

**HON. MR. DIRKS:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fundamental question raised by this Bill is as follows, I believe: does the state have a compelling interest to ensure that a woman about to have an abortion understands very clearly what is involved; does she understand the nature of the procedure, the possible implications and risks, and the state of development of the unborn child?

I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that the state, that society through its government, does have a compelling interest to ensure that such information is made available. And I would therefore submit to this Assembly that the principle inherent in this Bill, that of provision of information, is a sound principle, at heart a democratic principle, and that this Bill is in the best interest of the citizens of this province.

I wish to take a few minutes to elaborate, Mr. Speaker, on why I believe society does have a compelling interest to ensure that accurate and full abortion is provided. In the first place, Mr. Speaker, abortion is the taking of developing human life. That is an incontestable fact. What we know today about fetal life is far in advance of what was known a decade or two ago. Long gone are the days, Mr. Speaker, when anyone in good conscience can refer to the developing fetus as but a blob of cells or an appendage of maternal tissue.

The science of fetology has in recent years rapidly pushed back the frontiers of knowledge concerning the humanity of the unborn child. Indeed, this accumulated knowledge has led prominent medical persons who once advocated an open approach to abortion, to reject their earlier position, and today they embrace a far more selective approach to abortion.

This very fact itself, Mr. Speaker, should be sufficient reason for us to support the view that if highly educated professional physicians have changed their minds on the abortion question, based on new-found knowledge, then surely the unprofessional lay person should have access to similar information in order that their decision concerning abortion would be an informed one.

I shall not take the time of the Assembly to review in detail the information which fetologists have produced during the past decade. That information is readily available to those who have the time and inclination to research such information.

Suffice it to say that based on this expansion of knowledge, people on all sides of the abortion controversy unanimously agree that abortion does, in fact, terminate a separate and distinct developing human life. And it is because abortion is involved with the taking of developing human life that the state must take appropriate steps to ensure that such life is not taken capriciously, precipitately, in a atmosphere of undue pressure, or without a due appreciation for the nature and possible consequences of the abortion procedure.

While our law does permit abortion, Mr. Speaker, we nevertheless owe it all society to ensure that the ending of that life will not take place without those involved clearly appreciating the magnitude and the reality of the abortion act. That appreciation, Mr. Speaker, obviously cannot take place without full and complete disclosure of accurate information about the fetus, the abortion procedure, and possible short- and long-term implications.

Now some will argue that the present procedure is adequate to provide that information.



However, those in our society on both sides of the abortion controversy who have researched this matter in any detail, will have to candidly admit that on occasion pregnant women have unfortunately not been given full, complete, and, in some cases, even accurate information on abortion.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, those who are responsible for making the decision to terminate an unborn human life should also clearly make that decision with full knowledge and free from any undue pressure. It would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, to be rather contradictory for a civilized democratic society which puts a high value on informed choice and on life, to suggest that those involved in the abortion decisions shouldn't be denied such information.

And so, Mr. Speaker, because we are talking about today a medical procedure which results in the taking of developing human life, surely then society, through its government, does have a compelling interest to ensure that full and accurate information is provided to the pregnant women considering an abortion.

I wish now to move to the second major argument in support of the principle of this Bill. Just as we have witnessed a substantial advance in fetal science since the 1960's, so we have also come to understand that abortions may have significant physiological implications to which citizens should not turn a blind eye.

I will not take the time to review in detail the many physiological implications of abortion, except to note for the Assembly that they include such significant implications as a higher rate of premature births and a much higher rate of miscarriages in subsequent pregnancies.

These, of course, are significant implications, not only for the mother, but clearly for all citizens in view of the higher medical costs which will be borne by taxpayers as a consequence of these implications.

I would note, Mr. Speaker, that a recent report carried in *The Toronto Star* indicates that Saskatchewan has one of the highest rates of teenage abortion. And of course we know that teenagers who undergo abortions experience a much higher rate of premature birth in subsequent pregnancies.

