

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, this morning a number of my colleagues and I met with a group of individuals, some representing SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), to discuss the farm situation we are facing. And I would like to introduce to you and to this Assembly the individuals that we met with.

First of all from the RM of Grayson — and I'll ask the gentlemen if they'd just stand so we can recognize them — Bill Bisch, Peter Herpberger, Lawrence Kryslar, Dave Reiger. From the RM of Prairie Rose, Ron Federson and Joe Birtles. From the RM of Silverwood, Richard Westberg and Jim Cairns. From the RM of Willowdale, Lloyd McIntyre and Adolf Beutler.

Would the members please join me in welcoming these men here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to other members of the Legislative Assembly, some 10 people who are visiting here from the Southeast Regional College in Weyburn. They are accompanied by their teacher, Elaine Martin. They are sitting in the Speaker's gallery, Mr. Speaker.

I would just ask them to stand and be acknowledged and have everyone here join me in welcoming them to the Assembly. And I'll be meeting with them after question period for drinks and pictures, Mr. Speaker. Please welcome the guests from Southeast Regional College.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly, two people seated in the east gallery — I'll ask them to stand as I announce them — Blaine Couselan and Gunnar Passemore, both in the east gallery.

Please welcome these visitors to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly, the president of the New Democratic Party of Canada, Sandra Mitchell of Saskatoon.

As members know, I have the honour to be married to Sandra and am very proud of the work that she's doing, as are the Mitchell children, Janet, Roberta, Stephanie, Shannon, Donna, and Alison. I'd like you to welcome Sandra to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Financial Assistance to Farmers for Seeding

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is directed to the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture, and I have here in front of me a copy of the Speech from the Throne, sir, which was delivered yesterday.

And on page 4 of the Speech from the Throne, it says there that the government has received (here are the words):

... a commitment from the Government of Canada that financial assistance will be provided to farmers for spring seeding.

Those are the operative words — a commitment that financial assistance will be provided to farmers for spring seeding.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is this: now is the time — it being March 20 or thereabouts, 1990 — for specific, cold, hard details or facts surrounding that commitment and that assistance. Mr. Premier, will you please stand up today in the House and advise the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan, let alone the members of the House, exactly the details: how will that payment made; to whom will it be made; and when will it be made? Will it be made for certain before, say, April 15, 1990, before spring seeding, in order for the farmers to have the cash on the dash, as it were?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I can report to the hon. member that if I had all of the details of how payments would be made and the amount of the payments and to whom they would be going to, I would be standing in my place today announcing them. I can say to the hon. member, as he knows — and he's had experience in negotiating with other governments, particularly federal governments, and you're dealing with literally hundreds of millions and billions of dollars — it is a negotiating process that takes some time and is fairly serious discussions. I can only say to the hon. member, he can, I'm sure, in his efforts to help farmers, recall when interest rates were high, trying to get help, trying to back up farmers in drought. And it's complicated and it's difficult.

Mr. Speaker, we have provided hundreds of millions and billions of dollars to farmers. I have a commitment from the federal government that there will be help again this spring and this year. When the details of those financial assistance packages are ready, I will be only happy to announce them to the hon. member and to the public here in Saskatchewan. I'm not about to announce them before they're ready, Mr. Speaker, because there are hundreds of millions and billions of dollars at stake, and we want to treat it with all the respect that it deserves.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture. The word which the Premier has used in his Speech from the Throne yesterday was the word “commitment”. Now commitment, I think, in plain, good old-fashioned English means just that; that there is a commitment of some certain methodology of payment and the dates of payment. That’s what a commitment’s all about — not a promise; not an intention to negotiate; not a statement of continuing negotiations, but a commitment.

And the Premier’s been down to Ottawa himself on numerous occasions talking to Mr. Mazankowski and Mr. Mulroney. Surely the Premier must be able to be in a position today to get up and to tell this House and the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan something a little more than it’s very tough dealing with Ottawa. We all know it’s very tough dealing with Ottawa, especially the current government in Ottawa, but spring seeding is right here around the corner. Mr. Premier, you’ve got to give us the details and the hard facts now. Will you please stand up and do so?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, it may be relatively easy to stand in your place and say, give me all the details on several hundred million dollars that are going to go to people in Saskatchewan and who’s going to receive them and how much each farmer and in what kinds of conditions. It’s easy to say that. I will say to the hon. member, when we have delivered that kind of money before, it took a great deal of time and attention and effort. And it’s amounted to literally hundreds of millions and billions of dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I will say that we’re taking it very seriously. We are talking to not only the SARM that is here in restructuring the Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan, talking to them about the Farm Credit Corporation, talking to the bankers and financial institutions and the federal government, that farmers and farm organizations from here to Geneva and Brussels in dealing with the international situation as well as the local financial situation, Mr. Speaker — it is the combination of all of those that we’ve got the commitment on that we will deal with this spring and on through 1990 and 1991, particularly as we come to the final negotiations on what will the price of wheat be, particularly at the international level.

Mr. Speaker, I’ll say to the hon. member, he is anxious to receive information on the size of the package and where it goes. I can only say, Mr. Speaker, we’re working every day, every week, in making sure that our negotiations and our requests for Saskatchewan farmers are before the cabinet in Ottawa on an ongoing steady basis.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan, and I hope, Mr. Speaker, you’ll bear with me and so will you, Mr. Premier. I’m reading again from your Speech from the Throne of yesterday. Let there be no mistake what those words say. The words say:

My government has received a commitment (my government has received a commitment) from the Government of Canada that financial assistance will be provided to farmers for spring seeding.

End of quotation, full stop. Those are your words, sir, not mine. Those are your words, presumably put in there because the Ottawa government has given you a commitment. I don’t want an answer which tells us about all the problems in eastern Europe and elsewhere. We know about that. I want, on behalf of the farmers of Saskatchewan, for you to get up now, March 20, 1990 — spring seeding is here — and tell us what that commitment is. It’s your words. What is the commitment?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I will only say again to the hon. member, this problem that we face in rural Saskatchewan requires all the sensitivity and all the commitment and all the seriousness that we can give it. It doesn’t require any kind of grandstanding. It requires complete co-operation on both sides of this legislature, Mr. Speaker. We’ll be debating that later today, as it’s come up earlier. We require all the co-operation and all the sincerity that we can put together to make sure that we help rural Saskatchewan this spring.

Now we have got a commitment from the federal government that they will help. The hon. member wants me to jump out and say, well, here it is in detail. I am negotiating with them, Mr. Speaker, on all the details for all the farmers and all the programs that have been suggested by the SARM and other agricultural organizations.

He doesn’t want me to rush into it and design it wrong. He’d be the first to stand on his feet and say, well, you didn’t do this right, or the drought program didn’t have this line, or other kinds of things. We’ve got to be very, very careful that we do it as accurately and as broadly and as in depth as possible, Mr. Speaker. That takes serious conversation and serious negotiation with a government that is talking about hundreds of millions of dollars. And that’s certainly what we have asked for, and you’ll see in a motion before this legislature later today.

So I say to the hon. member, I appreciate the fact that he would like to know all the details. He has tried to negotiate in the past, Mr. Speaker. We would be . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question for the Premier. Mr. Premier, I understand and the members on this side of the House understand that these could be complicated negotiations and discussions. Let’s put that argument aside. I accept that.

But I say to you, sir, this is a problem which just did not arise last night or last month. This is a problem which has been on your plate for the last couple of years, if not more. Since 1985 the federal government under Mr. Mulroney has been promising some form of assistance program for the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan. You’ve

been working on it for quite some time. You use the word "commitment." Are you telling us that there is no commitment other than a commitment to negotiate? Is that the position you're saying today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker . . . If you allow me, Mr. Speaker, and the opposition, I will just take a moment to outline the kinds of financial commitment that we have received in Saskatchewan from the federal government just to . . . and to give him . . . No, Mr. Speaker. If he's serious about this . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . All right, he's serious.

You've asked . . . It's been going on for the last two or three years, last two or three years, and you say that it's been going on — have we made any progress, has there been any delivery, Mr. Speaker? He's asked that.

I just want to point out, since 1985, since 1985, if the hon. member is interested, the federal government has allocated \$6.6 billion to the province of Saskatchewan as the result of several trips and several meetings with respect to negotiation. Now that's special grains, that's deficiency payments, that's drought payments, and we've just received 58 more million dollars as a result of negotiations on a multi-year crop disaster program for one-third of the province of Saskatchewan.

Now \$58 million plus the 6 billion may not be anything to sneeze at. He may say that it may not be too much or it's too little, but I would just say those are the kinds of negotiations that have been going on in the last couple of years. That's the seriousness and an indication of how serious our negotiations are right now, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. I thank him again for that description of the historical past and the events of the past. We're talking about spring seeding 1990; we're not talking about a large portion of which money belongs to the farmers themselves in payments out to the farmers in the past, as you've pointed out. We're talking about the crisis which is before us in 1990.

You'll recall the television speech where you told the people of the province of Saskatchewan how under siege we are. We're talking about today's crisis, and my new question to you therefore is the following, Mr. Premier. Would you be kind enough to tell the House whether or not Mr. Mazankowski is trying to extract from you and the provincial government a cost share, a provincial share, of money toward that \$500 million that the wheat pool is seeking. Is that what Mr. Mazankowski is asking of you, as he says in the various newspaper articles that he is doing; and if so, what is the position of the provincial government; and if so, is that the reason for the delay in this non-announcement today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, the opposition knows that I have said since 1980 that the Government of

Saskatchewan and the federal government should work together to make sure they protect Saskatchewan agriculture and rural Saskatchewan with diversification programs, rural gas programs, education programs, and various kinds of financial assistance, so that we can diversify and strengthen rural Saskatchewan.

The hon. member stood in his place for 11 years and didn't provide that kind of assistance, Mr. Speaker. We are quite prepared, and have in the past. I'll say to the hon. member, when we've asked for assistance coming from the federal government in the form of deficiency payments, they've been paid by the federal government alone in cash; not loans, but \$800 million to the province of Saskatchewan in deficiency payments, Mr. Speaker, as the result of the international trade wars — \$800 million.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member doesn't seem to recall that or doesn't seem to remember the kinds of negotiations that we've had in the past to make sure Saskatchewan farmers are helped. He stands in his place and says, well, are you going to have any help for them in Saskatchewan? I only say, Mr. Speaker, we've had production loan programs when they didn't have any money. We've got cash advances at zero per cent interest rates, after they paid 20 per cent under some administrations. We have been there, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to be there again for the farmers of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I have one last, final new question to the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan. And may I say to the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan that for the moment there'll be many times to debate this. I don't think the House is particularly interested about the litany of past practices or past accomplishments, good or bad. Those may be important; may not be.

I am doing what I think a legitimate Leader of the Opposition should do in a legitimate question period, and that is ask a legitimate question based on your Speech from the Throne, saying that there would be a commitment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my question is this. We know, Mr. Minister, that you've been meeting with Mr. Mazankowski. We know you've held numerous meetings. The newspapers are full of statements that the money is coming. You said that there was a commitment the money is coming. You can't provide the details.

My question to you, sir, is: what in the world is holding up the announcement of that so-called commitment, other than more negotiations? What in the world is holding it up? The wheat pool wants it; all of the farm organizations want it. What in the world is holding it up other than the fact that it does not conform with your political timetable. Is that what's holding it up?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I knew eventually — I knew eventually, Mr. Speaker, that he'd have to get into

politics when it comes to Saskatchewan farmers. He couldn't be sincere long enough, Mr. Speaker, and talk about helping farmers and families, towns and villages and small businesses all across the province of Saskatchewan. It was the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, that started this session, under this crisis situation, saying . . . it's politics for him, Mr. Speaker. I'll say, Mr. Speaker . . .

And now, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the record, they don't want to hear about the record, Mr. Speaker; they don't want to hear about the record. They don't want to hear about what we are doing for Saskatchewan and rural people and saying, give them that record; here's what we will continue to do in the future.

Let me just say this, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member said that he was serious about helping rural Saskatchewan. It is beyond partisan politics. Mr. Leader of the Opposition, it's beyond partisan politics. Take it seriously. This is about helping farmers and towns and villages and young people all across this province, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to base it on our record of providing help to agricultural people, Mr. Speaker, not on rhetoric but on a sincere commitment to defending rural Saskatchewan, and you're going to see that show up, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Multi-Year Disaster Benefits

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier, the Minister of Agriculture, and it concerns the multi-year disaster benefits paid out under crop insurance. Mr. Minister, on March 7 the federal minister, Mr. Mazankowski, told reporters that the payment was held up because your government had not yet submitted the necessary information. He also stated that was part of the hold-up for the \$500 million cash payment.

Mr. Minister, I ask you this: after a week later, when you announced the multi-year disaster program, what were your self-serving motives that caused you to withhold that information going to Ottawa, to delay the payment, and why on earth do you continue to use farmers as pawns on your political chess-board?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Mr. Speaker, in answer to the hon. member's question, first of all, the federal government, I believe early in March, had received the full data on the multi-year disaster benefit. They had . . . I don't know if it had been submitted to the minister at the time, but certainly the system had it.

We had taken some time because of the size of the multi-year disaster benefit that was going to be incorporated within the system. There was 95 RMs that were approved for the multi-year disaster benefit. There was another, about 80, that was very, very close. We went back and rechecked them all over again, which amounted to about 25,000 claims that we had to recheck. Those benefits were then put into the computer and made

available, or will be made available shortly, by the first part of April. There's \$58 million to 95 RMs; I believe about 12,000 producers will receive those cheques, Mr. Speaker.

And I believe that is a substantive amount of money to help those farmers in the areas who have had severe drought over the last two years. When I say severe drought, they've had more than 20 per cent of claims against indemnities, and that's how you figure out the multi-year disaster. So there's a large number of farmers. Fifty-eight million dollars — it's been all put into the process now, and they'll get their cheques in early April.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Minister, you are disagreeing, I guess, with the federal minister. And the point is, if you guys can get your act together, then maybe something can be done, because Alberta and Manitoba have their act together and their farmers are paid.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Minister, farmers paid for that multi-year disaster program through their premiums in the last couple of years. The people in the individual coverage do not get the added benefit. They've paid for it themselves and they're not eligible. Can you explain to me, Mr. Minister, why, when farmers pay for the program, and why, when you exclude some, that you make an announcement tying it into a new aid package out of Ottawa? That is hypocrisy and deceiving of the people. What you are trying to do is say to them that this is a new policy when they've already paid for it. Can you explain those tactics, Mr. Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Mr. Speaker, I assume the member wasn't at the SARM when I made the announcement. I explained it very specifically how it was. First of all, that program has been in place since 1985 — it's not a new program. You have to have two years of consecutive drought in four RMs combined, or a combination of that to qualify. Third, you must have at least 20 per cent losses in each one of those RMs to qualify.

