

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce some international guests from the Ukraine to you and to other members of the Assembly, visiting the Department of Education today and touring some of our facilities and meeting with department officials. I would like them to stand as they're introduced. The first I would like to introduce is Volodymyr Luhovy, the deputy minister, the Ministry of Education; Yevhen Polishchuk, who is the chief, international department, Ministry of Education; Bohdan Zabrowarny, who is the president of the Luts'k Pedagogical Institute. And they are accompanied today by Mr. George Zerebecky from the Department of Education, and Vera Lebach who is from the Ukrainian language development consultant.

Now we want to extend a warm welcome to our guests to Saskatchewan. They are, as I indicated, meeting with some of our department officials today and tomorrow and touring some of our facilities. They have visited other facilities and met with department officials in Alberta, and I understand will be going on to Manitoba.

I'm looking forward, Mr. Speaker, to signing an agreement with them where we will be able to exchange materials and also professional exchanges in the years ahead. And I'm sure that we all have appreciated the contribution that people with Ukrainian heritage have contributed to our province in the past and the culture that they have added to our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to ask you and other members to extend a warm welcome to our visitors today and also extend a very happy visit here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with my colleague, the member from Saskatoon, in welcoming our guests from the Ukraine.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Ukrainian).

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Federal Funding for Agriculture

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, I will address my question to the Associate Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, it is obvious that Saskatchewan farmers were very disappointed that the expected \$500 million of assistance will now be substantially less. It appears that the payment will be about half of what you led them to believe it would be. Mr. Minister, how do you explain

your failure to come through on a commitment to Saskatchewan farmers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, when we began this process, about in November, at the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool convention, the Premier agreed with the resolution by the delegates from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool that the hurt here was \$500 million. And we have recommended to the federal government that that hurt be addressed and that that volume of dollars be addressed, and we at that time decided we were going to start to work on the process to see if we could bring that here.

And what we have done is we have brought in more than 50 per cent of the 500 million that the federal government designated to agriculture in this process.

Mr. Upshall: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I remind you that on March 19 of this year the Premier . . . through the Premier in the Speech from the Throne, you told farmers that you had a commitment to farmers for cash by spring seeding.

Later in this Assembly you said you were going to hold Ottawa to the sum of \$500 million for the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, you created the illusion of substantial amounts of money coming to Saskatchewan for farmers in time for spring seeding. Can you explain why, in your falling short in that commitment now, that somehow you say that everything is okay?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, I will acknowledge this, that we have worked as hard as possible with the federal government in terms of the conditions that existed and relating to them the conditions that existed and relating to them the conditions that exist in agriculture today. And we work together with the organizations, and I could read into the record what the National Farmers Union, Mrs. Wiebe, said about what we had done — it was better that nothing — and Mr. Speaker, that's typical of what they got with Mr. Chrétien when they were in power.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Speaker, new question. Mr. Minister, that is a great defence you have there. Mr. Minister, for five months now you and your colleagues have played political games with Saskatchewan farmers with this aid package, just waiting for a window of opportunity for an election. In the meantime we have many hundreds of farmers going broke and leaving the land.

Why do you not just admit, Mr. Minister, that this political posturing was totally for the benefit of your political party and not in the best interests of Saskatchewan farmers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, we have in the last five years delivered more to agriculture in this province than any other government in the history of

Saskatchewan. We have, Mr. Speaker, the \$6.6 billion to this province — this province, Mr. Speaker — and we put in \$800 million.

Now, the members on this side who come from rural Saskatchewan, and the ones on that side, the odd one, should be able to recognize the fact that they are better off today having had the Tory government than they were in the time when we were under their administration.

I'm just going to conclude by saying what Harvey McEwen said from the wheat growers: we're further ahead today than we were yesterday.

