

April 15, 1991

## EVENING SITTING

## GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

## Federal Funding for Agriculture (continued)

**Mr. Romanow:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At the conclusion of my brief remarks I'll be moving an amendment to this government resolution. An amendment, Mr. Speaker, which we on this side believe more accurately reflects the true state of affairs with respect to this specific issue of the third line of defence, and an amendment which more accurately reflects what the farmers and the rural community see are the needs with respect to this third line of defence. And I'll save the reading of the motion until the conclusion of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, but I simply alert you, sir, and all the other members of the House that we will be moving this amendment.

At the outset, Mr. Speaker, let me say with some considerable sadness that I find it confusing and in a sense almost unconscionable, if not unforgivable, that this debate today on April 15, 1991, is even necessary. This payment on the third line of defence, Mr. Speaker, should have been in the hands of the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan long ago. We should not have been debating, as we were this afternoon, a motion which calls on the federal government to pass the money along to the farmers; which by the way I might just say in passing, a motion which has sort of a subtle implication to it that maybe Ottawa won't be coming through with money, even though we know by the popular press that Ottawa has indicated that in fact such money will be coming quite quickly, quite expeditiously — after eight months.

The need here for farmers is obviously crucial and it's urgent and it's desperate, and the need for cash for spring seeding is today. It was actually one month ago, two months ago. And I find it, Mr. Speaker, as I said, unconscionable, unforgivable. I find it sad. In some ways I find the statements of the Premier to be almost pathetic in the recitation of the past policies and past actions, all the while refusing to speak of course to the urgent need which is before us.

So the most important thing, I think, that needs to be made, and what this resolution does not say, is that this payment needs to have been made and that this debate, in a sense, is an exercise which I can only describe as an exercise in political objectives or political purpose, occasioned by a government which has been very tardy on this important aspect of the farm crisis.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the fact that there has been delay, I think, is beyond any debate whatsoever. We know that in September of 1990, for example — and let's take a moment to refresh the members' memories — that in September of 1990 the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool spoke on this issue of the third line of defence.

I would remind the members, Mr. Speaker, that way back in September of 1990, the Wheat Pool argued for a recall of this Legislative Assembly. And in the statement of September 19 it set out a detailed farm viability strategy. I

have a copy of it in front of me. And indeed it is a very excellent blueprint of many of the things which farmers, as the Wheat Pool saw in September, need and I would argue still need in April of 1991.

On that occasion the Pool said the following:

The Pool also wants Ottawa to come up with a \$550-million deficiency payment for Saskatchewan farmers. "The payment is needed this fall and should be administered like other special grains programs, and not on production," says the Pool president.

This is from the press release. The document itself — now I will take a moment just to read this — the actual farm viability strategy says the following with respect to the deficiency payment:

It is estimated that Western Canadian grain producers required \$1.1 billion in deficiency payments to compensate for the low grain prices resulting from the U.S.-E.C. grain subsidy war.

In respect to the Iraq grain embargo, the federal government will need to extend additional compensation to offset any market losses.

I will stop from my recitation here of the text by saying that in this debate of course there has been no mention of the Iraq embargo and the cost that it has imposed upon the farmers of this province. Continuing again from the farm viability strategy paper of the Pool, it says:

Saskatchewan would receive approximately 50 per cent of the \$1.1 billion deficiency payment, or \$550 million. This would increase Saskatchewan's realized net farm income to an estimated \$797 million for 1990 (five-year average income levels).

And the last point in the written script says: "Federal assistance is required in calendar year 1990."

So, Mr. Speaker, what we see by this statement is the Pool's argument that the deficiency payment is required because of the subsidies war, because of the Iraq embargo. And it's required in the calendar year 1990, and it's required in the amount of \$550 million, and it's required, as the president of the Pool said, now in the fall of 1990.

There is no doubt about it, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan's leading pre-eminent farm organization identified correctly the needs of rural Saskatchewan and farmers. And since September of 1990, unconscionably and unforgivably and sadly, the government in Ottawa, aided and abetted by the silence of the front benches opposite, has ignored this call by the Wheat Pool and the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan. This is an eight-month delay, Mr. Speaker.

And I repeat again my point about how tragic it is that we are here on April 15 purporting yet to be debating a resolution which, by all newspaper accounts in any

events, will see some action of some form by Ottawa in the next few days.

I want to add one other point about the business of timeliness, Mr. Speaker. There have been a number of statements by the government opposite itself on the question of timeliness. I have here in front of me three statements made by a combination of either the Premier or his Associate Minister of Agriculture.

Here's one comes on Progressive Conservative caucus letterhead, Mr. Speaker. You'll see it. It's dated February 16 and the headline says it all. "Premier says further farm aid imminent." That, Mr. Speaker, is two months ago. Today is April 15.

Then on February 18 there's a Government of Saskatchewan press release and the headline on it says, Mr. Speaker, "Devine, Martens host Canadian agriculture ministers' meeting," and in that press release again both the ministers who spoke this afternoon said we need to have the third line of defence, the deficiency payment.

And then on March 2, 1991, the federal-provincial ministers of Agriculture met, Mr. Speaker, here in Regina with a great deal of fanfare. Once again the ministers opposite issued a statement promising the payment of the third line of defence. I'm going to read you two paragraphs of the communiqué put out by the federal-provincial ministers.

Ministers received a report from the Third Line of Defence Committee. Because of the extent of the farm income shortfall in 1990 and 1991, and as farmers will not receive the full benefits of GRIP and NISA until 1992, Ministers agreed that interim measures will be required as a bridge to the new safety nets. At the same time, they reinforced the need for long-term adjustments to be addressed through the third line of defence process.

Note that word — I'll come back to say a word about this. They said:

At the same time, they reinforced the need for long-term adjustments to be addressed through the third line of defence process.

And then the next paragraph talks as follows:

Ministers emphasize that the third line of defence process enters into play when there are problems that measures like GRIP and crop insurance were not designed to address . . . Any transitional assistance in 1991 will be funded by the federal government, but will be conditional upon a commitment by industry and provincial governments to develop complementary initiatives which will enable the industry to adjust over the long-term.