The other thing is, under the individual coverage, they are already at 80 per cent, and the federal legislation says that you cannot exceed paying above more than 80 per cent of the coverage.

Under the area coverage, which is only to 70 per cent maximum, they were charged a premium, about 4 per cent in the South which was added in each year, to about 1 per cent in the North which was cost shared with the federal government. So they paid a premium, the individual coverage, who are under individual coverage, did not pay a premium because they couldn't go beyond the 80 per cent; they couldn't collect on it, so they weren't charged. And that was explained, Mr. Speaker, at the SARM convention to all the delegates there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, in light of all that you have said, can you give me your assurances that all the information is in the hands of those people in Ottawa who are about to bring forward this program? Is all the information in their hands now? If it isn't, when will it be? And thirdly, if it's not, why isn't it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hardy: — Well first of all, Mr. Speaker, they have it all. They've had it since early March. Second, it is not administered by the federal government. It is administered by crop insurance in Saskatchewan — Saskatchewan crop insurance which is co-shared under the reinsurance fund by the federal government. And the third part is that, as I said earlier, it's all in place, it's ready to go, and the premiums will be out.

And I just want to make mention of another one earlier when he said, why were we so long in doing it when Alberta and Manitoba already had theirs out. We have about 43 per cent of the farm lands in Canada in Saskatchewan. We had over 55,000 producers enrolled in the program, and we had over 90,000 claims. So I just want to answer those two questions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Call for Moratorium on Legal Claims Against Farmers

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Premier, the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Premier, you have been talking to the banks and financial institutions, asking them to be a part of the solution to the farm debt crisis. You have been urging the federal Farm Credit Corporation to take a leading role.

My question to you is one of leadership. And I ask you this: will you announce today that your government, through the Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan, will declare a moratorium on all of its legal actions against farmers until such time as there are programs in place that will help to protect the farmers and ease the burden that they are facing? I ask you, will you in fact show that leadership, and will you set the example?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, we have had the concurrence by the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities to assist in designing the policies and the programs for the agricultural credit corporation to look at all the programs and policies that we deal with with respect to ag credit.

I'll also point out to the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, that we have had — and I'm sure the hon. member has had, and I'll check — meetings with the credit unions in the province of Saskatchewan and probably in his constituency, and, I can say, in mine, talking to them, Mr. Speaker, with respect to moratoriums and the impact that that might have on credit for people throughout the province.

Finally I will say to the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, that in meeting with the financial institutions, they reminded us that when interest rates were 20 per cent people in certain jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, wouldn't help at all, and in fact, didn't step in to do anything, let alone deal with the financial crisis, Mr. Speaker. And they said that's when the problem started — at 20 per cent interest rates. That's when we should have had somebody dealing with it. And thank goodness there's somebody that can deal with it now, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — A new question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, you don't have to talk to the financial institutions in respect to ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan). You said it was the Saskatchewan . . . the farmers' bank. All you have to do is talk to yourself and stop the legal actions. That's all it takes.

I want to ask you, Mr. Premier . . . You know, I find it rather troublesome that you go down and you start to lecture the financial institutions as to how they should act in respect to the farmers and ease the burden, and at the same time ACS, your institution, your farmers' bank, is taking more legal actions against farmers than any two banks put together.

Are you aware, Mr. Premier, that in 1988 ACS had legal actions against 620 farmers? By the end of October last year, the first three quarters of '89, he had turned over files on another 2,500 farmers for legal action. I ask you, Mr. Premier, is this the type of leadership that you want to give to the banks and the lending institutions across this nation? Is this the type of leadership that the farmers can expect from you as Minister of Agriculture? Why don't you stand up and take actions that will help them?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, under the agriculture credit corporation and our administration we put out over \$1 billion to farmers at \$25 an acre all across the province of Saskatchewan — \$25 an acre. And they'd asked before under the previous administration and nothing like that ever was there to help them.

We've said to the people of Saskatchewan, we'll be there with over a billion dollars on the production loan program. Now the hon. member stands in his place and said, well maybe that you should put a moratorium on the production loan program for people that didn't make their payments.

I stood in front of 1,500 SARM delegates at this convention over here and I asked them, should we penalize those that paid their production loan payments as we deal with those that don't? And I said, maybe we should give consideration to those that have made their payments, Mr. Speaker, and I got an applause right across the room saying we have to be fair to both.

Now the hon. member stands in his place and says, well you should just cancel moratorium on all of these things that ACS is doing, Mr. Speaker. Go talk to your SARM delegates. Do you know what they'll tell you? You have to

treat those people fairly. Some have worked on the farm and off the farm to make their payments. People have worked very, very hard, winter, summer, fall, on kinds of things to make sure that they can make their payments. We shouldn't penalize those, Mr. Speaker, and we're not, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order.

MOTION UNDER RULE 39

Help for Saskatchewan Farmers

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day I want to move, seconded by the member from Morse, by leave of the Assembly pursuant to rule 39:

Be it resolved that this Assembly, recognizing the serious economic crisis in Saskatchewan, demands the Government of Canada execute its responsibility to Saskatchewan by implementing the following plan of action:

- (1) An immediate announcement of an injection of \$900 million to Saskatchewan farm families with \$500 million to be paid out prior to seeding and the balance of \$400 million to be paid out in late fall.
- (2) Establish a \$1 billion contingency fund to counteract the disastrous effects on grain prices caused by the international grain subsidy wars.
- (3) Bring all possible pressures and resources to bear on the United States and European countries to achieve an early resolution of the international price wars.
- (4) Apply its constitutional authority over banks and lending institutions to achieve a lasting solution to the current national farm debt crisis.
- (5) Instruct the Farm Credit Corporation to rewrite mortgage values at realistic land prices to be accompanied by more reasonable payment schedules.
- (6) Make a greater commitment of federal resources to the current review and implementation of long-term stability programs in agriculture.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words with respect to this resolution. I want to point out, as we have during question period, the seriousness of the situation facing the province of Saskatchewan and farmers in rural Saskatchewan and western Canada.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, this is a non-partisan issue. We

need the co-operation of all members of the legislature, all the financial institutions, all the rural organizations — as we have with the SARM and others — to make sure that we will come to a conclusion and a resolution of one of the most serious economic consequences that we've seen in the last 50 years here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, people need our help. They don't need more rhetoric. They need our assistance, they need our sincere efforts, and they need this House to stand in unanimity to make sure that what we can do here in Saskatchewan, combined with what we can do federally and internationally, will bring the kind of results that are necessary for Saskatchewan people.

We are negotiating, Mr. Speaker — and I'll just say at the outset to the members of legislature — it's not easy for Saskatchewan people to face the kinds of problems that they face, being short several hundred million and indeed billions of dollars. It's not easy when governments have deficits, as we know we all do. Finding cash for people . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, the hon. members say that they never had any deficit. They never came up with billions of dollars for farmers either. And they faced 20 per cent interest rates and they said, I'll just balance the books here; we will not help farmers.

Well I'll just say to the hon. members, we need solutions today. We need your help. We need your co-operation to make sure that we find the kind of results necessary from the federal government and the provincial governments, the financial institutions, our own Farm Credit and others, to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that we provide the kinds of results necessary.

I know when previous governments have tried to negotiate, it's been difficult for them as well. I know how difficult it is to get cash out of another government. And we can go back and look at the history of the province of Saskatchewan and governments here asking for help from the federal government, and the track records speak for themselves. I'm not going to review them.

But I think people in this House would acknowledge it's not easy. Whether it's a Liberal government down East, or whether or it's a Conservative government down East, asking money to be brought out from central Canada and placed on the tables and in the homes and the farms and the communities in western Canada, in Saskatchewan, is a major task. And I know when interest rates are 15 or 18 or 20 per cent and we need help, it isn't easy either.

Getting the central bank to change, getting the Trudeau administration to change or the Mulroney administration to change, when they sit there in central Canada and say, well, that's the way it is because we fight inflation, or whatever.

I know members opposite realize how difficult it is when you face 20 per cent interest rates. And we've seen that. But we've had to take it on here in the West, and we've had to take it on in the province of Saskatchewan. Those kinds of negotiations are difficult, and the record and history speaks for itself.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few moments today to go

through the kinds of things that we believe that can be done, based on the record and the result we've had in the past. And with the co-operation of the members of this legislature, I believe that we can make a significant difference.

I am optimistic about what we can do and what we will do. The people of this province will succeed, and farmers will be on the land, and we will not be intimidated by Europeans or Americans or anybody else, trying to force us off the land so then they can charge us whatever they like for food.

We've taken on OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) when it drove prices down to \$9 a barrel, and we didn't back off. We are going to stand beside Saskatchewan farmers, Saskatchewan rural communities in this province, whether it takes this month or whether it takes hundreds of millions of dollars or whether it takes next year or the next 10 years. You will see us fighting for Saskatchewan food and agriculture in rural communities because it's the right thing to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, in moving this motion, I want to take just a few moments to remind the members opposite, and the members of the House on my side, how significant rural Saskatchewan is and how important it is to the province and indeed to the country.

As one of my ministers said today, we have between 45 and 50 per cent of all the farm land in Canada here. And the people in rural Saskatchewan, in the heartland of wheat-growing country, face a disaster, an economic crisis. They want our sincere efforts. They want us to respond. They want us to react. We see the lowest net farm income that we've seen in 50 years — minus \$9 million in the province of Saskatchewan.

In 1933, under various kinds of drought and economic conditions, nationally and internationally we saw the same. Mr. Speaker, it means that it's going to take an awful lot more than our partisan rhetoric to help these people, these families, these children, men and women, rural and urban, across rural Saskatchewan as we face this crisis.

Saskatchewan families and the rural people in Saskatchewan that amount to something like 65 per cent of the population when you take the cities outside Regina and Saskatoon, are important not only to us economically, but they are our families, our relatives. It's the heart and soul of rural Canada right here in Saskatchewan. Those are the people that we have to defend, and under these severe economic conditions, we're going to be there. The provincial government in Saskatchewan is going to be there, Mr. Speaker, and the federal government has to be there, Mr. Speaker.

Between 20 and 30, 000 farmers are living on an economic and an emotional precipice right now, struggling with an enormous debt, and made even worse by double-digit interest rates. Twenty to 30, 000 farmers in the province of Saskatchewan are facing that. They're shouldering something like 75 per cent of the \$5 billion

debt that is sitting out there. They're your friends and mine, Mr. Speaker. They're friends and relatives of the members opposite, and the people of Saskatchewan, and indeed friends and relatives of the folks all across Canada. They deserve our help.

They're trying to pay for machinery; they're trying to keep enough money in their pockets to feed their families; and at the same time they're trying to buy the family farm. They're looking at providing repairs; they're trying to clean their seed; they're getting ready to put the crop in. It's extremely difficult.

Another 20, 000 of them, Mr. Speaker, have less than \$100, 000 in debt, and they're facing the same slippery slope. If they don't get some assistance, then they can get into the position where they're going to have to start paying their grocer and not their banker. They're going to have to just pay for clothes and just pay for other things, because people know that if you have to have \$1, 500 a month just to keep the family going and that's all you got, you certainly aren't going to have money left over for anything else.

And if you take the 60, 000 farmers that we have at \$1, 500 a month for each of them, that's a little over a billion dollars; that's all the income there is in Saskatchewan in the rural areas right now. That means there's nothing left over for mortgage payments — absolutely nothing; \$1, 500 a family, the average family. And you take that in rural Saskatchewan times 60, 000 farmers — for this year you're going to have zero income, zero capacity in discretionary income to pay for any help or any kind of payments that they might have, other than just live.

Mr. Speaker, businesses also are beginning to show the results and the consequences of what we see before us. Towns and villages in the province of Saskatchewan are suffering, and the businesses are suffering as a result of the cash flow.

I met with the financial institutions and they have said to me, well, it is agriculture. And I reminded them, it's rural Saskatchewan and it's coming back into the towns and villages and indeed the cities, because if farmers don't have money and they're tightening their belt, then they're not selling the repairs, they're not selling the cars, and they're not selling the machinery. What will happen to machinery dealers? What are the consequences to people who are selling in the hardware stores?

Go to the towns and villages and ask small businesses what they think of the situation out there, and they'll say, this is much more than agriculture now; this is rural Saskatchewan. We can't handle the 15 per cent interest rates, and the price of wheat isn't there, the cash flow isn't there, the drought has taken away the production volume. They'll say, this is a crisis and we need the provincial government and the federal government — primarily the federal government — and they know that we've got many programs before them.

Our young people desperately need the help of this legislature and of parliament. If young people are going to find the opportunities here after we go through years of drought and high interest rates and commodity wars, then

we're going to have to do an awful lot, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that our back is to the wall to protect young people all across this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — I will point out, Mr. Speaker, that agriculture is a very, very significant base for our economy, but frankly it is for the nation as well. In Saskatchewan it provides jobs for one-fifth of the labour force and accounts for 20 per cent of all public and private investment in this province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if we have 60 to 65 per cent of the population of this province living outside Regina and Saskatoon, and one in every five jobs in rural Saskatchewan — and that doesn't count the food industry and processing and manufacturing and the service industry associated with it, because food and agriculture are the largest industries — then, Mr. Speaker, I'll only say to you that we will make sure that we do our part in the Government of Saskatchewan, with the co-operation of the members opposite, and we are going to continue to put pressure on the federal government to make sure that it does its part, as it has in the past, Mr. Speaker. Hundreds of millions of dollars to the province of Saskatchewan, literally billions over the years, but we're telling them it isn't over.

(1445)

Now is the time to stand there as we go through with an opportunity, maybe in '91, for lower interest rates; maybe a resolution in the commodity wars so that in fact that we can have some prosperity in rural Saskatchewan. What we need now, Mr. Speaker, is help in the short run to make sure farm families live in the long run.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the drought payment that just went out for \$58 million will be going to people in rural Saskatchewan, will average about \$4, 750 to the people of Saskatchewan that receive it, on average for the farmers. It will touch about one-third of the rural municipal . . . rural RMs here in the province of Saskatchewan, rural municipalities.

And that \$58 million certainly isn't enough to help the people across all of Saskatchewan, but, Mr. Speaker, it's that kind of long-run program that people have been asking for, a multi-year drought disaster mechanism that can kick into gear so that people know: yes, if I have back-to-back droughts, then I can receive 3, 000, 5, 000, 8, 000, or \$10, 000 on my farm because I'm hooked into a program that is sponsored by the provincial government, the farmers, and the federal government together.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I say to the federal government and I say to this legislature and others, that \$58 million is appreciated. It's only the beginning, Mr. Speaker. We need that kind of money all across the province of Saskatchewan, and we need it several times that if we're about to make the kind of changes necessary to make sure farm families will receive assistance, the kind of assistance that is needed in some detail.