The risks and long-term problems associated with such abortion-related premature births should in and of itself, Mr. Speaker, be sufficient reason for information about abortion risks being provided.

I also want to speak about the psychological risks attendant to abortion. What has become clear over the past decade and a half is that abortion is not a simple medical procedure with but minor consequences for many women who undergo abortions. What is also clear is that many women who have undergone abortions did so without accurate information, under pressure, and they have suffered because of that decision. And had they known then, prior to the abortion, what they know now about abortion, they would not have chosen to terminate the developing life within them.

The devastating psychological implications of abortion have been well documented for some years now, Mr. Speaker. The rapid proliferation in the United States of branches of the organization entitled Women Exploited by Abortion is a clear indication that women may suffer devastating consequences from abortion, and that in many instances they were provided with very little, if any, information prior to the abortion.

I refer here to the article carried in the *Washington Times* on Wednesday, October 3, 1983. We have no reason to believe, Mr. Speaker, that the psychological impacts of abortion in Canada or in Saskatchewan. Indeed, here in Saskatchewan as early as 1974, a practising

psychiatrist, Dr. E. Jones, after having referred 500 patients for legal abortions based on psychiatric grounds, reversed her position on the abortion controversy, based on the psychological impacts of abortion on the women with whom she was dealing.

And as early as 1966, Mr. Speaker, the council of Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in England reported that the incidence of serious permanent psychiatric aftermath from abortion is variously reported as being from between 9 and 59 per cent.

I would therefore argue, Mr. Speaker, that the state, that society through its government, does have a compelling interest to provide abortion information to anyone considering an abortion. To deny any woman the right to make a truly informed decision is discriminatory against women. Indeed, it is undemocratic.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to briefly deal with the objections that have been raised against the principle of this Bill. It is suggested that the effect of this Bill would be to limit access of women to abortion. I do not believe this would be the case, as Dr. LM Hanson, associate professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at the University of Saskatchewan, and one who should know, has publicly stated: "Bill 53 is not designed to limit access to abortion, for (he goes on to state) how can information limit access to abortion?"

Secondly, it is suggested that the information to be provided to the woman would be nothing but anti-abortion propaganda. I would remind the members that the information to be provided under this Bill is readily available to the professional medical community, and would be provided to the woman by a practising professional physician or physicians. To therefore suggest that the information referred to in the Bill is propaganda is to call into question the professionalism of our medical experts.

Thirdly, it is argued that the decision to have an abortion should be purely a private decision between a woman and her doctor with no form of interference or intrusion by the state. However, Mr. Speaker, the fact that we are dealing with matters pertaining to the destruction of developing human life is sufficient reason — indeed it is a most compelling reason — for the state to take an active interest in this matter. In addition, the psychological and physiological implications of abortions are not simply private implications. These implications impact not just on the woman but also on family, friends, associates, and very clearly on the taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill which in principle deals with the provision of information. For the reasons that I have elaborated I believe that the provision of abortion information is a sound principle, in keeping with our best democratic traditions. It is a Bill which is based upon information garnered from the fields of medical science and human psychology. It is a Bill whose basic principle is worthy of legislative support.

Mr. Speaker, I have fought against the unnecessary taking of developing human life for many years, and will continue to do so. Few causes are more important. But I also believe, Mr. Speaker, that we as legislators must act, and must be seen to be acting responsibly within our legal boundaries.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is argued from many quarters that this private members' Bill is unconstitutional. Some advance the argument that the provincial legislature does not have the legal jurisdiction to pass a Bill dealing with the particular subject matter before the Assembly today. Whether or not this legislature, or the federal parliament, has legal jurisdiction to legislate on this matter is a very important question. Others advance the argument that various provisions of the Bill, even if amended, would violate the highest law of the land, the charter of rights. These are arguments that responsible legislators cannot dismiss, and which must be given rational consideration.