I'll have a word to say about that last statement which seems to tie the third line of defence to complementary initiatives at a provincial level, and seems to tie it into the question of GRIP (gross revenue insurance plan) or NISA (net income stabilization account).

Well, Mr. Speaker, the point that I wish to make here, I think, is self-evident. From September of 1990, through to the Premier's statement that it was imminent — the payment was imminent two months ago — through to the statement of the federal-provincial ministers' meeting right here in this city, in Regina, indicating that it was coming — the third line of defence — although there is confusion as to whether it would be tied to the GRIP and NISA programs.

Throughout that entire period, the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan were entitled to believe the words of the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture. They were entitled to expect that their farm leaders' hopes and demands, dating all the way back to September of 1990, would be followed. The farmers of the province of Saskatchewan needed the amount and the terms and the conditions of that third line of defence spelled out, not to be debated in today's legislature, but to be spelled out and to be paid.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, that is a tragedy, and it is unforgivable that this government opposite has been playing pure politics with the situation in a desperate crisis that we are.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — I say that this is a political situation.

Mr. Speaker, it does not give me pleasure to say this. Clearly this is a matter which should transcend partisan politics. We know whether people are New Democrat farmers or Progressive Conservative farmers or Liberal farmers or uncommitted. It doesn't matter. They are facing all of the difficulties that the Premier outlined in his address and the Associate Minister of Agriculture outlined in his address.

We know how desperate and how important the agricultural community is to the people of the province of Saskatchewan. I endorse very much the numbers which the Premier and the minister opposite have talked about with respect to the impact of a healthy farm economy on the province of Saskatchewan, which makes this all the more puzzling, Mr. Speaker.

If the agricultural industry is so important, as it is, if it is in such deep crisis, as it is — and I won't go through all the figures that the Premier at length recited — if these facts are so unalterable and so obvious, as they are, Mr. Speaker, the question then that begs for answering is: why has there not been an announcement of a third line of defence deficiency payment by this time? Where in the world has the Premier been? Where in the world has the Associate Minister of Agriculture been? Where in the world, putting it more bluntly, has Mr. Mazankowski and Mr. Mulroney been?

We know that this is the situation.

**An Hon. Member:** — Tell us what your . . . (inaudible) . . . is.

**Mr. Romanow:** — The member opposite said, what is our plan. Our plan was, right from September of 1990 and consistently in press releases, to say that the federal-provincial government should stop playing politics and make the third-line payment. That's been our position.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, and we have this situation of the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster, who refuses to get involved in the debate. Maybe he will a little later on, knowing this to be the case, with no explanation being offered. And, Mr. Speaker, when I say no explanation being offered, I would suggest to you, sir, that it's incumbent upon the Prime Minister or Mr. Mazankowski or incumbent upon the Premier of this province to tell the farmers concretely what the reason for the delay is.

They have a duty to say in a non-partisan, non-political way why it is that they've had to wait, the farmers have to wait, from September of 1990 to this debate of April 15th. And one doesn't know how many days after today before some form of payment will be coming. I mean, there needs to be an answer or an explanation.

**An Hon. Member:** — An accounting.

**Mr. Romanow:** — An accounting, as one of my colleagues says. And the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster, yelling across the floor as to what our position is, I said to him in response, in retort, what our position has been.

I have in front of me here, and I'm prepared to deliver it over to the member opposite, a statement made by myself on September 19, 1990 endorsing the farm viability program of the Pool, endorsing the third line of defence at the time that the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool wanted it. I even went so far as a few days ago, writing a letter to the Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, indicating to him, together with my colleague the Leader of the Opposition from Manitoba, that the third line of defence needs to be paid out now and urgently, and in effect being critical as to why there has been no payment. We have been urging them to give us a statement.

(1915)

Now, Mr. Speaker, I ask you to reflect back, and you were very patient if I may say so, with respect, in listening to the comments in this debate, as is your responsibility. I ask you to reflect back upon whether or not the Premier made any explanation at all as to why the reason for the delay in the payment. And the answer is, there wasn't anything said by him at all. I think the record is quite clear on that.

What there is, is this resolution which calls on us to support the payment of the third line of defence: something which we all support, something which the Pool initiated in September 1990, something which the official opposition endorsed since that time and continuously, and still no answer as to why the delay.

I stress the reason that there is no explanation and no

answer, Mr. Speaker, for this very reason. In the absence of a credible, non political explanation as to the delay, members opposite should not be surprised if the farmers and the opposition and other political parties conclude that the delay is geared, pure and simple, to the election timetable of the Premier of this province and not to the interests of the farmers in Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — There is no other explanation; we have heard none. And this I say, Mr. Speaker, is unconscionable. It's unforgivable. It is sad, and I say it's pathetic watching the two ministers today elaborate on the importance of agriculture — which we all admit and support and agree — all the while that farmers that want some answers and the payment on the third line of defence, or the deficiency payment.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the first thing that we find wrong with this statement, with this motion, is the fact that it does not recognize this political gamesmanship to which now we are reduced to debating in this legislature at this late hour with spring seeding around the corner. And in the amendment that I propose, we propose to rectify that, to call a spade a spade, and to identify the reason for this delay by the amendment, so that the Prime Minister and the people of Saskatchewan would know.

But I now move to a second point, Mr. Speaker, a second, larger point on this resolution. And I invite the members opposite and I invite you, sir, and I invite the journalists especially, to take notice of the fact that the motion moved by the Premier makes no reference whatsoever to a sum of money to be paid by the way of the deficiency payment third line of defence to the farmers by the government. There is no mention of a figure there at all. Now I find this, Mr. Speaker, being very blunt about it, to be very worrisome. We know that the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool has called for \$550 million. I've read the portions of the Wheat Pool statement which sets out the rationalization for that.

Why is it, Mr. Speaker, I ask you, sir, and for those who will enter the debate following me on the opposite side, why is it that the Premier and the Associate Minister of Agriculture did not incorporate in this government motion a dollar figure, \$550 million, the dollar figure which we all know in Saskatchewan is the minimum required in order for the farmers to deal with this crisis and in the face of the importance of the agricultural economy as the Premier and the Minister talked about this afternoon. Why isn't there a figure in there?