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Speaker, I want to also direct a question to the Associate Minister of Agriculture, and, Mr. Minister, a straightforward question. In respect to this long-awaited federal payment, which I understand you're still negotiating, I wonder whether you could indicate to the farmers on what basis the payment is to be made. Is it to be paid on the acreage basis? Or on a seeded acreage basis? And if that position hasn't been determined, can you indicate what position the provincial government is taking?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, we will be asking those same organizations that helped us develop the process that we went through to talk to the federal government. We'll be asking them to come to us and decide how that money is spent. I will tell you this — that the suggestions made by these farm organizations have been this — that they be paid on an acreage basis. And whether that's the quota acres or whether that's the seeded acres or whether that's the total cultivated, improved acres, that's what we're going to discuss with them. And we will come to a resolution together with the farm organizations as we have to this point.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — New question to the same minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, as you realize, all farmers in Saskatchewan are not in the same financial position. In *The Western Producer* it indicated that some 10,000 farmers face foreclosure or have already given up their land and are leasing back from financial institutions.

I want to ask you: can you tell us whether some portion of this federal money will in fact be targeted to those in need? Or do you have additional money which you are going to make available to address the debt structuring that is necessary across the province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Farm organizations, Mr. Speaker, have told us that probably a universal program, as it relates to the federal aid, is better than any other program. That suggestion has come basically 100 per cent from all of the associations that we talk to. And we will be going back to them to discuss further exactly what they mean by that, and we will decide after we've had a meeting with them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — New question to the same minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you indicate that a universal application of this federal-provincial money be implemented. I ask you: really, if this universal program is good in respect to the federal moneys, why haven't you used a universal program in the application to the farmers with the seed loan program?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, we have determined various kinds of programs in the Department of Agriculture. Some are focused on different groups. Some are targeted to young people. Some are targeted to livestock, some to the beef side, some to the pork side. And when we go to the organizations in the province, we will be asking them exactly what they want to have. Till now, they have generally suggested that we give them a universal acreage payment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Final question to same minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, while you play around and play politics with the farmers, more and more farmers are going broke, and that's the result of it.

I wonder, Mr. Minister, can you give our farmers some indication when they might expect to receive payment? It was promised this spring. Will they get it in June or July or August? Or will they in fact get it in 1990, or will it depend entirely on your electoral timetable?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, we are negotiating those benefits to the farmer as quickly as we can. The deputy minister of Agriculture is in Ottawa today and we're discussing that as we go through the general discussion. We very likely will be waiting till after farmers get their crop in to bring them in here to ask them what they should be doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Shortage of Speech Therapists

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. Last year during the Department of Health estimates, I brought to the attention of the minister this province's severe and chronic shortage of speech and hearing therapists. What I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, is what, if anything, has been done since that time to solve the situation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. member will want to get into that discussion again in estimates of this year, and they are coming up in a few days, in a few weeks, I'm sure. They will have our estimates in Health.

And the issue of speech therapists is an issue, as it is with

many of the professional . . . the health professionals across the province. We have difficulty in recruiting some of these. There's no question that that's true. We have bursaries, Mr. Speaker; we have bursaries for speech therapists. We have bursaries for those people and we bring them back.

What the problem is, Mr. Speaker, to a large degree, is that even though we put up bursaries, even though we pay for the education to a large degree of people who enter into this field, they go to other provinces who will pay out their obligations to Saskatchewan. They pay out their obligations to Manitoba. They pay out their obligations to Alberta.

The provinces here in the prairie basin are having our people recruited away to other parts of the country. We know it's a problem, Mr. Speaker. The solution that the hon. member is suggesting for a solution, we'd certainly be willing to hear. I'm sure we'll hear it now in his supplementary question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — New question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you've obviously admitted that your recruitment policies are lacking in this province. The national ratio of speech therapists and audiologists was one for every 9,587 of population according to the most recent Health and Welfare Canada statistics. For Manitoba the ratio is one to 6,894, and for Alberta one to 6,503, whereas in Saskatchewan the ratio is one to every 13,416 people. Now what are you doing about this very, very serious problem, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — We are doing as every other province is doing, but I would say to the hon. member, Mr. Speaker, we are recruiting as many as we can. We are paying for the education of people who take the training in this area. If the hon. member knows of one . . . if anyone watching this program today or this legislature today, anybody, if anybody wants to enter that field, the positions are available. The positions are available. The money is in the budget. The people are there to be hired. In this day and age of people looking for work, that work is available. If there is anyone who wants to enter that field, please contact the Department of Health; there's a job there for you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — New question, Mr. Speaker. The minister knows full well that Saskatchewan is simply not competitive with benefits packages in this area. He knows that full well, and that's the main reason for the shortage. We also know that there's an extremely high turnover rate of speech and language audiologists in the province, Mr. Speaker. And that is because of this government's recruitment policies, Mr. Speaker.