Because of the legal issues involved in this Bill, because of the sensitive and potentially divisive nature of this legislation, and to ensure that this Assembly is not seen to act perceptibly, and that the people of this province can have faith that this legislature will not step beyond its legal boundaries — I believe it would be in the best interests of all concerned, on both sides of this matter, for this private members' Bill, along with proposed amendments, to be referred to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal for a ruling on its constitutionality before this Bill proceeds further in our legislature. Such a reference would ensure that this legislature does not pass legislation which is beyond its constitutional jurisdiction, if indeed this Bill is unconstitutional, which I hope it isn't. And such reference will help provide guide-lines for this legislature as to what law-making authority pertaining to abortion is, in fact, in the jurisdiction of this particular legislature.

In conclusion then, Mr. Speaker, just as I believe the principle of this Bill is in the best interest of society, I also believe it would be in the best interests of our citizens for this private members' Bill to be referred to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal for a ruling on its constitutionality.

(1630)

**HON. MR. LANE:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think all hon. members understand the comments made by the member from Regina Rosemont. There are few that have spoken more strongly on the issue and fought more strongly on the issue than that hon. member. And I personally know the difficulties which he faced in taking the position that he did, a position that I believe that all hon. members and all fair-minded people will see as a reasonable and necessary approach.

Many questions have been raised as to whether Bill 53, if enacted, would be constitutionally valid legislation. It has been clear, Mr. Speaker, that the province has jurisdiction to enact legislation in relation to matters of health and hospitals. It also has jurisdiction in relation to consent to medical treatment in a general sense. It could be certainly argued that Bill 53 deals with these subject areas, and that therefore it is within the jurisdiction of the province to act in the manner set out.

Indeed, it could be pointed out that subsection 251(7) of the Criminal Code specifically preserves the need to obtain any authorisations or consents that may otherwise be required when a legal abortion is to be performed, that is an abortion pursuant to section 251 of the Criminal Code, and unless there is relevant federal legislation the proposed Bill may then be valid under the provincial health power.

It is also beyond doubt that the province has jurisdiction in relation to the matter of consent to medical and surgical treatment. And the province's powers are set out in those sections of the British North America Act: section 92(7), the establishment of hospitals; section 92(13), under property and civil rights; and section 92(16), matters of a local or private nature.

It is apparent, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill deals with matters related to health and medical consent, and therefore there are grounds to believe that the Bill is valid under provincial legislation.

However, all hon. members know that abortion is a subject matter which has been dealt with by the Criminal Code of Canada, and section 251 of the code outlines the circumstances in which abortion can legally take place. Section 251 appears to leave room for the operation of provincial laws. Nevertheless, concerns have arisen as to whether Bill 53 might infringe upon the criminal law power of the Parliament of Canada, and be in conflict with section 251 of the Criminal Code, and therefore *ultra vires* of the province of Saskatchewan.

And the Supreme Court of Canada has recently ruled on the paramountcy or the exclusivity of the criminal law in the Westerdorp case.

I further add, Mr. Speaker, that the question of morality has been upheld by the courts as one

within exclusive federal — not provincial — jurisdiction. If the Bill is ruled as having a moral purpose as opposed to a health purpose, it would then be ruled *ultra vires* of the province because, as I say, morality is a matter within the federal jurisdiction under section 91(27) of the Constitution Act of Canada.

Concerns have also been raised as to whether some of the provisions of the Bill might be inconsistent with certain of the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. For example, the section requiring the husband's consent would probably violate section 15(1) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and may violate section 7, guaranteeing the life and security of the person. I am advised that the member proposing the Bill is proposing amendments to correct this particular section.

The question of consent of a parent or guardian of a child may also violate section 7, and may also discriminate by reason of age, contrary to section 15, but also the hon. member proposing the Bill is proposing an amendment which would, in my view, take away the contravention of the charter.

I'm frankly not persuaded by the argument that freedom of expression is violated by section 2 — violated by the proposed Bill. It's not one that in my view is a strong argument because the Bill requires the supply of information and is not telling a doctor what to say and there is nothing to prevent a doctor from giving information supporting an abortion.

So I question whether the charter arguments are as strong in light of the amendments, I'm advised, being proposed by the hon. member.