I say, Mr. Speaker, this is ominous. This is ominous because I suspect that the Premier of this province, working in close concert with the Minister of Agriculture Canada, knows that the figure will not be \$550 million. I hope I'm wrong. He knows that that figure cannot be supported by the federal government, and there is no mention of it therefore.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, that if we're going to talk about this issue in a non-partisan way we ought not to be worried about what Mr. Mulroney thinks. We ought to be speaking, Conservatives and New Democrats, about

what is needed, not what they think or what he thinks is right.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — We should not be pulling our punches here. No one will fault the Premier if he goes to Ottawa and he can't get the \$550 million if it's an honest effort, an honest try. I worry about that because I think the track record of the government here has been more determined to follow the political agenda of the Mulroney government.

But leaving that as an aside, this legislature has a duty to speak up in a united voice about what is required on this third line of defence. We need to tell the farmers that we know they need \$550 million. We need to tell Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Mazankowski that, whether we're Conservatives or New Democrats, we're united behind that \$550 million. And, Mr. Speaker, this resolution is deficient because it has no figure at all contained in this motion.

It's, in effect, a fill-in-the-blank resolution that Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Mazankowski can simply fill in the blanks. And if the figure is less than the \$550 million, then the farmers of this province will have been done a great disservice. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that we have to amend this motion to put the figure of \$550 million for Saskatchewan farmers clearly on the record, and let's get the job done on behalf of the farmers of this province.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — So that's the second thing which is deficient on this motion.

Now there's a third matter of this motion which I think needs to be addressed, again, Mr. Speaker, very bluntly. Members opposite, the Premier and the Associate Minister of Agriculture, talked at length about how this motion, the third line of defence, tied into the GRIP and NISA programs. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that in my travels around rural Saskatchewan farmers are asking me a number of questions about GRIP and NISA, basically stemming around the fact that they do not have the answers from the government opposite, or from any of the officials of the government, on GRIP and NISA. They're expressing their frustration about this. They're expressing their worry about the deadline, Mr. Speaker. They have to sign up by May 15, I think is the deadline. The answers seem to vary from meeting to meeting.

They're also worried about a second thing. They want to know whether or not the third line of defence, which is the subject of this motion, is going to be tied into GRIP and NISA as they are currently structured and currently proposed. And they are worried about that, because the fear, as has been expressed to me by farmers, is that frankly the third line of defence may be at least indirectly, if not directly, made conditional on the farmers being forced into signing into GRIP and NISA.

And there have been numerous questions asked by farmers, Mr. Speaker, about whether or not the third line of defence is going to be tied to GRIP and NISA and them

joining GRIP and NISA. Did the Premier today tell the farmers whether or not that was going to be the case? The answer is, not a word on that, Mr. Speaker.

Did the Associate Minister of Agriculture get up and explain to the farmers of the province that they will have to, for example, at least indirectly get into GRIP and NISA, with good cause? No, he was silent on this issue. And he was surely silent on the issue about whether or not the third line of defence was a free-standing payment in acknowledgement of what the Wheat Pool says is a desperate need for cash.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, any objective observer of this debate would realize that the questions I am asking are not partisan. These are questions that farmers are asking whether they are New Democrats or Conservatives or Liberals or uncommitted. They have to know what they're buying into, and they want to know whether or not the third line of defence is being used as kind of a stick to beat them into a program which has many aspects of it that favour it, but a program which has many questions surrounding it. My colleague says, let's get the facts. And that's exactly what they're saying. We need to know what the facts are.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said about GRIP and NISA. I just said a moment ago that it's a start. I will say that it is a belated start. The Associate Minister of Agriculture himself — yes, the Associate Minister of Agriculture himself — admitted this afternoon that in 1986-85 he described how the wheat prices began to tumble because of the United States export enhancement program. And he will admit that in 1985, that's when the federal government announced that they would have an income stability program which would be based on some form of permanency and on the conditions of flexibility that the Premier outlined.

And the record is clear that for over five years now Ottawa has been promising and the Minister of Agriculture, the Premier, has been echoing that promise, the assurance to the farmers that there would be a permanent cost of production formula based on income stability — something along GRIP or NISA, we didn't know at the time what it was going to be like — but in any event a move away from the *ad hoc* programs which have characterized the developments in this province with respect to this issue. It's a start, but there's a five year delay to it. And as I said, Mr. Speaker, there are many questions which are being asked out there by the farmers and the farm community.

Mr. Speaker, I want to draw to your attention some of the questions and some of the developments out there with respect to GRIP and NISA. And I want to begin, first of all, by talking a little bit about the grains and oilseeds safety net committee. Now this is a committee that was referred to by the Premier and the Associate Minister of Agriculture in their remarks this afternoon. This is the so-called 19 producers, the actual farmers — not the bureaucrats and not the politicians — the 19 farmers who advised the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . now the Minister of Finance is very sensitive because he knows exactly what I'm going to say. And I might say to the Minister of Finance, he deserves to be absolutely

super-sensitive about what I'm going to read here in a moment. So I can understand your super-sensitivity.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — But, Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Minister of Finance knows exactly what I'm going to say, but what is interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that neither the Premier nor the Associate Minister of Agriculture told the full story on this in the speech this afternoon. Their line was that the 19 producers on the committee, the safety nets committee, this was their program. That's the pitch.

Well I have here a letter, a copy of a letter which is in the public domain, dated March 25, 1991, signed by Barry Senft, director, district no. 6 of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, a Pool rep, and he writes this. Dear Editor:

As one of the 19 producers who sat on the grains and oilseeds safety net committee, I would like to clarify the . . . (role of that committee) in . . . (the development of) the GRIP and NISA programs.

As a farmer and a representative for Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, I and my organization appreciated the opportunity to be involved in the development of a new grains and oilseeds safety net.

Now here's the paragraph:

The committee presented its recommendations to federal and provincial agriculture ministers in August 1990. Since that time, producer involvement has been minimal (Mr. Senft writes).

Federal and provincial governments had been responsible for final decisions regarding program criteria and implementation. For example, important issues like cost-sharing, individual versus basket coverage and premium methodology were decisions made exclusively by federal and provincial governments.