For example, Mr. Speaker, and I just want, for the record,

to outline the kinds of things that we can expect and that we are holding the federal government committed to.

We look at the possibility of payments, western grain stabilization. And since 1985, Mr. Speaker, we've received something like \$1.9 billion in the province of Saskatchewan. Now we take on international prices and international commodity wars. I will say to any reporter, nationally or internationally, wheat producers and grain producers in western Canada have been entitled to that \$1.9 billion. I can say to the hon. members and people across this country and any place else, that when we take on treasuries in Europe and the United States, at putting up hundreds of millions of dollars and literally billions of dollars, then providing stabilization payments to the province of Saskatchewan and to our people, are very, very credible things to do. Two billion dollars facing the kinds of subsidies we've seen in Europe where they've taken 15 million metric tons that they used to import and now they export that, a change in 30 million metric tons, is a small price to pay to make sure that we make sure that we maintain any kind of market share and our standard of living.

The Agricultural Stabilization Act, \$32 million in the province of Saskatchewan. The special Canadian grains program deficiency payment, Mr. Speaker, \$858 million. That's the kind of money we're talking about that farmers need in the province of Saskatchewan so that in fact they can get through these difficult times, particularly of price wars and drought.

Grain stabilization programs and Canadian special grains programs are not loans. They don't have to be paid back. This is cash in the people's pockets because they deserve that kind of money.

When you can go into Europe today and see people getting \$700 a tonne for wheat . . . Mr. Speaker, let me give you just a brief illustration. I had the opportunity to talk to the Minister of Agriculture in Finland in January. I'll point out, Mr. Speaker, in asking him about the agricultural programs in countries that deal with Europe, I asked him very specific questions. What is the Canadian farmer up against in exporting grain into Europe? What kind of barriers? What kind of money? I said, what does your farmer get here? He says, the farmer in Finland gets a little over \$720 a tonne for wheat. Well, I said, the farmer in Saskatchewan gets 150 to \$160 a tonne. Where does the money come from? Where does this extra 4 or \$500 million come from? Well, he says, it comes from the Finnish treasury. Well, I said, who finances this? I asked him who financed it. He says, well, the people do. It's the taxpayer and the price of food.

Here in Canada we spend about 11 per cent of our discretionary income on food. In Finland it's over 20 per cent. And the tax revenues going into subsidized agriculture in Finland, Mr. Speaker, are enormous. They've built huge storage bins and granaries all over Finland and they fill them with Finnish wheat, and now they export oats into the United States, into Kentucky, and they export feed grains into the Soviet Union. And we are asked to compete with that when I get \$160 a tonne for wheat on my farm, and they get \$700 a tonne. And you ask me whether Canadian special grains program is

warranted!

Mr. Speaker, I will say to the federal government and I'll say to members opposite and I'll say to any reporter, anybody all across Canada that wonders about food production and keeping farmers alive in this province or in Canada: if other treasuries are going to turn loose \$700 a tonne, which is a difference of 4 or \$500 million in subsidies, to compete against farmers here who are the most efficient in the world — our costs of production are just as low as you can find — should we let our farmers go because treasuries in Europe, in France, in Germany, in Spain, in Great Britain, or the United States are beating us? Should we let our farmers go?

An Hon. Member: — Never.

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Not on your life, Mr. Speaker, not on your life. We will put up our money. We'll have production loan programs. We'll have seeding programs. We'll have low-interest loan programs. We'll take our treasury and we'll put it to the wall for the food industry in this province that has 50 per cent of the farm land, Mr. Speaker, and we will never back away from that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — No hesitation at all is what I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, in asking the federal government for special grain programs, for deficiency payments, for money coming into western Canadian agriculture, when we face these kinds of subsidies internationally.

Think of a market where we used to export 15 million metric ton spring wheat into Europe. And in 10 years, the last 10 years, they've not only locked that out, now they export 15 million metric tons for a net change of 30 million metric tons in Europe and all bought by the treasury. Do you know how much wheat we grow here? — 30 million metric tons. They've replaced with the treasuries exactly what we grow here in wheat.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the farmer's fault; it's not the reeve's fault; it's not the opposition's fault; it's not the government's fault; it's not even the local banker's fault. The shareholders in the credit unions and the banks and other places that deal with the farmers here are starting to realize the problem is largely outside of this country, and that's why I want the co-operation of the members opposite.

I took with me — and I'll point out — vice-president of the wheat pool, Mr. Leroy Larsen; I took Bill Duke, the former president of the western Canadian wheat growers; and I had Hugh Treimans of the canola growers association; and Dick Wright of Wawota who is chairman of the hog board — were with me in Geneva and in Brussels. And they went through those meetings, pointing to those people who were living with all of that kind of subsidy, and they looked them right in the eye and said, you know, you're affecting my family; you're affecting my town and my life and my heritage.

In 1992 they're going to a free trade agreement all over Europe for all the right reasons you can think of — economies of scale, mobility, and all the new jobs — and

they give you all the arguments for it until you get to agriculture, and then it's absolute economic nonsense.

They say, well why is it so different in agriculture? Why don't you put agriculture on the table so we can see what you're doing? Well, they say, it's political, it's different.

And I said, you're affecting our lives. Leroy Larsen could sit there and point his finger at them and say, this is affecting farmers all across the province of Saskatchewan and western Canada. You're affecting our lives. We're not going to grow bananas here in 50 million acres or be self-sufficient in celery. This is wheat, oil seeds, and meat country. And we can compete with anybody in the world except their treasuries.

Mr. Speaker, we must have financial assistance that takes on these commodity wars or there won't be a government ever in the province of Saskatchewan that can take on that kind of financial burden and that kind of economic war that is placed on rural Saskatchewan. If we've got to fight for the 5 years or 10 years or 15 years, there isn't enough money in Saskatchewan to do it. You're talking about the German treasury, the French treasury, the British treasury — 12 countries in the European economic community.

You're talking about a value added tax, as in Europe now — and we wonder about the GST (goods and services tax) — the value added tax runs 25 or 30 per cent all over Europe. Nine per cent of that value added tax goes right into the common agriculture policy to fight commodity wars, and they have a surplus in that pool right now to take on Saskatchewan because we are the major exporter. In other jurisdictions they feed hogs and cows a lot more than we do. Here we're in the business of providing food grains and feed grains for the whole world.

They've decided politically to take us on. That's what I want from the members opposite and the members here and all across this country — to recognize that we have a job to do politically, to make sure not only that agriculture is on the table but that we can sit down and realize that this province, this province faces that kind of a problem that is much bigger than a production loan program here or interest rate protection or some other things. It is an international war that is focused on people like us.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the kinds of programs that we can come up with here, the reason that I asked for 500 million and another 400 million and an ongoing billion dollars in the contingency fund is to fight those treasuries and say that we will not give up on Saskatchewan farmers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, at the same time they're going to come to us and say: are you prepared, are you prepared to help? And I look at the federal government; they've come up with \$6.6 billion since 1985, and I appreciate that, and farmers do. It may not be enough, but it's 6.6 billion they didn't do before. It's the best ever. It may not be enough but it's the best ever we've seen in the history of Saskatchewan and the history of Canada.

They also are saying to me — people across the province of Saskatchewan — well you got to go your own best lick as well, because you have to be prepared to show that you're going to fight for farmers, rural towns and villages, and the way of life that we believe in.

Well we have. We've come up with . . . It's not that amount; it's \$800 million in various kinds of programs, interest rates and other packages that we have, plus about another 3 or \$400 million when it comes to rural gas distribution to cut their costs in individual line service is a couple of hundred million dollars.

And I'll give you some combinations of things that we have. On the drought assistance program, \$115 million right out of Saskatchewan; looking for water and helping drought proof, 33 million; a farm purchase program, 94 million; and all kinds of programs with respect to interest rate protection that amount to \$350 million to show that we care.

Why do I say that, Mr. Speaker? It's not enough that we just say, well Ottawa's got to do it. And if they don't do it we say, well there's nothing that I can do. I really don't believe that. And I'm not picking on anybody. I'm just saying it's not enough for the Government of Saskatchewan ever to say, well I can't do anything. We must. We must show that we're sincere about our people and our farms. And we happen to have half the farm land in the country and that's significant. We have to show that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — So I stand in my place today encouraging the federal government to continue to provide the kind of support Saskatchewan farmers need and rural people need in the face of international wars that go way beyond the ordinary average farm. That farm family can't handle 4 or \$500 a tonne difference.

I spoke in London in late January, Mr. Speaker, and as I spoke to the Canadian Club there . . . as I spoke, the European agricultural policy just took \$85 a tonne and put it right into the hands of the Soviet Union to take western European wheat and not ours. Eighty-five dollars a tonne — that's over half of the price that I get just to take it to market. And the Americans were sitting there with the export enhancement program just ready to do the same. And they see-saw back and forth.

Europeans don't export that much; it's mostly domestic market. The huge amount of money from 300 million people is a large pool, and they can just cherry pick and pick the markets when they want and the kind of subsidies they want. United States is the same — 250 million people, huge treasury. They don't export much — mostly domestic market, and they can just cherry-pick those markets.

Here we are in the export business, about a million people, and we export most of it. There's no cherry-picking for us; we have to compete all across the globe all the time and take these people on.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll just say one more time, there is total justification for a Canadian government and treasury, along with the people of Saskatchewan, to fight these unfair international commodity wars. There is total justification. It's never enough to say, well it all has to be them or we don't have to do a dime and let them go; we'll not do that. I don't think any government in the history of Saskatchewan or in the future of Saskatchewan will ever do it again.

(1500)

We'll have to stand there. But I say now and I say to people locally and nationally, and if I could make national television I would say, we deserve as Canadians to have the kind of support for our food and agricultural industry that we see all over Europe today. We shouldn't be left hanging out there to dry by these economic wars so that our people go down and that we have to end up paying 20 to 25 per cent of our income on food just to play the games that they're doing in Europe.

Mr. Speaker, what's going on in Europe and in the United States to beat our farmers into the ground is wrong. It's unfair, it's immoral, it makes no economic sense, and it's very political. Mr. Speaker, we have to change that. This resolution here today says we have to have assistance to fight the war. We've got to ante up here in Canada. We have to have that ammunition to take them on. That ammunition is credible, it's right. It's the kinds of things that we should be doing.

Well I will say to the members opposite, all of them, I seek your total concurrence that when we come to saying, will we defend Saskatchewan farmers; should the federal government defend Saskatchewan farmers; should it be hundreds of millions and indeed billions of dollars over time, as we look at taking on those international commodity price war leaders, the answer is yes. I want that total unanimity in this House, and I seek and request that kind of support from the members of the legislature.

In addition, because we're not in it alone, we've asked for and you will see Agricultural Credit Corporation change, I hope the Farm Credit Corporation change, and we have asked for credit unions and banks to make their changes as well. It's their shareholders who are being hurt, and not necessarily their fault. Some of it may be because we've all been in it in terms of the loans were lent and interest rates and so forth, but everybody's in it together.

And we are asking in this resolution, and we've asked publicly and we'll join with the members opposite in this whole House to say, we are in it together; you have to do your part. I want you to go look at those loans; I want to look at what's in the best interest of your shareholders. What I believe financial institutions should do, along with members of this legislature and farm groups and others, is be prepared to join me and others in Europe either with mail or in person or any other way, to make sure that we get a resolution to these commodity wars.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, you think about it. Banks in Europe want access to North America. Financial institutions in Switzerland think that they're fairly sophisticated. You've heard about Swiss bank accounts.

And that industry, the banking industry, thinks that they can compete all over the world. They want access to Saskatchewan. They know that there are billions of dollars here in terms of money that has to be invested, money that has to be loaned. They want access to here. They want to compete with the local credit unions. They want to compete with the local banks.

In the information age and in technology, all the kinds of things that people are looking for to trade internationally as a result of Europe 1992 with free trade and the North American free trade agreement, do you know what we can say to them, Mr. Speaker, and the banks in this country can say to those financial institutions? Hold it, boys. Before you get access to the Canadian market for banking, I want you to start putting some pressure on your own politicians and your own financial people in Europe and in the United States to make sure that you start making some changes that allow our people to be productive here in Saskatchewan and in Canada. And if they're not prepared to do that, Mr. Speaker, then we are prepared to get as tough as we have to with anybody here who will not go to bat for our farmers, our towns, our villages, our businesses, and the whole economy here. You can't have it both ways. If they want open access to things all across North America and to Saskatchewan, then they're going have to give us access to food and food products that we are competitive in in Europe.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, there are many ways to play this. There will be 98 countries sitting at the table. And this is one of the largest, most important poker games you're going to see Canadians involved in as far as agriculture is concerned. They've had the Kennedy round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the Tokyo round, and never has agriculture been on the table. Now it's there. It's up there right on the top and people are starting to deal with it.

It's difficult, Mr. Speaker, but I believe that they have to deal with it. They have to be prepared to go to those meetings — that is, the federal government along with ourselves, and that'll include the members of the opposition or members from the general public in the province of Saskatchewan like we had from the wheat growers and the wheat pool and the hog producers and the canola growers last January, and there's going to be more of them — at those meetings to say we need a resolution to this.

And if you want to play hardball in international trade, we're prepared to play it. There's no choice. When I'm looking at restructuring — and by financial institutions, when I'm asking them to join us, what I'm saying is that we're all in it together. In this resolution that you see before you, we're asking for \$900 million in cash, \$1 billion in the contingency fund.

Fighting those trade wars, Mr. Speaker, very important part of this resolution, there will not be one announcement Friday at four or Tuesday at seven that's going to fix all of this. We want to make sure that we do everything possible by financial institutions and lending institutions — our own included, with the help of the

SARM and others — to make sure we give farmers the benefit of a doubt: restructure loans, cash in their hands, low-interest loans, guarantees, a combination of things that we can do with cash and interest, production loans, seeding loans, guarantees, rewriting, postponing, lending out, lengthening — and fight for us in Europe and in United States.

All of those combination of things working together: the provincial government, the federal government, municipal governments. And municipal governments are prepared to co-operate.

I had a very, very sincere and solid co-operative response at the SARM convention that just finished. And they are prepared to respond. They're talking, Mr. Speaker, with the kinds of things that we have to do to make sure that municipalities, one, even have a tax base. What do we have to do collectively to make sure that we can address that situation?