However, the issues raised are deep and real concerns. And the issue is an important matter. In the circumstances, in my view it is appropriate that the issue of the constitutional validity of the Bill be referred to our court of appeal pursuant to The Constitutional Questions Act before it is further considered by the Assembly.

In asking the court of appeal to review the Bill before it is enacted through a special reference, we will be able to remove any doubts as to whether or not the province has jurisdiction to act in the manner proposed. And I believe strongly, Mr. Speaker, that this is a responsible way to deal with this legally difficult issue.

A reference to the court of appeal will allow the matter to be dealt with by those very people who will ultimately decide the issue in any case. Parties on both sides have threatened to take the Bill to the courts and, as I say, it will be before the courts if those arguments are to be taken at face value. And I think all people would take them at face value.

The procedure of a reference will expedite a judicial resolution of this matter. For the first time after the decision by the courts, all legislatures in Canada will know their legislative limits in dealing with this very important issue. And we hope, Mr. Speaker, that this procedure will allow an expeditious resolution so that we as legislators can deal securely with the legislative powers that we have on this matter, and that those parties concerned about the issue will know the limits and the legislative powers of all legislatures in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I'm therefore proposing an amendment, seconded by the member from Meadow Lake:

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

Bill 53, An Act respecting Freedom of Informed Choice, concerning abortions in Saskatchewan, be not now read a second time, so that the subject matter of the Bill may be referred to the Court of Appeal of Saskatchewan pursuant to the provisions of The Constitutional Questions Act.

Mr. Speaker, that is an amendment that I will be making, and I will advise, as well, that under the provisions of The Constitutional Questions Act of Saskatchewan, either party would also have an automatic right of appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada which should further expedite a resolution of the issue.

Mr. Speaker, I so move the motion, seconded by the member from Meadow Lake.

The debate continues concurrent on the motion and the amendment.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to participate briefly in the debate on the Bill before us and the important issues it raises.

Some of the government members opposite have said outside the Assembly that the Bill is about a fundamental, moral, and religious issue — abortion. And there are many of my own constituents and many other Saskatchewan people who will agree that abortion is indeed an absolutely fundamental, moral, and religious issue. In their view, from the time of conception, the fetus is an unborn child, a distinct and unique person, a human being. Abortion is therefore, accordingly, according to this view, the ending of a life, the killing of a distinct and unique person. They find that wrong, and a violation of basic moral and religious principles.

Some summarize their position as the “right to life,” stressing the positive value they attach to life of the unborn child, and their opposition to abortion which ends that life. And they look across Canada at the large number of abortions annually, and they are indeed shaken: more than 30,000 per year in Ontario; more than 12,000 per year in British Columbia; more than 6,000 per year in Alberta; more than 65,000 a year across Canada.

And they looked to the Conservative governments across Canada, because there are eight provincial and one federal, and they are deeply disappointed. They see no support from the British Columbia government, but 12,000 abortions per year; no support for their position from the Conservative government of Alberta, but 6,000 abortions per year; no support for the right-to-life position from the Government of Ontario, but more than 30,000 abortions. And now, no support whatsoever for the right-to-life position from the Mulroney Conservative government in Ottawa, but 65,000 abortions across Canada each year.

Mr. Speaker, when those who espouse the view that abortion is fundamentally wrong — morally and religiously wrong — when they look closely at this Bill, they see it does not deal with their concerns. It does not acknowledge their position and endorse it. Those people, Mr. Speaker, are very disappointed with what has been brought forward in this Bill.

Moreover, they are especially disappointed because of the Bill’s central thrust, its central and critical provision, the matter of consent. How, they ask, does destroying an unborn child become correct and acceptable just because one more person consents to that killing? Why is it morally wrong for a young unmarried woman to have an abortion, they ask, but somehow right, somehow okay, if she has the consent of her parents? For those Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is totally wrong since it seeks to sanction or endorse abortion if only we get the consent of some individuals.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, as we have looked at this Bill, I submit that it is indeed a bad Bill — bad from many aspects; and as others have said, in respect to the constitutionality, but also in addressing the position of those who are opposed to abortions.