And then the letter goes on and talks about the principles for which these 19 producers argued and fought for, but after August of 1990 were not listened to. Now the chronology here is very important. In September of 1990 the Wheat Pool puts out its farm viability program, of which I've read portions to you respecting the third line of defence.

In August of 1990, according to Mr. Senft, essentially, for all intents and purposes, this Premier and the federal government and the bureaucrats — I won't say the Premier, I'll withdraw the Premier comment because he wasn't on the committee — but at least the officials of the governments, provincially and federally, in effect stopped listening to the producers, the actual farmers.

And the Premier did not tell the whole story today. He attempted to tell the people of this province and this legislature that what we have on the table with respect to GRIP and NISA today is a program that the farmers' committee have endorsed, when Mr. Senft and others say, no, that's not the case. They were there, but the decisions were made by the governments since August of

1990. This, Mr. Speaker, comes from a Premier, a Minister of Agriculture. And he's not alone, Mr. Senft.

This will get the Minister of Finance really good and agitated. And I think he should get agitated. Here's another committee member. Headline in the *Leader-Post*, dated April 3, 1991, "GRIP 'designer' washes hands", and the quotation says, "To say that the 19 producers held a majority of this 33-man committee, and therefore it's their program, is total hogwash." . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Terry Hanson. Not my words. Total hogwash.

The Minister of Finance says why didn't he say that two months earlier? Because he didn't expect that the Premier and the Minister of Finance would go around this province and this country saying that it was their program. They didn't expect that they would be victimized and politicized that way.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

(1930)

**Mr. Romanow:** — That's why he didn't say it. It's when the Minister of Finance and the Premier and the Associate Minister of Agriculture tried to politicize this operation by dragging in this safety nets committee that the farmers say that they object to a politicization, and the statements were made. That's why it was done, Mr. Minister of Finance. That's why it was done.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — And I say to the Minister of Finance, he can make his speech from a seated position. And he keeps on saying, you know Terry Hanson is some sort of a political person. He may be, but I tell you Mr. Minister of Finance, he's a farmer; he's a citizen of this province, and your arrogance in denying him his right to speak is unforgivable sir — unforgivable.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — Their arrogance. The Minister of Finance and the Premier, they say, dare you cross our words, dare you just give a different opinion and you're going to be maligned and you're going to be run through the mud. Because that's the way these people operate — American style, personal attacks on people. I say to you I'll take the words of Barry Senft and Terry Hanson, and the other 19 producers, long over the Minister of Finance or the Premier of this province.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — Shame on them. This is a government — shame on them — a government that goes around running down people for different political views, on a legitimate operation and of an importance of this nature, which is not political and shouldn't be political, they make that in this issue.

Now these are what people are saying. Now I want to come back to the second point that was not mentioned in the not telling the whole story line of these people

opposite, Mr. Speaker. That's why they are in such deep, political trouble.

The Premier today was talking about — excuse me, I don't think it was the Premier. It was the Associate Minister of Agriculture and his address who mentioned the name of Ken Rosaasen, University of Saskatchewan agricultural economist. I recall that name. And the letter here he refers to — he says — is a letter from Ken Rosaasen describing GRIP as being a program which is a very significant program and has a number of improvements over the WGS (Western Grain Stabilization Act) and the like. And the minister is dead right on that.

And that's our position. We think it's a start. Five years too late, but it's at least an attempt by the governments.

But what the Associate Minister of Agriculture and the Premier did not tell the House is what these people, Professor Rosaasen — but there are others: Furtan, Rosaasen, Gray, Weisensel, Kraft and others of which they'd given copies to a variety of people — what they had to say about GRIP and NISA in their analysis of it.

And the essence of their statement — I'm looking at page five of their document — I'll read only a portion of it; it's in context. They write as follows, quote:

As outlined in Section B (referring to this document they prepared), (1) GRIP is not market responsive. Changes in the relative prices of crops will have little or no impact on the choice of crops grown by producers so that producers may add production to already glutted markets.

Two, they write, these professors:

(2) GRIP does not encourage self-reliance, as the payout from the program is more important than the level of grain output achieved. (3) GRIP does not recognize regional diversity. GRIP off-loads much of the cost for the support for the agricultural sector to the tax payer in the regions which produce grain. Given the size of the agricultural sector in these regions, the additional tax burden comes when these regional economies can least afford it. (4) Finally (they write), GRIP is not environmentally sound. As outlined in section B, the large expected payout provides an incentive to bring often fragile marginal land into production to collect program benefits and to adopt farming practices that are neither economically nor environmentally sound. The exclusion of hayland and alfalfa may result in the rebreaking of this land to collect program payments.

And this is a very thoughtful critique, Mr. Speaker. One may not want to endorse all that's said in it. But these are important questions which these people are asking. The member opposite says, I better not. Well, I mean, I would like to see the member opposite, one of them, say to the farmers of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, look, here are our answers to these questions raised by these eminent people. There are explanations to them. I'd like them to say whether or not these are legitimate concerns, whether

they've been properly addressed or not even addressed.

But you see the point that I'm getting at, Mr. Speaker, on GRIP and NISA, which is part of the third line of defence. There are a variety of questions as asked by Rosaasen and Furtan and by Hanson and by Senft and others which are out there in the community. The farmers leave these meetings, Mr. Speaker, and they are as concerned about what goes on as anything else that they might be.

Here, Mr. Speaker, I've got a newspaper story from the *Leader-Post* which makes my point. The headline is . . . it's dated March 30, 1991. And I'm going to begin, this is a story written by one D'arce McMillan of the *Leader-Post*:

Though highly promoted by the provincial government, not all farmers are rushing to sign up for the new farm safety net program.

Grant Swanson, a Semans-area farmer, is not sure he wants to spend about \$20,000 for GRIP when the final payment from the program won't come until the fall of 1992.

And Dale Heenan, who farms southwest of Regina, is "99 per cent sure" he won't sign up (is the story).

Now whether they do or they don't, that's not the point. I'm simply identifying who these people are. And the story continues like this:

A lot of pressure is on farmers to make a long-term commitment to the program, but because it is still an enigma, they must do so on faith. And their faith is shaken when they attend GRIP information meetings and get the impression either that the people running the meetings either don't know the program very well, or the program itself is not fully developed, he said.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what we've been hearing. We've been hearing by people who've attended these meetings that those running the meetings either don't know the program very well or the program itself is not fully developed. That's exactly the concern which we are hearing, Mr. Speaker, when we are out talking to the farmers and in the farm community. And farmers need answers with respect to GRIP and NISA.