Mr. Speaker, finally we have to look at the combination of longer run programs along with fighting these wars, to provide the kinds of confidence that we need in agriculture to make sure that there is some solution.

If we're looking at a situation where we want to make sure that there is the diversification, there is the processing, there is the manufacturing, and there are alternatives in rural Saskatchewan, then we've got to be there in a broad way and a significant way to make sure people can look at new alternatives.

I want to just throw out a couple of significant things that I believe people are interested in looking at and that I want to promote in this legislature and indeed across the province, and I ask for the opposition's support.

If you look at the debt in rural Saskatchewan, we're running about 5 to \$6 billion. That's just in agriculture. If you look at the debt in the towns and villages and businesses, it's several more. Mr. Speaker, I believe it's time that we took our capacity to generate diversification and new businesses, processing and manufacturing and a diversification without as much borrowed money, using the local community as much as possible.

Mr. Speaker, what I am suggesting is Saskatchewan people are prepared now to sit down and say, with the help of the federal government in cash, with the help of the provincial government, they are prepared to take their money, their savings, and their efforts and their imagination to make sure that we can build and diversify and grow in the province of Saskatchewan, particularly in the towns and villages that need those opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, the combination of federal money, provincial money, municipal, financial assistance, and co-operation with banks and credit unions and business people across the province and indeed across the country is going to be absolutely necessary to make sure that our people survive this crisis.

The province of Saskatchewan has a long list of things that we are prepared — and have done, Mr. Speaker — and prepared to do this spring and long into the summer and

the fall, well into 1991 and into the 1990s. The federal government now, Mr. Speaker, has a responsibility like it's never had before to stand up for the farmers of Saskatchewan and the towns and villages across rural Saskatchewan.

I'll say, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion, and I hope members opposite all across this legislature, both sides, will stand in their place and say, it's time that the federal government, the provincial government, financial institutions and all co-operate to make sure cash gets in the hands of the farmers. We fight the wars, and we are prepared to do whatever we can in restructuring and refinancing to make sure that rural Saskatchewan survives it this time.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I move this motion.

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to today point out a number of things that I believe are important in relation to the motion as presented by the Premier. I want to deal with a few of those items, and then I want to, first of all, begin by addressing myself to those people who perhaps are not as familiar with agriculture as I personally am.

I want to direct some of my focus onto three areas, Mr. Speaker. One is where the lenders occur, where they occupy the minds and thoughts of the various farm people and farm organizations. And then also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about how the taxpayers relate to this, and I want to address some of this as it relates to the farmers.

Many people in the province of Saskatchewan have grown up with the tradition of understanding and knowing, Mr. Speaker, the details of how agriculture works in this province. But there are many people who are a part of Saskatchewan's fabric who do not know, and today I want to point out a number of those things. And for those people who are in agriculture, they might find these points interesting themselves.

One, Mr. Speaker, is that we in the province of Saskatchewan have about 45 per cent of the agricultural land in Canada. And that, Mr. Speaker, is fairly significant. Sixty-five million acres in the province of Saskatchewan are related to agriculture. And of that 65 million, Mr. Speaker, 50 million are related to improved land, and land that is used directly in cropping and forage for livestock.

Now we have a lot of those kinds of areas in the southern half of the province, and they are generally, Mr. Speaker, thought of as very fertile, very productive, and have a solid involvement in the communities that they draw and earn an income from.

Some of the things that we have to talk about in relation to this are, what's produced on there. Mr. Speaker, it's important to assess that 52 per cent of this production in Saskatchewan is related to wheat, 10 per cent to canola,

and 16 per cent for cattle. Now that, Mr. Speaker, is significant in terms of what we're talking about in relation to these items that we have on the agenda, because that is where the cash flow and the volume of dollar begin to impart themselves to agriculture in Saskatchewan.

I want to point out to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, the significance of the value that they have and the contribution they make to the fabric of our society in rural Saskatchewan. Fifty-two per cent; it's a significant figure. And why that's important, I'm going to relate it to later on, are the subsidy wars that are facing us through the European Economic Community, the kinds of things that they are doing to us. And I want to point out one thing, and I'm going to point it out a significant amount of times so that people understand that the volume of export out of western Canada is significant.

Seventy per cent of our production, Mr. Speaker, flows out of this country to export market, whereas in the United States, for example, 70 per cent is consumed by their domestic market. And in Europe 70 per cent is consumed by their domestic market. So it has significant impact on what the world does with our trading relationship with other countries, whether they put on export enhancement or whether they don't. Mr. Speaker, for us in Saskatchewan that's very, very significant.

And why? Because we have, on production basis, 52 per cent of our volume of return to agriculture in Saskatchewan is wheat, 10 per cent for canola, and 16 per cent for the livestock or the cattle industry. Then you have on top of that . . . you have hogs, you have all of the other kinds of commodities that we grow in agriculture.

(1515)

Seventy per cent of our agriculture is exported, Mr. Speaker — 70 per cent. We are a trading province in a country of Canada located in the centre part of Canada, and we have a long way to market which is significant in terms of the kinds of things that we have to think about when we're delivering our product. And in terms of that, we still export 70 per cent of the volume of products that we produce. That, Mr. Speaker, is very important as it relates to the European Economic Community and to the United States.

But we talk about the volume of grain produced in Canada of 30 million metric tons as the Premier alluded to. That market that was established in Europe has already taken not only that market away from us but are competing in that same market-place with the export subsidies of 30 million metric tons and the subsidies placed on it. That, Mr. Speaker, is a negative to the kinds of things that we in the province of Saskatchewan have to consider when we deal with how the international focus treats us. We have to be aware of the kinds of things that we have to deal with in view of international trade.

Now in production of wheat we've got 65 per cent is wheat, 12 per cent is durum, and we've got canola at 10, we've barley at 7. Most of that, Mr. Speaker, on the domestic side is consumed here. Therefore the barley is not as extensively impacted as some of these other commodities are.

I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, as we go along, that we have had a variety of changes moving into this pricing structure, based on export enhancement and things that drive it. I want to point out a couple of those things as I take a look at this problem that we face.

In 1960 the international market-place and consumers in Canada and throughout the world consumed 230 million metric tons of grain — 230 million metric tons in 1960. By 1990 that was 530 million metric tons. Mr. Speaker, agriculture through international scene has doubled their production. They've doubled their consumption.

What have we got in place today? We have a measure, Mr. Speaker, on how people value the commodity markets in agriculture commodities, and we deal with them in three components, Mr. Speaker. We deal with them from the component of production, we deal with them from the component of consumption, and the stock on hand. Those three, Mr. Speaker, indicate to the international market the value that grain should be in the international trading scene.

Now there are three times since 1960 when the stocks have gone down to what they are today. In 1980 stock on hand was exactly as it is today. In 1972 the stock was exactly as it is today.

And what that shows to me, Mr. Speaker, that in 1972 to 1973 we went up from \$78 a tonne to \$160 a tonne. In one year, with the stock at the level we have today, jumped \$100 a tonne. And that, Mr. Speaker, is very significant.

Where are we today in international markets on pricing? Mr. Speaker, we are today at an equal stock unit with 1972 and in 1980. What has the price in the commodity of wheat done, for example? Has it gone up or down? And, Mr. Speaker, it's gone down in 1990. In 1990 it has gone down. Why, when the stock on hand in relation to the consumption is equivalent to what it was in 1960?

And what has that done, Mr. Speaker? It has come there from the very fact that the international trade scene has put export enhancement into place. And that comes from three countries, Mr. Speaker. It comes from Europe and the EEC (European Economic Community); it comes from the United States; and it comes from Japan. All three of those countries are in part to blame for the commodities as they are in existence today. And I want to point out that that is extremely important.

The international scene impacts on Saskatchewan every day. We realize that in the export of hogs. We realize that in the export of cattle. We realize that in the export of grain. For many years, Mr. Speaker, we have considered that value to be insignificant, because it didn't impact as extensively as it has in the last four years.

In the last four years, Mr. Speaker, if we would take the income realized from agriculture and put it into perspective, we have had a net farm income, '86, '87, '88, and '89, a net minus in agriculture. And that is very important.

I want to point that out because the Premier raised some of the issues as it relates to funding from the provincial government and funding from the federal government. If we would have not had funding from crop insurance, western grain stabilization special grains program and all of the other things involved in agriculture, we would have a realized net income of a minus since '86.

What that essentially did, Mr. Speaker, it put us over into a plus position. And that, Mr. Speaker, is why we are today asking the federal government to contribute those kinds of moneys to the agriculture scene in Saskatchewan.

It's significant, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to have a minus \$9 million net income in 1990. That's what's expected. In 1971 — and I was farming in 1971 and '72 and '73 — net farm income in 1971 was \$500 million, a half a billion dollars. Today it's under the line. It's not over; it's below. It's a minus nine. And in 1971 when things were really tough, it was at 500 million plus. And that, Mr. Speaker, went up to 1.6 billion in 1975.

Think of the relationship of the dollars of income to the cost of living, for example, 1971 to 1990. Mr. Speaker, we are in a position today that is far worse than it ever was in 1970, '68, '69, '70 and '71. And I want to point that out to the people of Saskatchewan, that it is significant in the fact that we need to have the people of Saskatchewan support and draw around those people who are in rural communities and in rural towns and villages. They are important to the people of Saskatchewan. They are important to the whole fabric of the kinds of communities that we have. And I think what we need to do, Mr. Speaker, is rally round this kind of a resolution and also to deal with the kinds of things that are occurring.

I want to point out to the Assembly that we have some very, very efficient farms in the province of Saskatchewan. I want to point out that this income earned is being earned under a lot of duress. It's earned under a lot of stress and problems related to agriculture. They're impacting all the way through the family, they're impacting all the way through the community, and I want to point that out.

I want to point out one other thing. The people in rural Saskatchewan are earning more off-farm income today than they have ever earned before. Six hundred million dollars of off-farm income is flowing into farms and rural communities today because these people want to pay their bills, and they're working as hard as they possibly can to deliver on that.

We have over 22,000 farmers and farms today reporting off-farm income. That's a third of our farms are now reporting off-farm income. And that, Mr. Speaker, is impacting on the availability of jobs for people who are non-farmers.

If, for example, the people of Saskatchewan could have their farmers earn enough income to deliver on the kinds of things that they need to have to pay for the food, the repairs, all of the things in agriculture, then there would be opportunity available for many more people to work in the province. And that, Mr. Speaker, is very, very important, and I want to point that out to the people of Saskatchewan.

Now when people do a cash flow on their farm and they find out that it's a negative or a positive plus this or plus that, we have another measure, Mr. Speaker, that we often use in relation to the commodities, and that's what you have as a capital asset.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we have a farm debt of about \$5.25 billion. And that, Mr. Speaker, is 20 to 25 per cent of the total volume of capital assets in the province of Saskatchewan. Now if you dealt with this in an ordinary business, you would say that that was capitalized adequately. But, Mr. Speaker, what we are finding is that the cash flow to deliver on the debt is not sufficient to deliver on paying down the debt. And that's what's interesting in relation to this.

There is lots of assets in the province of Saskatchewan. There are a lot of debt-free assets in the province of Saskatchewan, but we haven't the cash flow to deliver on the debt we have, plus deliver on the cost of producing the crops. Those are very important features.

I want to point out one more thing as it relates to the international trade and how people look at the international trade in relation to the commodity prices. Commodity prices have related to the three things, as I said before — production, consumption, and stock on hand. Stock on hand in 1960, Mr. Speaker, was 81 million metric tons. Stock on hand today is 81 million metric tons. We are consuming twice as much as we were in 1961 in the world, and what we have today is the equivalent on stock on hand as we had in 1971.

And it is serious. If we move down two more points — which could easily happen with the international trade as it is existing today — if that moves down to 15 or anything below 17, we are having a new record on the shortfall on the volumes of grain in the world today.

And what we have, Mr. Speaker, are the United States and the European Economic Community having their export enhancement, their tax dollars driving down the stock volume when they could in fact be increasing the stock volume. And what they're doing with those export enhancement funds, those subsidies, is they're driving down the price. They're driving down the price and, Mr. Speaker, they're driving down the volume of stock on hand.

Now how has this impacted in Saskatchewan? If we take a look at how a cross-section of the farm debt review and the Farm Land Security Board and the counselling and assistance for farmers and the arrears in banks and all of these things, we have had a whole lot of problems through the past decade on drought, grasshoppers, commodity prices, all of those kinds of things.

And, Mr. Speaker, those are the kinds of things that would tend to make you believe that there was a pattern, or you should take and follow a pattern in how these problems existed, where they existed. If drought was one of those patterns, then it should show up in some of these figures. It doesn't, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, what it does is it shows no pattern at all.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is why we believe that export

enhancement by other countries is by far the most important feature in dealing with the kinds of problems that we have today in Saskatchewan. We have had drought, we have had grasshoppers, we have had the wheat midge in the North, we have had drought, we've had flooding in the North — all of those things. And what have they done for a systematic decline in the province. It's not a pattern across the province. It's not.

I'll tell you what is more a pattern than anything else. And the pattern exists, Mr. Speaker, as we take a look at what we do with our agriculture and what other provinces do with their agriculture.

Number one, Mr. Speaker. Agriculture in Saskatchewan is basically based on wheat, and I wanted to point that . . . I pointed that out in the beginning and I wanted people to understand that. Our agriculture focus is 52 per cent based on wheat. And 52 per cent on wheat, whereas the province of Alberta has a far greater degree of reliance on livestock, and Manitoba on diversified crops. Those crops have led them through an opportunity to deliver a better commodity return than they have in Saskatchewan.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is why I believe that the export enhancement in foreign markets has driven down the prices that we have in the province today, and has also not allowed the market to dictate the real price. That's really what we have come to today.

(1530)

When we talk about the grain markets, we do not have a great deal of optimism, Mr. Speaker. But I want to point out that if we move down much lower in our volume stock on hand in the international market, we may in fact see a turnaround, and very quickly. And that can happen when the EEC and the United States decide to quit on the subsidy wars.

That will almost immediately, Mr. Speaker, increase the demand and the volume of grain, for grain, on the market. That, Mr. Speaker, is the problem we are facing today — the price, in my opinion, would jump, and it would jump dramatically because of all of the factors that we have seen throughout the last 30 years in the grain side.

But we have other things that we have to be, I believe, a little bit optimistic about. The livestock and the cattle business is not depressed. And if we take a look at what Alberta has done in their agriculture scene by moving into the livestock side, I think it's important.