I want to indicate that Campaign Life of Saskatchewan have examined the details of the Bill. I want only, in closing, to quote a portion of their comment. And they say:

While we cannot object to the principle of informed consent prior to abortion —

which incidentally is required for any surgical procedure including abortions, without Caswell's Bill — we must object to her presentation of this as a pro-life Bill with pro-life support.

I want to quote one other passage from another paragraph:

It is written, providing the choice to abort, and does not address itself at all to the right to life of the unborn child.

One closing comment by the Campaign Life of Saskatchewan:

This Bill provides no effective measure to eliminate unnecessary abortions or even to limit them. Even strengthened, the effectiveness of Caswell's Bill would be minimal . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, please. I would caution the member about using the names of another member. If he has a comment about the member, then use the constituency.

**MR. KOSKIE:** — I was just in reply . . . Well, I won't argue, fine.

Even strengthened, effectiveness of the Bill would be minimal, since it does not address the issue of abortion squarely. This, too, is typical of the PC government's other attempts to appear to be taking a pro-life action.

Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on the motion that has been put forward, or the amendment by the Minister of Justice, to indicate that the government had a full opportunity to review the Bill, to give some consultation, certainly from the Minister of Justice and the department, in respect to the constitutionality, in respect . . . It could have been sent out to the various groups for their comments, but it was brought in, and now the government are finding themselves in a dilemma. They want to refer it to the court of appeal to determine the constitutionality.

I think what it represents is a division in the caucus across the way and this is a method of bailing out of a dilemma which they have placed themselves.

**MR. SHILLINGTON:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin my comments with a word about the procedure. It is most unusual, Mr. Speaker.

Constitutional references are not unknown in this Assembly. Constitutional references do take place from time to time, but I've never seen a constitutional reference take place quite in this fashion.

What has been done in every other occasion is that a Bill proceeds and the amendments are made which might strengthen its constitutional position, and then after the Bill passes, but before it becomes law, it is then referred to the court of appeal. I've never seen a Bill referred directly from second reading to a court of appeal without any attempt to clean up the Bill.

And there are some obvious things that could be done to clean up the Bill. The fact that this highly unusual procedure has been used I think confirms what everybody knows, and that is that the members of the Executive Council know this is a bad Bill. It will not work. It will do more harm than good. This is their way of accomplishing what they haven't the courage to tell the member from Saskatoon Westmount, and that is that it's not a good Bill. This is their way of accomplishing what they have not the courage to say.

I'm going to put it in crystal clear. My first line of my comments read . . . I rise today to speak briefly on Bill 53 and register my firm opposition to the Bill. At the onset, I wish to establish two things, notwithstanding some of the comments which have been made. While the proponents

of this Bill would like to say it's a Bill about abortion, it is in fact a Bill about human rights, the rights of women.

The second thing I want to say is that the Bill does absolutely — nothing whatsoever — to acknowledge or to respond to a major social issue before us, the deeply troubling issue of unwanted pregnancies and how to reduce that number. For the real social issue here in Saskatchewan and elsewhere in Canada is not abortion, but assuring that every child is a wanted child, every pregnancy a wanted pregnancy. That is the real social issue facing us. That is the problem which all of us, men and women of all parties, should seek to address and resolve.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, is wrong-headed, and it is offensive on several counts. The comments have been made about the constitutionality of the Bill. I agree with some of the comments made by the Minister of Justice. I could add a number of other grounds by which I think this Bill violates the constitution. Given the approach of the Supreme Court, court of appeals in recent times. it would seem not to have a great deal of chance of surviving any reference.

I say to the member from Saskatoon Westmount, I think the Bill is therefore dead. I would have felt better if the members of the Assembly had voted in that fashion, instead of accomplishing the same thing in this oblique fashion.