Now the reason that GRIP and NISA is a part of this debate is because we have the prospect now that GRIP and NISA might be tied to the third line of defence. Now if you've got these questions on GRIP and NISA but the third line of defence, which is the desperate cash needed, only comes because of some indirect, perhaps even direct pressure to get into GRIP and NISA, is this really playing fair with the farmers? Is this the way to deal with this very critical situation? Well I argue that it isn't, especially in the light of the constraints. And a lot of farmers feel that they're being blackmailed into signing up the program or doing it in a way which is too hurried in order to get the cash payment, which the third line of defence promises to be made.

And, Mr. Speaker, the confusion. I now move to the third area of my concern about this resolution. My first area

being that it doesn't explain satisfactorily why the delay. My second point being that it doesn't indicate the numbers required. The third point that I am speaking to, is the question of how it relates to GRIP and NISA. And the confusion persists.

Here on January 31 in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, Don Mazankowski is speaking to a Manitoba farm group and he said this:

Mazankowski also tied a second key stipulation to the proposed farm aid: the payment will go only to those farmers who join Ottawa's recently announced Gross Revenue Insurance Plan (GRIP).

That's *Winnipeg Free Press*, January 31, 1991. Now they've changed a bit it seems. Just a few days ago in the *Leader-Post* the headline says, "Farm aid may have 'strings'". But this time it isn't only for those who have signed up. This time round the statement goes as follows:

Mazankowski replied that it "may be overstating" the case (note the words, Mr. Speaker) . . . it "may be overstating" the case to suggest that farmers will have to join the plans, but admitted there will be incentives associated with the money to join the safety net programs.

When the safety nets were designed, a goal was to have — to the largest extent possible — any extraordinary relief . . . tied to the new programs, he said.

Mazankowski said he is aiming to release details on the so-called third-line payments next week.

Which by the way we're debating as if this was some fresh motion by the Premier opposite. This is what the minister says, and then he goes on to talk about it.

By the way, Garf Stevenson is quoted in this same story by simply saying, look:

. . . GRIP (is not going to) . . . provide much help this year. "We really need cash."

Which is the position which we advocate.

So the situation is that the Minister of Agriculture Canada, Mr. Mazankowski, says, you can't say that they're going to be absolutely tied in to GRIP and NISA before you get the third line of defence payment, but "there will be incentives associated with the money (in order) to join the safety net programs."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I say the farmers have a right to know what those incentives are going to be. Are they going to be incentives or are they going to be strait-jackets? Are they going to be incentives or are they going to be the things which bully them into signing it? And the farmers want to know more particularly the details of GRIP and NISA, and I think those are legitimate questions to ask. It's a start; it's a good start. It's five years late but these questions that the professors and others have raised need to be talked about and need to be aired and they're not being aired and the farmers feel they're being pushed into

it.

Let me just give you one example of what I mean. Here's a well respected, well-known writer, Jim Knisley of the *Leader-Post*, who writes here in this particular article that I have in the *Preeceville Progress*, Preeceville, Saskatchewan. I don't know if it's in the member of Saltcoats's constituency. No I guess it's not; it's in Canora, the minister's constituency.

Here, Mr. Speaker, is what the writer says:

There is also the so-called third line of defense. The reason this doesn't rate being called the fifth good thing about the program is that nobody knows what it is. It could be extra cash; it could be debt relief; it could be preferential interest rates for beginning farmers or it could be a chicken in every pot and two cars in every garage — we don't know.

What we do know is that you won't qualify for the special assistance of the third line of defense unless you're in GRIP.

In other words, the third line of defense is a nice little piece of blackmail, if nothing else (Mr. Knisley writes).

Now, Mr. Speaker, maybe the circumstances have changed since Mr. Knisley wrote this on January 31, because we see now the Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa says that it's not going to be a straight, direct tie-in, but there'll be incentives. But none the less, this captures the mood of what farmers are telling us.

And I say to the Associate Minister of Agriculture, for whom I have quite a fair amount of respect, I would have expected him to have gotten up this afternoon in the legislature and have told us the full story about whether or not the ministers are talking about the third line of defence in the context of either: (a) extra cash, free-standing; or (b) debt relief; or (c) some preferential financing by way of interest rates; or some combination of those three, or some other option.

Because I believe, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the ministers of Agriculture of Canada have been talking about the third line of defence in each one of those three or four alternatives, to which the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan have every right to know, and to have that in advance, to have it debated and thought out, not simply something foisted on them in their desperate moment on the eve of an election, at the time of crisis that the Premier talks about, in a time of economic importance that the Premier talks about. They have a right to know. You can't manipulate them the way these people opposite have been manipulating them.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Romanow:** — So, Mr. Speaker, this resolution does not tell us about this. And we feel that because the time to sign up GRIP and NISA is too short, May 15; because the questions asked by a number of people, respected people like the professors I've talked about and farmers, need to

be answered; because the third line of defence has three or four various options as to how the money could be spent, at least that's at one point what the ministers were considering — I firmly believe that to be the case. The associate minister can deny me if I'm wrong. I'd like him to table the documents, however, to prove that.

Because these questions are up in the air, we say the third line of defence should be made as a free-standing payment. In the words of Garf Stevenson of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, we need the cash, the farmers need the cash, full stop, period. And it should be in the amount of \$550 million and this resolution doesn't talk about that.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

(1945)

**Mr. Romanow:** — Now before I take my place, Mr. Speaker, and move the amendment of which I talked about, let me just say in passing that we know what the situation is with respect to Manitoba. Manitoba has not signed on with respect to NISA. We know that Alberta has serious questions respecting NISA for as much as we can tell, perhaps even GRIP as well.

Saskatchewan has joined in fast and is pushing hard, fast. In a way this is very consistent of what Saskatchewan has done in the past. When Ottawa did away with interest-free cash advances we didn't say, boo. When we sought to reinstate it, finally the government opposite was forced to say something about it on the eleventh hour, when they were reinstated. The farm fuel rebate, when that was done away with, Saskatchewan didn't say, boo. When the green paper is put down, Saskatchewan doesn't say, boo, in effect going to the market economy.