We had, in the '70s, Mr. Speaker, an opportunity to deliver for the province of Saskatchewan, a broader economic base than just wheat. And what we decided to do as a community, was to say that wheat is the most important feature. And that, Mr. Speaker, is where we made a mistake. And now, as we go through that cycle, in terms of the volumes of grain that we have to export and the international trade, we see a lowering of an income throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

In 1989 we had an average crop, and with the snowfall we had this spring, I expect there's a lot more optimism in rural Saskatchewan than there has been for quite some

time. And I'm just happy to see that a lot of the southern part of the province got a good deal of snow, and if that stays there we could have a good crop.

Another thing that has happened, we have had a decline, Mr. Speaker, in the last three years, of total farm debt. That is significant, in spite of hard times. People in the province of Saskatchewan have reduced their total debt from 6 billion to 5.25 billion. And that, Mr. Speaker, is very significant. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, it comes from some very important things that agriculture is doing in the province of Saskatchewan. I want to commend agriculture for tightening their belt. I want to commend them for paying their bills. I want to commend them for doing the kinds of things that they have been traditionally known to do.

I want to say that it has been with a good deal of work and perseverance that 22, 000-plus people who work off farm, the majority of them are doing it to supply income for themselves to eat and to buy down their debt. And I think that that's very, very important. I want to point that out to the public of Saskatchewan. And the reason why we feel that somewhere along the line because of the significance and the volume of significance that Saskatchewan agriculture has, that we should pay attention to it, number one, as lenders; number two, as farmers; and number three, as taxpayers.

In the province of Saskatchewan in 1989 we earned about \$4.4 billion in income to the province of Saskatchewan — \$4.4 billion. Mr. Speaker, in 1989 farmers in Saskatchewan spent in towns and villages and cities in the province of Saskatchewan, \$3.5 billion.

Mr. Speaker, people in Regina talk about the significance of the upgrader in dealing with the size of the project of \$700 million, and it is significant. But I want to tell the people of Saskatchewan that each year we put up five of those same kinds of upgraders just by seeding. And that, Mr. Speaker, is significant to the towns, the villages, and the cities in the province of Saskatchewan. It is significant and that's why the taxpayers of this province are impacted.

They're impacted by the farmers when they don't buy, they're impacted by the . . . farmers when they do buy. And that's very, very important. I wanted to have the Assembly and the people of the province realize that too.

I want to point out one thing about the debt load. The debt load is today being carried . . . 70 per cent of the debt load is being carried by 40 per cent of the people; 40 per cent of the people are carrying this debt load and they are, on a normal basis, paying about \$330 million of interest, Mr. Speaker. That is the volume of interest that these 40 per cent are paying.

They're paying significantly more than all of the rest, and the reason being that some of those others have had these old Farm Credit Corporation loans where they've had interest rates tied at 5, 6, 7 and 8 per cent. Their volume of dollars left to pay off are not significant. And that's the reason why we have more or less the young farmers and the farmers who are at the bottom of the income scale, most severely affected by those people who are . . . or by

the volume of interest that they have to pay.

When we did the production loan in 1986, Mr. Speaker, we had a significant volume of loans outstanding. We had contracts, Mr. Speaker, for 72, 000 contracts. We had 57, 000 clients and they would split the contract between the spouses, and that's why we had 72, 000 altogether.

Of those 57, 000, Mr. Speaker, this year already we have had over 21, 000 pay off their production loan. And I would say that 21, 000 people in the province of Saskatchewan, who understand agriculture and who are significant contributors to the kind of fabric we have in the province, have worked very, very hard to pay that back. Over 21, 000 of these people have paid that off.

When the people at SARM and other places that we have gone to speak have told us, you have these 21, 000. You have another 20, 000 who have paid off over a 10-year span or are paying it off over a 10-year span, and you've got the bottom 12 to 15, 000 people who have not paid off significant volumes at all.

Why should we penalize those people who have paid it off because of their being frugal, their working hard to pay it off? Why should we penalize those people? We, Mr. Speaker, have to provide some balance in how we approach the problem, and that's why it's important.

Now when we talk about farm debt, we have to talk about it from the lenders from a number of areas. Any single farmer and any farmer in here probably has any one of four groups that he has supplying financing for him. We have Farm Credit Corporation, we have ag credit corporation, we have banks, and we have credit unions. All of them have a specific mandate that is different from the other. And if we would make a blanket policy available to all four of them, then, Mr. Speaker, they would be negatively impacted in various kinds of ways.

And if we want to take a serious look at how we handle, for example, our relationship in debt to the banks, we have to talk to the bankers. And when we talk to the bankers, we have to deal with them in a very specific way. But we have to be totally different when we talk to the credit unions, Mr. Speaker. We have credit unions in this province who, if they were forced to write down 20 per cent of their agriculture loans, they would go into receivership.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out probably the place in this province where the highest degree of intensity is in relation to farm debt, and that's in the Birch Hills area. I met with six RMs there — had about 35 people there. And I asked them, Mr. Speaker, what's the solution? What's the solution to deliver on the farm debt? One of the gentlemen in the front said, moratorium is the way to go. That was his way of solving the problem. And as I went through I said, okay, now when do you want this moratorium to start? Today, he said. Okay, do you want that moratorium to be one year? Well, he said, at least at one year. Should it be two years? Well if it doesn't work out in one year, maybe it should be two.

He went on and he finally got to five years. I said, did you want your interest rate to stop flowing on this moratorium

or did you want that stopped too? And, Mr. Speaker, he said, well maybe we should let the interest go. Well I said, in five years, at the rate of interest today, you've got, not \$5 billion worth of debt, you've got \$10 billion worth of debt. What are you going to do with it then? And, Mr. Speaker, everyone was quiet.

And then I asked if there were any credit union board of directors there. And, Mr. Speaker, there were two. And I asked both of them — one was a gentleman about 30 years old and the other one was over 60 — and I said, what would you do at your credit union if we had a moratorium? And, Mr. Speaker, he told me, as I stand here today, he said, we would shut the door. They couldn't afford it, Mr. Speaker. I asked the older gentleman, what would you do at your credit union if we had a moratorium today? And he said, we would shut the door.

Mr. Speaker, we may talk about all these things on moratoriums as they relate to individuals and as they relate to credit unions, as they relate to banks, as they relate to ag credit corporation or the Farm Credit Corporation, but what will it do to the fabric of the credit union system in the province of Saskatchewan if anyone touches moratorium to any degree further than it has been until today?

And that, Mr. Speaker, is a very important function that we have to consider on how we handle debt in the province of Saskatchewan. I believe that we have a very, very serious problem. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we have a serious problem on the income side, and we have a very serious problem on the debt side. And, Mr. Speaker, those are the two things, that as we go about the discussion with various groups, that we will provide to this Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan some solutions.

The Premier asked the SARM to consider providing for the ag credit corporation a solution to some of the problems. Should we in fact, Mr. Speaker, have another production loan? That's a good question. Some people say, no you shouldn't; some people say, yes you should. Who's going to get it? Who should qualify? How should you qualify? Should you have banks do the work? Should you have credit unions do the work? Should you have ag credit do the work?

And if you do all this, to what should it apply? Should it apply to buy new pick-ups? And I don't think people would want to have that. Should it be for extending it to buying brand-new tractors and combines? Probably not.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we come to that question as we're going to address it next week to the SARM delegates. We're going to ask them those questions, ask them to consider what it should be used for, whether it should be done, how much it should be, and the kinds of things that should be . . . kinds of mechanisms we should use in paying it out, if we ought to. And that, Mr. Speaker, is why it's important for us to talk to those people about it. We went to them, Mr. Speaker, and we've gone to them on a number of occasions, and I want to point that out too, to the Assembly here today.

I have a list of people that I've gotten involved with over the past three months — six months actually, Mr.

Speaker, since my appointment. And I believe that in each one of these cases, where I have met with different people, that I have had these concerns expressed to me. Who do you write off, if you're going to write off? Who do you write down, if you're going to write down? Who handles all that?

Mr. Speaker, I have in my community, my neighbours who have told me over and over again — and they lived through the 30s — they told me many, many times that they were really irritated, and this was before this crisis. They told me over and over again, never have a mandatory write-down. And I asked them why, and they said, I can remember when my father got paid 10 cents on the dollar and that guy that's over there today, that rich farmer down the road, he got it all written off, except 10 cents. And that, Mr. Speaker, doesn't sit too well with people. And that, Mr. Speaker, is why we have to take and evaluate how this is done, whether it ought to be done, and who should do it and whose responsibility it is.

(1545)

I want to point out another few things. The concern has to be addressed from the perspective of whether it is a government agency or whether it is a privately held corporation or whether it is a publicly held co-operative. And, Mr. Speaker, those are the three things that we have to talk about to those three organizations. When we talk about guarantees, should we talk about guarantees in relation to the dynamic of guaranteeing Farm Credit Corporation? Probably not. When we talk guaranteeing banks, some loans, when they've talked about a write-down, should we guarantee some of that? In Alberta they have, and perhaps that's what we should be doing.

In dealing with the credit unions, if we force them, as I said before, to talk about a write-down and the kinds of things that will happen to the credit union system, we have to take a very, very, serious look at how that is done. And that's not going to be done easy, and that's not going to be done with a considerable lot of pain. The reason I say that, Mr. Speaker, is that we have two kinds of taxpayers in this system. We have the taxpayers who pay through deposit and could have losses in banks and in credit unions, and we have the taxpayers who put into place the people of this Assembly who deliver on government forms of credit corporations like the Farm Credit Corporation and Ag Credit Corporation.

Should there be write-downs in Ag Credit Corporation? Should there be write-downs in Farm Credit Corporation? These are all questions, Mr. Speaker, that are going to have to be addressed not only by this side as the Government of Saskatchewan but also by the people who reside in the province, and those are people who are people like the SARM convention.

Now I want to talk a little bit more about the two basic problems that we need to deal with. We have to deal, Mr. Speaker, with farm debt and income, insufficient volume of income to deliver on paying the expenses. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, it's important for us to consider this resolution. And I want to point out that it is significant. It's significant to the taxpayer, it's significant to the farmers, and it's significant to the province of Saskatchewan.

Why is it significant, Mr. Speaker? The volume of export from the province of Saskatchewan impacts on the benefits for Canada. We are living in a province in the centre of Canada that exports a high volume of grain to foreign markets, bringing back a balance of payments where we do not take in nearly the volume of imports as we do to the volume of exports that we have.

Mr. Speaker, our balance of payments from the production in the province of Saskatchewan is very favourable. And we have to think about that when we relate to how it's impacted in the Canadian economy. The Canadian economy is going to be negatively impacted by the very fact that we have the kind of income that we have in the province of Saskatchewan today, very negatively. And that is why we do not feel uncomfortable about asking the federal government and the taxpayers of Canada to contribute to this problem that we've got.

I want to touch on one other thing, and that's the interest rates. Mr. Speaker, the Premier has discussed this on many occasions, about the climate of interest rates in Canada. I've talked to feedlot operators in the southern part of Saskatchewan who have thought about going to the United States and take loan on investment in Canada to provide the cash for investing in feedlots in Saskatchewan and in Alberta and in Manitoba. Why? Because they're almost five basic points less than we are in the province of Saskatchewan . . . in Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, that's very significant. We can have interest rates being forced up by hot economies in Toronto and in Vancouver. And it just decimates the people of Saskatchewan and the rest of the prairie region.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is why it's important for us to discuss on a national basis, the crisis that we have in Saskatchewan today, the stress that is being imposed on agriculture because of the things related to it and the decline in income.

Mr. Speaker, there are things that I believe that we ought to be doing in addressing this, and we are talking almost on a daily basis with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture for Canada. We are talking to people in Saskatchewan about what we should do. We are taking people over to Europe to talk to the international traders about what they should be doing. And, Mr. Speaker, it is only as we rally around the people of Saskatchewan and as we assist them that we are going to deliver an opportunity for them to continue.

There's a very serious problem in agriculture today, and we recognize that and we're not denying it. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, our Premier went on television, and he went on television and told it precisely as it is.

And I think that that's why we have to focus today on sending a unanimous resolution to Ottawa to deal with the problems that we have in existence today. And that's why I wanted to take the time today to speak to this resolution. I wanted to take the time to deliver for this Assembly my points of view in relation to this. And I will be supporting this resolution as it comes to the floor.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, listening to the last speaker from the government side, the Associate Minister of Agriculture . . . we now have two ministers of Agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan — the Minister of Agriculture and the Associate Minister of Agriculture . . .

An Hon. Member: — Three.

Mr. Romanow: — Three. Somebody says three. Who's the third one?

An Hon. Member: — Beattie Martin.

Mr. Romanow: — Well there are now three ministers of Agriculture in this government. Having heard the Associate Minister of Agriculture speak, Mr. Speaker, I've come to the conclusion that this problem requires a lot of talk. There's been talk with Mr. Mazankowski. There's a lot of talk. There's been talk with eastern European delegations. We've been over to eastern Europe. Talk right here in the Assembly; talk to SARM; talk to SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association). Talk, talk, talk.

We also heard from the deputy minister of Agriculture, Associate Minister of Agriculture, that there are a lot of questions. Boy oh boy, are there a lot of questions! If there's a write-down, who gets it; who doesn't get it? That's a question. Questions on loan guarantees. Same situation. Who gets the loan guarantee; who doesn't get it? Can't figure that out either. There are questions — the question of the matter of costs, and we don't know what the apportionments are. There are questions.

So there's talk, talk, talk. And there are questions, questions, questions. And my golly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have heard, after two hours of debate from the government opposite, there are some tremendous problems in agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan — a lot of problems. That is the sum and the short . . . the sum and the total of what the Minister of Agriculture, the Premier, and the Associate Minister of Agriculture have told us. Questions, questions, questions. Talk, talk, talk. Problems, problems, problems. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not one solution or idea to save the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I have the highest of respect for the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities and SARM. We all do. These are practising farmers and they're also leaders and elected people in our province.

But to listen to the Premier and the Associate Minister of Agriculture this afternoon, we might as well bring SARM to this Legislative Assembly right now. We might as well let SARM decide what the answers to these questions are going to be all about. At least SARM will cut out the talking that the minister and the Premier opposite are giving us today.

We might as well invite SARM. We might as well invite the eastern European community. We might as well invite

the Royal Bank and all the other bankers to take part in this, because according to the government opposite, it has no solutions; it has no ideas. It's going to talk, it's going to question, it's going to think, but it is not going to provide the leadership for the farm crisis, Mr. Speaker, and that is a shame. That's a tragedy while farmers go belly-up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — There are lots of questions, there's lots of talk, there's going to be lots of consultation. No one can dispute the necessity for consultation. In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, the record just grinds along untouched. And what a record it is — 1, 000 farmers leaving the province every year. We have a farm debt load of \$6 billion which the Associate Minister of Agriculture says has been reduced to \$5.5 billion, and he congratulates the farmers for reducing it.