Now it's the Tories that have risen in this House, Mr. Speaker, and said that they have to pay Chuck Childers, Bill Doyle, and John Gugulyn some \$6 million because that is what the market demands, to quote them, Mr. Speaker.

Now I ask the minister, why is it then that the same adherence to market demands does not apply to the recruitment of health care professionals as it does to friends of the Tories? I'm sure that the people of Saskatchewan would think the recruitment of health care professionals was much more important than hiring an American to run our potash corporation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the recruitment of audiologists and speech therapists in Saskatchewan is not to do with the lack of a competitive rate of pay. I'll just make it very clear. It is not to do with the lack of a competitive rate of pay in Saskatchewan.

The member says that that's the case. That is not the case. And the speech therapists and the audiologists in Saskatchewan acknowledge that. So for that member to stand up and say that is what the problem is, it is simply not the case.

The facts are as I have outlined them. There is a shortage of speech therapists and audiologists across the country — no, not just across the country, Mr. Speaker, across all of North America, across all of North America.

And the significant problem that some of us have in this prairie basin I talked about — and it includes Manitoba and it includes Alberta — is that those who graduate in those areas with being recruited from every place across North America, do not wake up the day after graduation and say, I can't wait to get to Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's too bad that they don't say that, but it is the fact that they don't say that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Tabling of Crown Management Board Report

Mr. Solomon: — My question this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, is to the minister responsible for the Crown investments corporation. And as the minister knows, today is May 22, and the April deadline for tabling the annual report of the Crown Management Board is long overdue.

Mr. Minister, will you give the House the reason for this unacceptable delay, and will you tell us when this report might be tabled?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Speaker, new question to the minister, Mr. Minister, if I heard you correctly, you indicated the tabling of the report would be today. I am very curious to know, Mr. Minister, why there's been a four-week delay in tabling this very important report.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — I don't know as there is a delay in a technical sense, Mr. Speaker. If there is, I apologize. But

the reason for today is that I received it on Friday and honestly have to admit that I had it in my desk — the other copy is still here — did not get it tabled, and so I have tabled it and I table it today, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Solomon: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the minister responsible for the Crown investments corporation. Mr. Minister, we're very concerned because your government has set a legal deadline for filing important documents such as the annual reports. You have failed to meet that deadline. And, Mr. Minister, will you give this House the assurance this afternoon that in the future your annual reports will be tabled on time and that you won't be breaking the laws that you have set for this House to follow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hepworth: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I've said, I don't know as we're in technical default. I apologize for not tabling it on Friday, but I have tabled it, Mr. Speaker.

Review of Environmental Regulations

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the Environment, and it deals with the environmental review process. Mr. Minister, on April 25 the Premier called for changes in environmental regulations in order to restore certainty.

On April 26, I have here a memorandum, Alberta government memorandum which was issued, which called for a unified province . . . provincial approach by all the provinces so that the public would not have redress to the courts in environmental issues as they apply to environmental reviews. Can you inform the House, Mr. Minister, if the Premier's statement of April 25 included the removal of the public's right to redress through the courts?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly glad that the members of the opposition have agreed with the government and have agreed with the many environmental groups across Saskatchewan that have stated that the environmental processes that are now in place are not satisfactory.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is well-known in Saskatchewan that the rules that we play by today were rules that the NDP put in place back in the late 1970s. I'm not saying it was bad legislation, Mr. Speaker, but what I am saying is that legislation, and I've stated it publicly, is not satisfactory for today's era.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have committed to the House, and I will commit once more that that whole environmental process will be reviewed. In a few short weeks I will be making announcements with respect to the players across Saskatchewan who will be reviewing that process. They will be top lawyers, top environmentalists. And that process will change.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I have been informed that, by consent of the House, question period today will be shortened by a few minutes to permit members to participate in the outdoor welcoming ceremony for the Governor General.

MOTION

House Adjournment

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, with leave of the Assembly I would like to move, seconded by the Deputy House Leader, the member for Rosthern:

That this Assembly do now adjourn in order to receive our honoured guests, Their Excellencies, the Governor General and Mrs. Hnatyshyn.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 2:25 p.m.