And in a way it seems as if these questions are almost the same way, but the bottom line of it is, Mr. Speaker, that the farming community is entitled to have the answers, and we are obligated to provide them the answers; not we in opposition — we cannot provide them for obvious reasons, but the government is obligated to tell them the whole story. And we as legislators, Mr. Speaker, are obligated to fight for what our community wants. And we should not be doing it at 11th hours, resolutions such as this. We should be trying to do it in a non-partisan way. I'm sorry we weren't consulted by the Premier with respect to his proposed resolution. We might have been in formal discussions, given him some of our ideas so that we could have come up with a joint resolution and an unanimous motion.

These are serious issues, which this motion does not accurately set out or speak to. And I think — as I said, as I'm going to close now, as I said at the beginning — this is unforgivable. It's unconscionable. And in a way, it's sad and pathetic that a government in its fifth and last dying years is so incapable and unwilling to come clean, and to play the way this game should not be played. It should be played fairly and honestly with the farming community in a period of crisis.

We think accordingly the amendment, which I am now going to move, more accurately reflects what the farmers

want and more accurately reflects the situation today. And so I'm going to move, seconded by my colleague, the agricultural critic, who will say a few words after I do as the seconder of this amendment, the following amendment to this motion:

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

urges the federal and provincial governments to end the delay of the payment of the third line of defence assistance for political reasons; urges the federal government to make immediately the third line of defence payment of at least \$550 million to Saskatchewan farmers; urges that eligibility for this payment not be tied to enrolment in GRIP; and orders that this resolution be sent by telex . . .

I'll stop there, Mr. Speaker, to say after we pass a resolution, what do we do with it. That's another failing of the Premier's motion. It's just a passed motion. We'd like to do something with it, and therefore I continue:

and orders that this resolution be sent by telex to the Prime Minister immediately upon its adoption by the Assembly to communicate the urgency of the situation.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Upshall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the amendment put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, and to make a few points on the amendment and on some of the comments by the minister and the associate minister opposite earlier today.

I would just first of all note that in the motion put forward by the government concerning the third line of defence, with the Premier and the associate minister speaking on this issue, for the most part they talked about the GRIP and NISA program and only very briefly spoke about the issue the motion was putting forward, and that is the third line of defence.

I'm not sure what that means but I think it might mean that the Premier and government opposite are trying to hang their hat, to hang their election hat that is, on the GRIP and NISA programs. Unfortunately from talking to many people out in the country I'm not so sure that that's going to work for them.

I want to start by saying that this government opposite is not fooling anyone. The hypocrisy put forward by the timing of this motion when last Friday, the day that this motion was put forward, is precisely the day that in Ottawa, Mr. Mazankowski, the federal Minister of Agriculture, was making a statement to the press saying that he was going to make an announcement on the third line of defence this week.

So I hope the government opposite doesn't think they're fooling anyone when it comes to the timing of the motion, the timing, the debate, because we've seen this so many times before. We saw in 1988 when the deficiency



payments were coming through, the eight- to nine-month delay in the process where the government would make announcement after announcement after announcement, calling for a deficiency payment, going through the political process so they could have yet another press release. Well they can do that once in a while, Mr. Speaker, but I'll tell you, farmers in Saskatchewan are sick and tired — sick and tired — of being pawns in a process, a political process, a political agenda put forward by a government in the dying days of its mandate, the dying days of its mandate when they know they have but one constituency, and that constituency, they think, is rural Saskatchewan.

But I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, living and working and spending all my time in rural Saskatchewan, I can tell them something different. The hypocrisy they put forward by trying to go through this charade of political announcements and rhetoric is not working in rural Saskatchewan. It's not working because of the fact that farmers can see through this little charade. They can see through it and they call it blackmail. They're saying, well the government says we'd better vote for them because we're going to get a third line of defence and we're going to get a GRIP and NISA program, and especially the third line of defence. The blackmail is that the third line of defence, it is said, will be hooked to the GRIP or NISA programs, and farmers don't like that.

They're saying, why do I have to be hooked into a program that I don't know. It's supposed to be a voluntary program. This is one of the bases, one of the bases of this program, it was voluntary. But all of a sudden, as this little charade unfolds, we are finding that there are strings attached. And one of those strings could possibly be, as indicated by the federal minister and some ministers opposite, that there will be a requirement to join the GRIP program and get your third line of defence.

Well farmers don't like that, Mr. Speaker. They don't like it for more than one reason. First of all, what is the program? What is the GRIP program? We have seen meeting after meeting after meeting, and I get amused by the numbers that the government opposite put forward. They're saying they've seen thousands and tens of thousands of farmers. I've been to some of those meetings. Those same farmers are now going to their crop insurance agents to sign up or to discuss the GRIP program, the GRIP program that . . . the big question is: will it be a requirement to sign the GRIP program before you get your third line of defence, before you get your deficiency payment?

But they're being asked to sign this program on the back of the sheet, or the form. They're saying that . . . They sign on the bottom line saying that they understand the program. Well, Mr. Speaker, I defy anyone to tell me what exactly the program is because . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Sit down and I will.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Well the minister opposite says, sit down and he will. Well I've been at a meeting where he has given one version of the GRIP program. I've been at a meeting where the associate minister has given another version of the GRIP program. And that is the problem with

this government. They have a terrible lack of commitment when it comes to telling the truth about programs, or maybe they don't know. Maybe they don't know and they're just saying that they know.

At the end of the GRIP program, end of the first year of the GRIP program, there is a review process that has been stated in the legislation. So just look at it this way. Right now before this crop year, this spring, farmers are being asked to sign into the program. They're being asked to sign a document saying they understand the program. But the program, at the end of the first year, is going to be changed without a doubt. It has to be changed if it's going to be a good program, Mr. Speaker.

So farmers are being asked to sign a blank cheque. They're being asked to sign a document saying they understand something when the information is not available. And again I come back to the meetings in the country. From one meeting to the other meeting to the other meeting there has been a difference of opinion from minister to minister or from bureaucrat to bureaucrat exactly what the program is. Farmers simply cannot sign a document . . . feeling good about signing a document that they don't know what it's all about, but they have to do that.