Mr. Speaker, let's not be fooled about that reduction. If there's a reduction from 6 billion to 5 billion or 5.5 billion, this is because the farmers have been forced to lose their lands, and thereby the debt is reduced as it shifts over to the bankers and the lending institutions, not because of any some sort of efficiency that the Minister of Agriculture would have us believe.

Farm foreclosures are reaching astronomical figures. The letters that I have here, the numbers I have here: in 1988, 1, 642 notices; in 1989, 1, 292 notices — actual actions, not notices. The notices are much higher than that.

We've seen since 1988, Mr. Speaker, 2.5 million acres of farm land switching in status from owner/operator to a rented position — 2.5 million acres, Mr. Speaker. ACS has handed something like 2, 500 files over to lawyers last year alone. We're told by the **Leader-Post** that there's another 8, 500 apparently which are about to be transferred to lawyers for legal action. And of course there are a lot of questions that the government opposite has — questions, questions, questions, talk, talk, talk about this issue — but no answers. And by the way, this comes from an agency which the government itself controls.

As my colleague, the member from Regina Elphinstone, says, all that the Minister of Agriculture has to do is speak to the minister who's in charge of Executive Council, the Premier, and say to him: for goodness sakes, stop the actions by ACS against the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan, and you'd have one small solution to this entirely very, very serious crisis.

Then of course we have other problems which are evident and compounded as well. The high interest rate policy by the Progressive Conservatives and the Mulroney government. Well there we've had talk, talk, talk. Lots of questions, questions, questions, but the interest rates just keep on mounting.

We've had the high input costs. Lots of talk, talk, talk about high input costs. Lots of questions, questions, questions, but they just keep on mounting. This government's got no solutions. There's a low prices for commodities problem. Lots of questions; lots of talk. Again, no action.

In the meantime the Sturgises and the Preecevilles and the Dalmenys and the small towns and villages and the communities in the province of Saskatchewan and the farmers at the farm gate continue to feel the squeeze and are being forced off the farm lands.

Of course, we've had a federal budget which has eliminated interest-free cash advances, reduced the level of federal expenditure on agriculture, has increased the crop insurance rates at a time . . . the premiums, at a time when it's not needed.

And, Mr. Speaker, there wasn't a word in opposition by the Premier or the Associate Minister of Agriculture or the associate to the Associate Minister of Agriculture. These PC people opposite are simply content to ask a lot of questions and do a lot of talking, but not stand up for the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And here we are on March 20, 1990, Mr. Speaker. Spring seeding is around the corner. For all intents and purposes, spring seeding right now is here. I mean, the farmers started to plan for spring seeding quite some time ago. Where in the world has the government been?

Last year in 1989 at the session that we convened here about a year ago, Mr. Speaker, what was the number one agenda item by the government opposite? What was the number one agenda item, I asked the Associate Minister of Agriculture? I'll tell you, because he's not going to say anything about it now. This is one point where he's not going to talk.

The number one issue, Mr. Speaker, was not the farm crisis; it was this government's mania with privatization, of selling off each and every institution and commercial activity that the province of Saskatchewan had. That was going to be the Alamo. That was in 1989.

In 1989, a year ago, about approximately now and during the session, members on this side of this legislature said, look, you've got other matters to deal with; look, privatization is wrongheaded; you've got a farm crisis out there. It's been brewing, more or less, since 1985. This just didn't come about yesterday. It didn't come about with the Premier's television address.

We saw 1, 000 farmers going off the farm lands now for the last 4 or 5 years and your priority we said, Mr. Premier, was to have privatization to make it the NDP's Alamo. Your priority was your right-wing, big business, North American political agenda and not the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan, and they're paying the price for it now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1600)

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, for years now the opposition — let's forget about the opposition — responsible farm organizations have been saying the

same thing to this government opposite. The government and the people surrounding the government have been advised continuously that there is a major crisis brewing in agriculture, that there needs to be some long-term solutions in farming.

And, Mr. Speaker, the government has taken a precedent and decided on its own. It took the bold step that it was not going to listen. This government did not hear the plaintive pleas of the farmers. This government did not hear what was taking place in the towns and the villages. This farmer only saw the statistics and tried to alibi them.

This government did not sense and did not associate with and did not understand the heartache and the tension and the anxiety on the farms and on individuals as they see their communities and their livelihoods blowing away and going belly up, all during the course of a drought situation, all in the course of an international grain situation, all in the course of circumstances ranging, even due to Mr. Mulroney's actions in Ottawa.

All of these things are going and this government simply had a deaf ear and a blind eye and was mute to their concerns because it had another agenda. It had a big business agenda of free trade, and it had a big business agenda of privatization, and it left the farmers on their own. And is it any wonder that to some large measure — not totally, I'll say a word about that — but to some large measure, the crisis that we're in is exactly and directly the responsibility of those men and women opposite who have adopted that agenda to the detriment of the rural province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, my first point therefore has to be: what in the world has this government been doing for the last four years in the agricultural area? What has it introduced by way of concrete legislative enactments? What successes has it had in Ottawa? Where in the world has it been giving some serious thought to the issues and the questions that the Minister of Agriculture, or at least the associate, raised today? Where has this government been for four years?

And why is it, Mr. Speaker, is the point I wish to make here as a first observation — why is it that today on the first full day of the Legislative Assembly, March 19, 1990, this government comes, not to this House with a set of long-term solutions and proposals, this government comes to this House with a series of questions and a resolution which should have been enacted, not only yesterday but at some other previous time. Where in the world has this government been?

I say this government is out of touch. It doesn't understand the problems of rural Saskatchewan, and it's time for a change in government to get a new direction in agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Now, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite say that this matter should be dealt with in a non-partisan fashion. And I want to tell them that I agree

with that in proposition. But I want to say a word about non-partisanship here in a moment.

And I move to my second topic. The first question is: what's been going on by the government? They are the people who are charged with the responsibility of developing these policies and programs. But I want to start on a second topic, and that is to discuss the motion and to ask the first question, how did we get here today with this motion today?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think this is important to put on the record. We in the opposition saw nothing happening, saw nothing happening over the several months, either from Ottawa or from Regina, on the farm crisis. We heard Mr. Garf Stevenson of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool say we need the \$500 million. Let's just focus on that — and he said we needed it now — and let's just concentrate on that.

And nothing. We didn't attack the provincial government. We simply urged them to get on with the job, give us a status report. And nothing.

They went to Ottawa several times. I don't know how many times the Premier and the Associate Minister of Agriculture have gone to Ottawa, and still nothing. And so finally we decided that, as the session is approaching, that some action has got to be taken, and we should try at least to see if we could be of assistance to the government, in trying to focus a resolution which could give the government a bargaining lever, or at least a moral piece of suasion, an argument which they could morally continue down to Ottawa with and say, look, here's what the Saskatchewan legislature says.

And so on Thursday last I wrote a letter to the Premier suggesting that one possible unanimous motion that might be considered by all of us would be dealing with the \$500 million pay-out which everybody says is promised and is committed.

I just want to read this motion to you, Mr. Speaker. This motion, by the way, is not the motion that is before us today. And I gave a lot of thought to this motion. I could have, on the Thursday letter that I wrote to the House Leader and to the Premier, I could have added provisions with respect to long-term debt and other aspects thereto. But let's face it, Mr. Speaker, we are divided, they and us, on the solutions of those longer term problems and other approaches. I'll say a word about that.

But I felt that we had at least one common ground, and that was the \$500 million. Mr. Garf Stevenson and the wheat pool, I repeat, and almost everybody says, what about that \$500 million? In fact, Mr. Stevenson says, that money had better start coming down by March 29, the provincial budget time, or there's going to be big trouble for this government. I would say there's big trouble for this government already. But everybody agrees the \$500 million is what was required.

So, Mr. Speaker, I wrote to the Premier and I said, how about this as a suggested resolution? And this was my proposal:

That this Assembly urges the Government of Canada to immediately announce and deliver, in advance of spring seeding, a direct cash payment to Saskatchewan farmers of at least \$500 million to enable thousands of Saskatchewan farmers to continue their farming operations.

Pure and simple, Mr. Speaker, \$500 million delivered immediately before spring seeding, to allow the farmers to get on to their farming operations. I thought it was a figure used by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. It's a non-controversial figure, it's a non-political figure. No one says this is the solution to the agricultural crisis, Mr. Speaker. I want to make that clear, by the way, to some of the journalists and other commentators.

It is not the position of the NDP that \$500 million is going to solve the crisis — far from it. We simply say that the choice before us is very stark. We either back our farmers with our public treasuries as the other governments of the world are backing their farmers with their public treasuries, or, if we don't, we're going to see a massive set of bankruptcies and exodus, and some journalists and some Conservatives opposite can say, well that's the free market system and there's no use us trying to do anything about it. I for one don't subscribe to that philosophy and that's why I say it's a short-term measure . . . (inaudible) . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I was asked, Mr. Speaker, do we have long-term proposals and policies in agriculture, and I said yes, we do. And I said at the press conference that we do have those, and I didn't want to incorporate them because while I think they are good solutions, they probably would be the cause of a breakdown on partisan ideological lines. So let's try to keep it to the narrow \$500 million that I'm talking about. And so I wrote the letter.

In fact, I might say, Mr. Speaker, that one of the journalists said to me, well look, supposing the Premier would move this resolution, would you object? I said I would not object. He said, what if they had a few minor small word changes, would you object? I said I would not object. That's all on the public record of the press conference. It was there and the letter indicates that.

What happened, Mr. Speaker? No response from the government. But on Monday of this week, Mr. Speaker, yesterday at about 9:30 a.m., we receive a letter. I receive a letter from the Premier that says, your motion is no good. Why? The Premier says, number one, because an hour and a half of a debate is not long enough on this issue. Well it was not intended to be a long issue on the \$500 million. We simply wanted to get the resolution and the motion of unanimity. And his second argument was, we needed to have other items added on to this particular resolution, other items on the resolution which I thought could get the unanimity of Liberals and Conservatives and NDP and the wheat growers association and the wheat pool and the National Farmers Union. We could agree to disagree on the other major issues, of which we are going to agree to disagree on the major issues, but on this one it sounded to me like a logical, normal, good thing to do for the farmers and for the people of the

province of Saskatchewan, to which the Premier and this government said, no, they're not going to do it. They're going to come in with their own resolution, unilaterally drafted, Mr. Speaker, without any consultation. This is the subject matter which we're debating this afternoon. I say, Mr. Speaker, that in my judgement this was an issue and is an issue which begs for non-partisanship and begs for consensus and begs for unity.

But I want to say as a second observation, Mr. Speaker, that the actions of the government opposite were actions which betrayed that non-partisanship. They were actions of a government determined to make this a political matter because they turned down our suggestions and put in the extended, convoluted resolution which we have before us. This is not an action of non-partisanship. This act today, Mr. Speaker, is unfortunately, I'm sad to say, an act of partisanship to which the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan are going to pay the price that the Premier and the ministers opposite are going to have to bear the responsibility at election time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me come to the third point. Let me discuss the resolution here in a moment and this is the third point that I want to say, the proposal of the motion which we have before us. Let me preface it again by trying to outline to you what it was that was behind our strategy in the \$500 million. I have said just a few moments ago, Mr. Speaker, that if we had a single, clear-cut resolution which identified the most pressing, immediate, short-term need, the \$500 million to be paid by April 15, 1990, that would be the purest, best, non-political posture for all of the people in the province of Saskatchewan to adopt.

If there is one consensus in farming today — and there are many differences in farm policy, Mr. Speaker — surely it is a consensus on that issue alone. That \$500 million should be in the hands of the farmers of this province not today but yesterday, Mr. Speaker. I say therefore, as I said just a moment ago, it's regrettable that a simple motion of this nature, the direct cash payments by April 15, could not have been accepted by all of us. None the less, that was the decision of the Premier and the government opposite.

And I want to say something else, Mr. Speaker, in the light of today's Speech from the Throne and the questions surrounding it. Yesterday's Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, used the word commitment — that there was a commitment made by Ottawa to Regina. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier of this province was unable and/or unwilling in this legislature to give us the details of that commitment which he has, which he received — a commitment being made by one party and received by another party. He could have given us the details of when, how, and to whom those payments were to be made, but he chose fit not to make that announcement and that commitment.

That, Mr. Speaker, is consistent with what I think is out there in rural Saskatchewan today — a cynicism and a sense of betrayal by the government opposite. They use the word commitment in the Speech from the Throne, but they're not able to deliver the next day, the very first day that there's a responsible question put on the order paper

about it.

It's cynicism by the voters; it's cynicism by the farmers because of words which are not backed up by real promises. And I say that that was a missed opportunity in today's question period, and I say it was a missed opportunity not to have this pure, simple motion of \$500 million resolution that I've talked about.

Let me just further buttress my argument by taking a specific look at this motion that we're debating. As I say, there are some questions in this motion which I think any thinking person would have to ask, and exactly what the government intended by it.

For example, why was it, I ask you, sir, and the journalists, that in this motion the Government of Saskatchewan was entirely left out? Now the Government of Saskatchewan was entirely left out of our motion because our motion simply asked for \$500 million from Ottawa. Period. But their motion embraces a whole variety of other additional matters which involve provincial jurisdiction as much as they do federal jurisdiction. For example, there's a call for FCC (Farm Credit Corporation) to treat the debtors of FCC with fairness and compassion and possibly debt restructuring. I say, Mr. Speaker, that's a good argument. If that argument applies to FCC, I say it's an argument that should apply to ACS in Saskatchewan. Why wasn't there some specific information in this motion in that regard?

And ACS, Mr. Speaker, is an aggressive pursuer of farmers out there. Something in the order of 680 actions have been started by ACS last year and I've given you the numbers of other people who are already being threatened, or at least the files have been moved over to law offices to be looked at. That's one aspect of this motion.

You'll notice under paragraph 2 of this motion, there is a request for a \$1 billion contingency fund — get this! — for the international subsidies wars. Now there have been a lot of commentators asking about the subsidies war. I oppose the subsidies war; I don't think anybody can endorse it. But I want to know where did this idea come from. Was it Ottawa's idea or was it the Premier's idea of the province of Saskatchewan?

I want to know who supports this contingency plan. I want to know whether it has been discussed by the Premier and the Prime Minister and Mr. Mazankowski. I want to know, is Ottawa committed to it?