The Bill purports to require that certain information — it might just as fairly be called certain propaganda — be formally communicated to a woman, and in some cases to her husband and parents. The nature, the source, the authorship, the approval of this propaganda is left unspecified in the Bill. But it is clear from the sponsor's remarks, and the remarks which other members have made, that the propaganda is to be narrow, one-sided, biased, authoritative, and directive.

Much more serious however and much more alarming are the central principles and provisions of the Bill which focus on consent. This Bill, in short, would require not just the consent of the woman herself, but the consent of the father, or, if she's a minor, or both parents. First of all, there is no mention of the father of the child. What the Bill's proponent has not specified is that the father must also consent. Why that should have been the case, I don't know.

But it is the simple issue of consent which is really at the heart of the Bill. It would require that a mature, independent woman, who should otherwise have all the legal rights of an adult in a democratic society, all the rights of free people in a free society, suddenly finding her rights diminished and curtailed and her freedom reduced.

The Bill says that not only is her consent required . . . And I state the obvious, her consent is required before any operation of any sort if performed by any doctor. I do not think this Bill adds to that fundamental principle which has been a part of medical practice for as long as there have been doctors.

Not only is her consent alone, but the consent of her husband is needed. She becomes less than a free person. She has fewer rights than before. She must now have the formal written consent of other people if she wishes an abortion. That's the central thrust of this Bill. It is an affront to women. It totally ignores the many ugly circumstances which result in unwanted pregnancies — cases such as rape and incest. It is regressive. It is offensive to women's rights, a violation of fundamental human rights of women.

Mr. Speaker, I invite members opposite to take a hard, close look at the Bill, and to note what its opponents are saying. Many are saying that they do not advocate abortion as a means of control, but they certainly do not endorse any legislation such as this which violates human rights in such a fundamental fashion.

Others agree that abortion is indeed a moral and religious issue, a matter of conscience for a

woman to decide herself in consultation with her medical and spiritual advisors, but they do not endorse such a blatant violation of the rights of women, the basic human rights which ostensibly are held equally by all individuals in a free society whatever their sex.

Mr. Speaker, I make another, I think, obvious comment. No one would quarrel with the role which has been enunciated in a sense for the Bill, and that is that all consent should be free and fully informed. No one suggests it should be otherwise. It is a serious violation of the ethics to which all doctors subscribe, and to which I think they all privately subscribe as well, both publicly and privately: that is that all consent should be informed, all consent should be voluntary.

I think doctors make an effort to ensure that all consent is full and informed. If they don't, they leave themselves open for legal suits which are very, very expensive, in addition to the embarrassment of them. It is our position however that this Bill doesn't accomplish that, doesn't contribute to it, and is offensive on the grounds of human rights.

Let me just say a couple of words about what would be the clear consequences if the Bill is passed, and I cite only three. First, it will set back many, many years the progress Canadians have made in human rights. Secondly, it will almost certainly reduce the number of abortions in Saskatchewan thus forcing affluent women or those who have strong, close support to go to the United States or elsewhere to seek an abortion, while those who are not affluent or have not one to support them don't have that option. Finally, the Bill will do nothing, to meet the basis of the problem — to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies in our society.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill before us is a bad Bill. It is poorly conceived. It is poorly drafted. It represents an offensive and regressive policy decision. I firmly oppose it, and would really have wished that members opposite had had the courage of their convictions and had voted on the Bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. LINGENFELTER:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak briefly on the debate which is occurring concurrently on Bill 53, as well as the reference motion put by the Minister of Justice. And I want to say that I suppose that in this case I respect the judgement of the Minister of Justice on this one issue where he has, on behalf of his caucus who have moved in a very inappropriate way in the past month with Bill 53, bailed them out once again.

I find it I suppose in some ways disgusting that a government would bring in a Bill like this, knowing full well all the consequences that would come with it, out it before the Assembly, and then not having the courage, as they later changed their mind to believe that it was a bad Bill, trying to avoid voting against the Bill, and then had to call on the Minister of Justice to get them out of the problem that they had created.

Mr. Speaker, in my view . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, please. Being 5 o'clock this House is now recessed until 7 p.m. this evening.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.