Why not, Mr. Speaker — and I ask the government opposite — why not give the farmers a year's grace? Why not say we have a new program here and that the principles of the program as originally set out by those people who put forward ideas from the farm groups . . . both people put forward ideas that were legitimate. The principle of long term, the principle of predictability, the principle of farmers participating in a program that will benefit themselves, those are all good principles. But from what we've seen, those principles have not been put forward in time for farmers to make a rational decision.

So why not give them a year's grace. Why not say this is a program. The first year of the program is a free year. First of all farmers know they need the money. The government knows they need the money. And if I could just have the indulgence of the minister from . . . or the member from Kelvington-Wadena, I'd finish explaining this to him.

Let farmers have one free year, figure out if the program is good or bad, make the necessary adjustments to that program at the end of the first year, and then sign them in to a long-term commitment. By that time they know if the program is good or is bad, and they can make a rational decision. We've seen the months pass before the announcement of the program. We have seen the programs coming into place that have so many questions to be asked that the answers are still not coming forth.

And I had to laugh when the associate minister was saying that we went to the farmers, and we gave them some options, and we told them that this program was in their best interests, and they asked us many questions. Well you know why they asked many questions, Mr. Speaker. They asked many questions because the whole intent of the process to travel around Saskatchewan and have big meetings with farmers was because the government was trying to block the loopholes farmers might be looking at

in order to take advantage of this program, because they knew on the surface, at first blush, that it was not a program that they were going to be satisfied with. And the government knew that when the farmers aren't satisfied with a program, what option do they have but to take advantage of a program. And so they went out to the public and asked all the questions. All the questions came back.

And you know what the result was, Mr. Speaker? And this is why, as my leader has indicated, there has been a backing away by farm groups from this program. Farm groups were in the process up until last October. Government went out to a series of meetings. The farmers asked a series of questions. The result is 80 to 100 changes in the GRIP program from the time the farm groups put forward the proposal to today. And they want farmers to sign, saying they know what the program stands for. There's an indication that the signing the program will mean that they're going to be involved in the third line of defence. Well what blackmail, if I've ever seen blackmail, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why farmers in rural Saskatchewan today are not very happy with this government. They're not very happy with this government, and that's why this government isn't very happy because they know that they've bought them in the past by promises. The farmers know those promises haven't come through, and this government knows that they're not going to be able to do it again, because they just simply cannot go forth and have these falsehoods buy elections. So, Mr. Speaker, I say that this program, the third line of defence program, the GRIP program which are tied together, has very, very serious credibility problem.

(2000)

But the government says, well, there's going to be some sweeteners involved. I've heard talk of possibly cash advance on the interim payment for the GRIP program. I hear talk of postponing payments for premium, all these types of things just to entice people into coming forward and taking the program. But the result of that is, if there is an interim payment or interest-free cash advance on the interim payment, it still doesn't mean any new money, and this is what farmers are saying. This is what the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool has been pushing for. We need an immediate cash payment to producers to get the crop in.

This has always been pointed out as a deficiency in this whole process. It's been pointed out by every farm group. The GRIP premiums and payments are going to come due in this fall, the interim payments. But what about this spring? There is no money. I drive around farm to farm in my constituency and other areas of the province talking to farmers, asking them about their opinions of the program, and there simply is no money out there.

So why the charade? Why the antics about trying to convince people that there's going to be a third line of defence and hooking it to the GRIP payment? Why all the sweeteners, the strings? Why not, Mr. Speaker, tell the farmers the truth? And if they were to tell them the truth, that would be the best political move they could make.

But the reason they don't tell them the truth, Mr. Speaker, is because there is no truth in these programs. They're short-term programs. They're manipulative programs. They're programs very similar to those programs that we've had from this government in the past. It's a program to try to get them by another election. Well I tell you, Mr. Speaker, it's not going to work. It simply is not going to work.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Upshall:** — Mr. Speaker, if this government is so sure in their own minds that they have the answer to the agricultural problems — they put forward with great fanfare these programs, the third line of defence, the GRIP and NISA programs — if they're so sure this is going to work, then why don't they stand in their places and tell farmers that they're going to stop all the foreclosure actions until they put these programs into place? Short-term program by this fall will see the results of the program starting to come in.

They say we're going to have a third line of defence, cash in the spring. They say there's going to be the payment for the GRIP program in the fall. But if they're so sure it's going to work, why don't they give the farmers a break? Why don't they say, we will stop, put a halt on your foreclosure actions in order so that you can get your house in order, in order that you can take advantage of these programs. And then after that we will look at the whole situation again and see what has to be done.

But they're not confident in the programs. They're not confident in the programs because the programs simply are not going to work and they know they're not going to work. It's short term; it's *ad hoc*. Just as we said the very first time this program was put forward, the GRIP program, it's the shortest long-term program in the history of this province.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, why haven't there been any projections? If it's not going to be a short-term program, why hasn't the government come forward with a four- or five-year scenario on different crops, on different amounts of production, and on different prices?

Has anyone seen the scenarios on crops production and prices put forward by the government saying, if we have these amount of bushels and this price on this crop, then the result will be (a); but if the price is lower and the productions lower or higher or whatever, it will be scenario (b). This has not been put forward, Mr. Speaker.

And it hasn't been put forward because they know that if they were to lay it out in black and white the farmers of this province would see — not that they haven't already seen because they're ingenuitive enough that they've already figured this process out — they would see that in year three, four, and five the income from this GRIP program starts to decline very rapidly, assuming, as projected, the price stays very low, because we're moving off the mid-1970 averages for price, moving into very low average prices for the next few years. And at the same time, as my colleague says, the farmers are being asked to commit themselves. So they're only giving out a little bit of information. They're not giving all the facts

because they know in their own minds that this is a short-term solution.

I mean, we've had ag economics professors. We've had farm organizations and farmers themselves figuring this thing out. And everyone . . . if there's one thing that they're unanimous on it is that if, as projected, the price of wheat stays down for the next two or three years, that there will be no pay-out by year four or five of this program or not even enough to cover your premium. That's why they're not putting out predictions. And that's the same thing with the third line of defence.