(1615)

By the way, I should say, in the Speech from the Throne — I draw this to the attention of the public and the farmers as well — there is a statement in the Speech from the Throne very clearly which says that there is a commitment from Ottawa, or a commitment by Ottawa, on the issue of mechanisms. That's the word used — I don't have the Speech from the Throne in front of me — but mechanism to fight the international subsidies wars. Is this the mechanism, Mr. Speaker?

I don't know if anybody in the journalistic corps has asked the government of this — we're going to ask in the next

few days — but what is the mechanism? Why didn't the resolution that we're debating today tell the farmers a little bit about what they meant about this mechanism? That's the second concern that I have about this motion.

There are other areas as well which I think need to be looked at with a little bit of interest with respect to this multi-faceted motion which the government has introduced. Point number 3 of the resolution says that all the pressure possible should be brought to bear on the United States and the European community to stop their international grain subsidy wars.

Well that's a good idea in generalities, but I want to know why it was that the government opposite did not complain, Mr. Speaker, when President Bush announced his \$900 million export enhancement program in violation of the Canada-U.S. free trade deal. I want to know why it is that the government did not say in this motion, in the subparagraphs of the motion: we are going to urge the Prime Minister of Canada to say that the Canada-U.S. free trade deal is up for reconsideration — I'm not even talking cancellation, but for consideration — Mr. President, because your \$900 million export enhancement program has violated clause 701.4 of the free trade deal.

And some might say, well what about the Europeans? And I say that if the Americans were faced with that kind of a threat by the Canadians on the Canada-U.S. free trade deal, and they saw a danger to them on the free trade deal, maybe it would be a lever for them to sit down with the Europeans and get this grain subsidies war to an end. But we didn't hear a word about that by the government opposite. Not at all.

Then there's another consideration in this subparagraph. And I like these words, Mr. Speaker. It says that we should urge Ottawa to:

Apply its constitutional authority over banks and lending institutions to achieve a lasting solution to the current national farm debt crisis.

Well that's true, Mr. Speaker. Ottawa has constitutional authority over banks and interest. But it's not a whole truth, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Saskatchewan also has constitutional jurisdiction. The Government of Saskatchewan, like any province in Canada, has the power to, in a way, deal with this and to be a relevant player.

For example, we had a moratorium in Saskatchewan's history in June of 1971 to July of 1972. We didn't ask Ottawa to act. The Government of Saskatchewan had the constitutional capacity to act and so it did act. Why is it that this resolution made no mention of what the alternatives constitutionally are, here at home, for the province of Saskatchewan to help out the farmers in debt, with the bankers and the lending institutions and the FCC?

Why is it only Ottawa's experience? Why is it this government is shirking its responsibility in this regard? That's another questions that I have about this resolution,

Mr. Speaker.

Then I say, Mr. Speaker, that the fifth area of concern that I have in this submotion is the area dealing with the budgetary figures. In this proposal by the Premier, the government says that we should, "Make a greater commitment of federal resources to . . . programs in agriculture."

Well I agree with that as well. We should make a greater commitment with respect to the agriculture situation. But what about starting to look at home here, Mr. Speaker? What is the commitment of the provincial government?

If my research is right — I could be in error — but between the 1986-87 budget years and the current budget year of '89-90, our own provincial Department of Agriculture budget has fallen by 37 per cent, Mr. Speaker. We've had a reduction of 37 per cent. And so we have the provincial government there saying that what we've got to do is get the Ottawa people to put in some more money.

I agree — Mr. Mulroney has ignored the West. I agree that he has ignored the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan. His preoccupation with Meech Lake and the interests which are attached to that, I think seemingly have stopped him thinking about western Canadian concerns. So I agree that we ought to be asking them for more commitment to expenditure of agricultural programs.

But I say, subject to what we see next Thursday, I say that it's about time the Premier of this province and the government opposite made a similar commitment to agricultural programs in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — So, Mr. Speaker, you see the point that I am making here, my fourth point. My fourth point is that we could have had a nice, clean, simple and important resolution on \$500 million. I do not hold this out as a solution. We could have then debated over the long term our differences philosophically and economically, as to how we solve the problem in the long term. That's the way we should have gone.

Instead, what the government did is that it added these additional provisions, many of which ask questions — as I have asked some questions — but to give you an example of what I mean, questions which are unanswered and unresolved, and some of the answers of which I know are the direct fault and responsibility of the government opposite here who has neglected the farmers and the farming communities in the province of Saskatchewan. That's the resolution which we have before us.

And so we have to ask ourselves, Mr. Speaker, why did this come about? Why didn't we take the \$500 million resolution? I would have allowed the Premier to move it. I would have seconded it. Anybody. Some word changes, we could have done that. What a powerful message it would have given to Mr. Mulroney and to Mr. Mazankowski.

But we didn't choose that. What we chose was the longer

approach with some answers included in the longer version of the motion and others which have been ignored. That, Mr. Speaker, is an unsatisfactory way in which to proceed.

And so, Mr. Speaker, what we have to do is to move an amendment. We have to move an amendment to this resolution, which I'm going to do the moment that I take my place in a few moments. I don't know what the government will do with respect to the amendment, but knowing the way this government acts, I fear that what it will do is that it will reject the amendment.

The Minister of Health cackles and laughs in his seat because I know that that's his position. He does not believe that there is an amendment that any opposition, let alone this opposition, could advance. And this is from the government that says it's seeking for non-partisanship and a co-operative, open consensus. I don't . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was about to say before I was so rudely interrupted by the Minister of Health and some of the members, but primarily him on the front benches, we are faced with this resolution which has been given to us. And the resolution obviously speaks to the immediate cash crisis situation which, as I have said, we endorse.

But it adds to it other aspects which need clarification, and we are going to therefore propose an amendment which will try to, I think, improve the resolution as it is — although we would have preferred the nice simpler operation and the nice simpler solution that I've talked about — but an amendment, which I'm going to read in a moment before I take my place, which I think will strengthen the operation and strengthen the proposal here.

First of all, we're going to suggest in our amendment that we include the Government of Saskatchewan in these obligations. We don't need to include the Government of Saskatchewan on the cash \$500 million pay-out or the so-called billion dollar contingency — I'd like to know what this idea is all about — but we certainly should and could incorporate, and reasonably so, the province of Saskatchewan and the Premier and his agencies with respect to some of the problems that we can do something about, for example, the attitudes of ACS that I referred to in my main remarks.

So we're going to, first of all, cover off in the amendment the inclusion that the province of Saskatchewan should be a part of this, should be a part of the solution and not a part of the problem.

Secondly, we're going to clarify that the payments are the responsibility of Ottawa. I've made that point, but I want to stress it again. We think that when the payments are made, or if they're made, that these payments are the responsibility of Canada in the national interest. I don't think any additional arguments need to be advanced in that regard.

And thirdly, in order to clarify some of the things that are

not in this new extended motion by the Premier and the government opposite, we're going to amend to ensure that ACS acts as they would have FCC act. And we're going to also amend and call for the development of a long-term income policy program for the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan.

Now those are going to be the three or four points of the amendment which I will read when I take my place in a very few minutes.

But I want to say a word about the last point of the proposed amendment, a long-term income stability program. Mr. Speaker, that has been a position of this side of this opposition now for the last at least two years, since the 1988 federal election campaign, and really before that time but I use '88 because that's probably when in the popular press it got some coverage. We'd been advocating for an income stability program based on the first 8,000 bushels at some bench

_mark figure — at the time it was the U.S. target price — which would make up for shortfalls on price and production, payable on delivery, which would give the farmers stability and predictability, that they could say what their farming operations for the next year are going to be, that they would have some certainty. That is what this motion or this aspect of the amendment is all about.

What we're saying, Mr. Speaker, is what farmers are telling us, that they're fed up with **ad hoc** billion dollar programs, as needed as they might be, which come only at election time. They can't plan. And, Mr. Speaker, the farmers are telling this to us now like they've never, ever before told us this message. This whole situation today, as I speak, is an example of what I'm trying to say. Here it is, March 20, 1990, and all that the farmers get in **The Western Producer** and the **Leader-Post** and the **Star-Phoenix** every other day is a tidbit that says: something is coming but we don't know how much, we don't know when, and we don't know to whom.

That's not predictability; that's not stability. That's not rationalizing the incomes programs. That's not rationalizing the debt structure programs, which I'll say a word or two about in a minute. That is pure and simple politics, Mr. Speaker. That is politics with the lives of family farms and people who are hurting, and the towns and the villages that are hurting. That is politics. And our amendment says, no more to politics; let's get on with the basis of developing a solid income program for farmers in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — So, Mr. Speaker, that's the fourth point that I make — the comments about the amendment that we're going to propose in the context of the main motion that they advanced, an explanation as to how we got here. In fact, I would say, Mr. Speaker, this debate would not have taken place if it hadn't have been for my letter on Thursday last; we would not have been debating this. And I made some comments about the crisis and also some comments about the government's total inability to decide, to have a vision, to lead, to take the bull by the horns and to show some guts, and to stand up for the province of Saskatchewan; the government's simple

desire to simply ask questions, questions, questions, fiddle while Saskatchewan burns; in effect the province of Saskatchewan's determination to consult while more and more farmers are driven off the farm lands and the feature of Saskatchewan is changed almost irrevocably and permanently changed.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, two things before I close, two very additional points which I think are succinct — and I'll try to keep them as brief as I can but I think they're very important to be said — and that is the question that I have to next ask. I've tried to break down my address into headings: the crisis, the motion, our concerns about the motion, our amendment.

And now I'm going to ask the next question. Why are we at this point, Mr. Speaker? Why is it that we're at this point, apart from the indecision of the government here and the government in Ottawa?

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, if this sounds partisan, it is partisan because it also happens to be the truth. We are here because of the monumental and incredible incompetence of the Mulroney Progressive Conservative government in Ottawa — its dithering and its refusal to act for farmers in the province of Saskatchewan. That's why we're debating this motion today.

That may sound like it's partisan, and it is because it's true. And if the people opposite there are saying to me that we shouldn't be partisan, I've got news for them. I got elected to fight, not only for farming people but for the business people and the youth of the province of Saskatchewan, for anybody who feels that there's a need and a cause for us to advocate in this legislature.

And I'm sorry if it sounds partisan to the press gallery or sounds partisan to the people opposite. I'm going to stand up and to make those causes and that . . . (inaudible) . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I said it's incredibly incompetent. I'll say more than incredibly incompetent in agriculture, Mr. Speaker. I say the government is malicious in its policies toward agriculture — not incompetent, but malicious in its policies toward agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, in 1985 — I've made this point and I want to stress it again — the Mulroney government said that it would come up with a permanent, long-term, rationalized disaster relief program. That was in the light of the crisis of that time. And about that time we had the \$25 per acre.

(1630)

Since 1985, farmers and Canadians have been waiting for this promise from the Prime Minister of this country, from the Deputy Prime Minister of this country, from the Premier of this country. For five years we've been waiting and there's been no answer. I say that is either incompetence or maliciousness and it can't be tolerated by the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, we are in the midst of a farm crisis, and what does the federal government in Ottawa do with respect to farming?

First of all it changes, this PC government in Ottawa, the crop insurance system and the premiums to be paid by crop insurance. It ups them at a time when the farmers are finding it hard pressed to meet the requirements of crop insurance. This isn't a government which is sensitive to what's going on in rural Saskatchewan. It says it is, but it isn't. But they up the crop insurance premiums.

Then they do away with interest-free cash advances, Mr. Speaker. This is the government from Ottawa — and by the way, as my colleague says, where were they? — aided and abetted by the provincial PCs here, the government opposite. This at a time when farmers have been going belly-up and blowing up . . . and blowing away. And the farmers here who these people opposite say that they're concerned about — we're all concerned about them — but there's no action. The government has instituted this in Ottawa. Again, silence.

Is that negligence or is it pure maliciousness designed to radically change the face of farming in rural Saskatchewan and Canada? Not a word.

I heard the Premier this afternoon get up and talk about the need to save rural towns and rural villages. I got up and I heard the Associate Minister of Agriculture say, we've got to save our towns in rural Saskatchewan. And what does the Mulroney government in Ottawa do in the name of some form of free enterprise concept of efficiency and rationalization? It shuts down the post offices in rural Saskatchewan and closes those communities. And the ministers opposite and the members opposite are dead silent as this takes place.

Is this incompetence or is it a change, a purposeful change in policy by a group of men and women who simply don't believe that you can do anything to change rural Saskatchewan? I'll say a word about this in a moment. I said incompetence or maliciousness.

I see a government in Ottawa that says it's fighting to try to solve this problem on an international basis, Mr. Speaker. They've been attending the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the GATT negotiations with respect to agriculture. I ask you, sir, what progress that is hopeful for the farmers has come out? None whatsoever.

They've had the minister, the former minister, Bob Andrew, who was in the House with us, a colleague of ours, attend many meetings of the Cairns Group. What's the result of Cairns and GATT? Still no movement.

I met with the United States ambassador to Canada, Mr. Speaker. He was here about two weeks ago, three weeks ago. We discussed the question of GATT. He said, it looks . . . I shouldn't be quoting him, but in any event the essence of the conversation was that it looked kind of grim.

Is there an idea advocated by the government opposite, or by Ottawa, that perhaps we should be trying to look at some other mechanisms, like an international grains

agreement for the exporting nations, and looking at that and then working from there to a mechanism to getting the food to the poor countries of the world that can't afford it?

Don't give me, Mr. Speaker, all the arguments against it. There isn't an idea around that can't be attacked with some arguments against it. But if we're paralysed or unable or unwilling to act because of all the potential arguments that are against it, of course no action will take place; of course the bankruptcies and the crisis to the credit union system and the banking system and rural Saskatchewan goes on.

And this government opposite and their cousins in Ottawa, in fact, simply have so many reasons why something can't take place, or in the words of the Associate Minister of Agriculture, questions, questions, questions, questions, so many questions that they can't act. There are so many questions that they're paralytic, and in the meantime rural Saskatchewan is blowing away and going belly up. That's an idea. Where is this government in Ottawa or in Regina on this particular side? Nowhere wheresoever.

I met with the United States Ambassador to Canada, and I raised with him too, Mr. Speaker, the question of the \$900 million export enhancement program. I said, Mr. Ambassador, with the greatest of respect, I am just a lowly, small-time politician in rural Saskatchewan, from a rural province called Saskatchewan. Maybe we don't carry much clout with you, but I want to say to you that 701.4 of the Canada-U.S. free trade deal is violated. And I read it to him.

His answer is that they've got no choice; they're going to go ahead in any event. I say, fine, I understand what you think is the imperative with respect to the European community. I'm just talking about Canada and my relationships with you. I'm talking about Canada and our relationships with the United States. You made a deal with us that you would not do these things if they harmed our farmers, and you broke that deal. If you didn't break it in the letter, you broke it in the spirit of the law. Why wasn't the Premier and the Prime Minister of Canada in opposition with me on that position and fighting against the free trade deal?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And then, of course, I said that this government is either incompetent or it's maliciously, purposefully trying to redefine — I'm talking about Ottawa now primarily, but not only — the rural face of rural Saskatchewan. I have here in front of me, Mr. Speaker, the paper called **Growing Together** which is the so-called "green paper." This is the latest document put forward by Mr. Mazankowski and Mr. Mulroney.

And I won't read the paper here that's involved, but the paper talks about market responsiveness and self-reliance. It talks about the need to withdraw supports; got to wean them away. In fact there's nothing so unusual about that. The Premier of the province of Saskatchewan, before he was premier, raised some very important questions economically in this regard. I'll say a

word about that in a moment before I conclude this section.

But this green paper is a philosophy which says that, in effect, the people of Canada should withdraw gradually the series of support programs and marketing policies for rural Saskatchewan in the face of what they see as international globalism.

Now they have an answer; Ottawa has an answer, Mr. Speaker, and it is this green paper. That's what the answer is, and coupled with free trade and coupled with the inability and or unwillingness to act on an international basis, this green paper, if it gets flower and it gets to grow and gets the water and the nourishment from the governments in Regina and Ottawa, is going to rewrite the entire face of rural Saskatchewan — the entire face of rural Saskatchewan.

Have I heard a word of opposition from the Premier and the government opposite? Have the farmers in Belle Plaine or Central Butte or Sturgis or Preeceville or Kamsack, have any of the farmers in Kindersley or Indian Head or any of the areas heard this government object in principle to this radical restructuring proposal of the farm life and rural life of the province of Saskatchewan? No, they haven't.

And what can one conclude? Mr. Speaker, one can conclude that there's not an argument against it because they believe in it. And by the way, Mr. Speaker, there is, perhaps — I don't buy it — but a legitimate argument which can be advanced economically to say this is the way that agriculture should be organized. You can logically and intellectually defend the green paper. I can't, but one can.

But you can't have it both ways. You can't have the government hoisted on its own petard, having one foot on one horse going the way of the green paper, which means market and Cargill and all the big forces of the international economic forces dictating our future on the one hand, or in having the other foot on the other horse trying to go along the lines of subsidies and support for the maintenance of rural Saskatchewan and small town Saskatchewan. This government is schizophrenic in its agricultural policy, and the farmers are paying the consequences for its inability to decide.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — No, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the word. I do not think it is schizophrenic because in my judgement I think the government has made the policy decision. The policy decision that it has made is a policy decision if you look at all of these issues that I've talked about, whether it is the post office, whether it is the green paper, whether it is the crop insurance program, whether it is the free trade arrangement, whether it's the payments of the Crow benefit to the farmers, or to the railway companies.

Under all of those options this government has made its decision, and the policies have been entrained now since 1982, and all of a sudden the policies aren't working. It's true that there's a drought which has compounded the problem, and the international wars have compounded the

problem, but all of a sudden, after eight years, these policies have been working and they have collapsed and we have the crisis around us, and all of sudden they say they're going to now try to put together the mess that they helped to create.

Mr. Speaker, is it little wonder that there is no credibility left with the ladies and gentlemen opposite.

Look, I want to give one quotation, Mr. Speaker, which I think deserves some elaboration. It's always apologized in some of the reports that I've seen. I have here a photocopy of an article written in a document called **Business Review**, winter of 1977; its headline "Marketing Boards: Economic or Social Policy?", Dr. D.G. Devine, professor of agricultural economics, University of Saskatchewan.

Now I know that the author of this article is one and the same person as the Premier today, because I can see the picture on the article and they look the same. He's now the Minister of Agriculture. And this is not an out-of-context quotation. I want to read to you what it says. This is in 1977, quote — this is the Premier, but I'm reading from the article, Dr. Devine — quote:

Realizing that most of our food is produced by less than 20 percent of the farmers, who tend to be good businessmen as well as producers . . .

I'll stop there to say what does it imply that he said for the 80 per cent — not good businessmen and not producers? He doesn't say that, but he identifies that 20 per cent, who are "good businessmen as well as (good) producers", he writes:

. . . society may not wish to support higher food prices or "producer security" so that the non productive 80 percent of the farm population can live in the country — at a profit.

I'm just going . . . there's more of the quotation, but just get those words, Mr. Speaker. According to the writer of this article, Dr. Devine, the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan, the Minister of Agriculture. He writes that it may well be that:

. . . society may not wish to support higher food prices or "producer security" so that the non productive 80 percent of the farm population can live in the country — at a profit.

I continue.

That maybe sounds tough, but perhaps all rural people don't have to be farmers or at a minimum there might be less expensive means of maintaining a rural population. In other words, possibly we should separate agricultural economic policy from social policy and realize that the demise of rural life styles and values is not just an agricultural phenomenon but a social phenomenon as well.

Notwithstanding the need for agricultural

co-ordination, it is argued that the imposition of farm marketing controls may have a very small probability of being the answer to either our social or our economic (problems).

Now, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Premier today wrote those words because he believed this. Or the other solution is he did not believe them at the time, or he might have changed since the time. But I say he hasn't changed. He hasn't changed, Mr. Speaker, because of his support for all of these market driven agricultural economics only arguments which he talks about in this article — the 20 per cent that are productive and the 80 per cent that are non-productive; the divorcing of agricultural economics, in his opinion, from social policy, Mr. Speaker. I say to you we cannot divorce agricultural economics from social policy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — I say, Mr. Speaker, to the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan, I say to all of Saskatchewan, if you buy the Premier's line that you can divorce agricultural economics from social policy, I say you have no province. If you want to make farm policy, or any policy for that matter, based on economics only, with all of the circumstances which have worked against us, the small climate and the population and the distance and the insensitivity of governments in Ottawa, be they Conservative or Liberal, if you want to make agricultural economics the guiding yardstick, then I tell you, we are 650,000 people. If you want to have a way of life, if you want our families, if you want our curling rinks, if you want our family farms, if you want our people going to churches and to schools and living and having a right to exercise their freedom and their potential, it is social policy. Economics and social policy are part and parcel of the same message. That's where we stand. They don't, and we oppose their approach, and that's why we're at this crisis right now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — And so you see, Mr. Speaker, as I come to a close in my remarks, you see now why there were no answers today on question period about where that \$500 million is. It doesn't fit into the social policy economics argument. You can see why there is no opposition to the green paper. It doesn't fit into the agricultural economics versus social policy.

And down the line on the Crow benefit, whether it's to the railways or to the farmers — the railways that I want — or the free trade agreement, that's straight market. You join the United States, that's market; that's agricultural economics. No better proof of what you believe in and what you write than doing that. And the same thing with respect to all of the other issues which are tied in, including the GATT negotiations.

(1645)

Sure, there have been payments from time to time. I am going to be counted, I'm sure, by one of the people opposite saying, oh well, but look at all the money that's come to agriculture. I don't minimize that. But, Mr.

Speaker, that is money which has compounded the problem in many circumstances. That is money not part and parcel of a sensible melding of agriculture and social policy; that money came because of straight, sheer political necessity. That's why that money came. That's why the billion dollars came in 1986. That's why they're delaying the \$500 million now. It is not anything to do with the policy. It's got to do with the short term political expediency.

And then they say there's a crisis. Well of course there's a crisis. It's a crisis manufactured and created by these people in large extent, not because they are malicious, not because they are mean, not because they want to see individual people hurt. They simply do not have that commitment to the social contract which was and is Saskatchewan; the social contract that we need a strong and healthy farming community, because not only does it enrich ourselves and the families and provide food for the world all over, but it enriches Canada in the world. They don't believe in that social policy, and we do, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — So, Mr. Speaker, I close my remarks. I close my remarks by recapitulating how I tried, on a point-by-point basis, to dissect what has been before us as rationally as I can, albeit with some emotion — and why wouldn't somebody have emotion on this kind of a debate?

I've talked about the crisis which we all accept and why I don't think simply asking questions, questions, questions, questions when the time has long gone by to act. I've talked about that. I've talked about what would have been a better motion. I've talked about, thirdly, why this expanded motion leaves some things out and asks a number of unanswered questions in other areas.

I've talked about our amendment and the necessity to perhaps improve this motion. I've talked about the larger philosophical areas of differences. Make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker, I will do everything that I can as opposition leader to join forces with any political party, including the members opposite, if it's going to provide help and assistance to the farming community, and I'm prepared to do it even on this motion if they defeat the amendments as it is.

But also, make no mistake about it, that that isn't our farm policy. That's not the NDP farm policy, because we have that belief in social policy. We have that belief in the commitment to long-term income and long-term debt restructuring and the question of intergenerational farm transfer programs. And the members opposite say, what farm policy? They've heard it. We've written about it, and I want to say to the members opposite, we are going to talk about it again. That's why we intend to discuss it at length. We have that policy and we're going to discuss it in the appropriate time and appropriate resolution.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can only say to the members opposite that if this is truly a feeling of co-operation, if this is truly a sense of consensus, if the government opposite there really says what it . . . and believes what it says, that they

will adopt this amendment. And perhaps then we could get on to repairing a little bit of a flawed motion, but nevertheless repairing the amendment.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by my colleague, the agricultural critic, the member from Humboldt, the following:

That the motion be amended:

- a) By deleting the words "Recognizing . . . action", inclusive, in lines three, four and five, and substituting the following: "Recognizing the serious economic crisis in Saskatchewan, demands that the Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan execute their responsibility to Saskatchewan farmers by implementing the following plan of action:"
- b) By inserting the following words after "\$900 million" in section 1: (namely the words) "from the federal government".
- c) By inserting the following after "\$1 billion" in section 2: (the word) "federal".
- d) By adding the following after numbered section 6:
 - "7. After consultation between the two governments, establish, by July 1, 1990, a National Farm Income Stabilization Program, which would guarantee production and price shortfalls on delivery."
 - "8. Direct the Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan to implement immediately a stop to foreclosures of farmland and its seizure of farm assets, until the measures in items 1 - 7 above are in place."

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Swenson: — A great responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to rise in this legislature today to speak on this particular item.

When I think of my neighbours and of the people that I represent in the constituency of Thunder Creek, most of whom make their living from agriculture, most of whom are active farmers as am I, and when I think, Mr. Speaker, that today in Saskatchewan we are forecasting a minus 9 million net income for the farming public of this province, you certainly feel that the responsibilities that you have assumed as a member of this legislature weigh heavily upon your shoulders.

When I think of the motion put forward by the Premier today, Mr. Speaker, I think it really hits home to all of us in this legislature, and to any of the public that are listening, that Saskatchewan people are going to have to stand together as they never have before. And I know when the

Premier went to the viewing public of our province a couple of weeks and talked about many of the things that were near and dear to certainly his political heart, he knew that those things had to be talked about with the public so that we could address this agricultural situation which is gripping our province. The Premier did that in a non-partisan, open-ended approach, and I think, Mr. Speaker, the main motion which was presented in this legislature today carried on from that address of some two weeks ago. And I guess it's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that others have not chose to treat that process in the same regard.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it is a reasonable motion that we had before us today because it talks about farming in its whole. Farmers in this province — and I'm proud to be one of them, Mr. Speaker, one of the people that goes out and gets dirt under his fingernails and enjoys it — farmers in this province by and large are well educated, they're smart, they're business-like. And anyone that would suggest that they cannot see the whole picture, the broader picture of agriculture, I think, does them a disservice. He discounts their intelligence and certainly says that farmers are not as perceptive as to the economy of this province as other people that live here.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think anyone who would suggest that type of thing certainly does a disservice to our province, when we as a whole are trying to pull together to present our case to the federal government of this country to save the main industry of this province. And I feel sorry that the Leader of the Opposition chose to handle it in that way, that farmers simply weren't intelligent enough or capable of looking at the whole picture as presented by this particular motion to the legislature today.

It's a motion, Mr. Speaker, that covers a number of areas, as it must if we're going to talk about farming and agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan. It talks about the cash flow problems that are out there for spring seeding. It relates to the constituents of mine who have come into my office in the last few weeks and actually brought in their detailed seeding plans, the detailed operating expenses that they know they're going to face this spring and say, I'm short. I'm not going to be able to see the crop the way I would like to because I'm an efficient, good farmer. And if I'm going to raise the kind of crop that I know I can grow on my land, I must do these things. And they're short today, Mr. Speaker.

And this motion talks about the cash flow problems that are a reality out there in rural Saskatchewan. It talks about the fight that must go on by Saskatchewan, by Canada, with these international grain wars that are out there right now.

As our Premier so eloquently explained to members opposite, who I know have a great deal of difficulty understanding some of these things, that we are in a very difficult situation, fighting the treasuries of the European Economic Community and the United States of America, that between the two of them have a combined population of 550-some millions of people, who consume a great deal of the production which they grow, and export very little.

To use the treasuries of that many people, to use the tax base of that many people, to wreak havoc upon a province which contains nearly half the farm land in Canada and a million souls who reside in this province, I think is a travesty which the federal government of our country has got to stand shoulder to shoulder with us and try and negotiate better terms for the grain farmer of this province.

This motion which we've had before us this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, addresses the question of the long-term debt, and I think it's something that any discussion on agriculture must address, because obviously there are many across the piece who bear responsibility when we talk about long-term debt.

And certainly there are farmers in this province, Mr. Speaker, who would not exempt themselves from that particular equation.

There are farmers out there who know that the price of land got too high and they certainly don't back away from their responsibilities. But we also know, Mr. Speaker, that any motion which talks about farm viability in this province must answer the questions of FCC. They must answer the questions of what role do the chartered banking institutions in our country play in farm financing, and certainly it must address the questions of what will happen to the credit union movement in our province who, by their nature and by the nature of the shareholders in those credit unions, have assumed a large proportion of farm debt in our province.

We must implement strategies, Mr. Speaker. We must implement laws that are fair and equitable to these various areas. Any motion, Mr. Speaker, in this legislature which addresses the farm crisis must talk about the long-term view of farm income. The mechanisms that have been in place must be improved.

And what are the options to improving those mechanisms to achieve stability on the income side, to provide security and to allow farmers to purchase and contribute to plans that will enhance their own ability to regulate their income in the things that they want to do in the future?

Those things make good, strong economic sense, Mr. Speaker, for our province. And any time we address a question of agriculture in this province they must all be talked about. And I think that was only fair and reasonable that the Premier expanded upon the motion as presented by members opposite last week, so that when we present our case as a province, as people standing shoulder to shoulder, that those that we are dealing with fully understand all aspects of the problem that we're dealing with.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.