Why didn't they articulate as this amendment we said puts forward? Why do they not say \$550 million, as is a common number put forward by the agriculture groups around this province? Why do they not say that it wasn't going to be tied to GRIP? Why do they not say we're going to have one year of a free program, so you don't have to sign your life away for the next four years? They didn't do that because they know, and their advisors have known and have advised them that it's a short-term program.

The farm groups were very, very serious about their commitment to this program. And this is the part that really bugs me. We went through this exercise at the Wheat Pool, the farmers union, the wheat growers, the canola growers and the 19 representatives that were on the program were very serious about developing a program, a long-term program that was in fact going to help producers.

And now since last October, six or seven months later, we've seen all the changes. They were abandoned by this government in Saskatchewan and the federal government in Ottawa for one reason. The producers had the commitment, Mr. Speaker, but this government and the Mulroney government in Ottawa has one commitment and that is unto themselves.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Upshall:** — Mr. Speaker, in all the talk and all the rhetoric we've heard from the other side of the House, in here and the government in Ottawa, there is one thing missing. The item that has been missing from every debate that we have ever entered into in this House or every discussion that we've entered into with the Government of Canada regarding agriculture, and that is there is not one mention of debt restructuring.

And I'll tell you, if there's one message that I get clear from the farmers of Saskatchewan, that is for every dollar of income that I bring in, I have to be able to balance that dollar with the amount of debt dollars that I have to put out. And it's not mentioned again. If there was a commitment to creating a solution for this problem this government and the federal government would be talking about a debt restructuring program in concert with an income stability program. And again, it's not mentioned.

We have had Bills in this House over the last four years, year after year after year. I've gone through them all. This government talk about farm financial stability, and we have another amendment to that effect this year. But for four years we've talked about farm financial stability.

They've stood in their places and they've talked about the security of the future, the long-term debt restructuring, the stability of agriculture as far as debt was concerned. And what's happened? Absolutely nothing, absolutely nothing. It's all rhetoric because there's no commitment.

The number of farm foreclosures keeps sky-rocketing, the government opposite being the biggest forecloser. The number of people in Saskatchewan walking away with voluntary transfers. The number of people just simply saying, I can no longer stand it any more and leaving the province. I mean I live in rural Saskatchewan and many of these people do too, and if they had a commitment they would be very serious about trying to keep the numbers on the farm. But that commitment simply isn't there.

I just wonder, Mr. Speaker, how they can face their neighbours, the rural MLA's over there, how they can face their neighbours and tell them that they're trying to do something when they've seen absolutely nothing as far as debt restructuring is concerned from their government.

And, Mr. Speaker, the minister has talked about the income, how it had been cut in half in one year, and cut in half again in another year, and cut in half again the third year. And now we're at a negative 181, I think, million dollar income, he said.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister had a choice in some of these matters. He just likes to sit there and say, well this is the way of the world; we're in little Saskatchewan here and we can't do anything about this. Mind you, this is the same minister that says he's controlling the purse strings in Ottawa, getting the payments out here.

And he stood idly by, in fact sometimes not so idly by, in removing a number of programs that benefitted Saskatchewan farmers financially, programs that we have had in years gone by, up until a year or two ago, that made sure that the farm income remained as high as it could be. I've talked about these programs before, the two-price wheat.

The Minister of Agriculture, the Premier of this province, was a cheer-leader taking away \$127 million from the province of Saskatchewan, because the Free Trade Agreement made sure that the two-price wheat system in this province, in this country, was gone. And he pushed that.

And he was the minister that said nothing when the transportation rates have increased for the last three years going. And we know why he's doing that, because there's going to be a whole new regime, he thinks, in the freight rate system.

And there was interest rates, interest rates that when the government should have been doing something about them, were ever sky-rocketing. In fact, it went up seven times in seven months till April of 1990. And what do they do? Absolutely nothing. And this is dollars out of the pockets of Saskatchewan farmers. The fuel, the fuel rebates. He stood idly by when they took the fuel rebates away.

And, Mr. Speaker, my point is this — the list go on and on

-- but my point is this, the Premier stood in his place today, as the associate minister did, and he was trying to tell Saskatchewan farmers of the billions of dollars that he and his government has brought forward from Ottawa. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, those dollars are dollars that he allowed to be taken away, in fact helped take away from Saskatchewan farmers in the first place.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Upshall:** — What hypocrisy. What hypocrisy from a minister, from a Premier of a province.

Mr. Speaker, they're only giving back what they took away. I will repeat that time and time again, giving back what they've taken away. If their programs were so lucrative, and they had not taken away the millions of dollars from farmers, then the amount of money that was put forward, I think the Premier used the figure \$10 billion, certainly would have been enough to correct the situation. Certainly would have been enough to correct the situation, but it wasn't. It wasn't because they just simply took out of one pocket, passed it through the hands of government, and put it into the other pocket. And farmers were left spinning their wheels, digging that hole ever deeper into a state of foreclosure for many and leaving the farm for others.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I've talked a bit about the government trying to hook farm groups into this whole safety net program, the third line of defence. I talked about the confusion at the GRIP meetings; put forward the different messages from different meetings. I've talked about the fact that the Saskatchewan farmers have had money taken out of their pockets and the government telling them that they were being good guys by putting it back into their pockets.

But the point of the whole thing is, Mr. Speaker, we again see a short-term, *ad hoc* approach to agriculture, and this is the sad part of it all. The short-term, *ad hoc* approach to agriculture is putting forward many, many bankruptcies — and if the Minister of Finance would take his place and quit interrupting, I'll just tell him — putting forward many people in bankruptcy situations, putting forward many foreclosures, forcing farm families off the land, reducing the number of people in rural communities, reducing the number of people in our towns and villages, and in fact reducing the number of people in this province of Saskatchewan. This is the government that is saying that they are going to replenish. They're going to be the saviours of the Saskatchewan farm families.

(2015)

Programs with no predictability. We've got no predictability on the GRIP program. We've had no predictability on the *ad hoc* programs before that, and we have no predictability on the third line of defence.

We are sitting here in mid-April of 1991. This need for a third line of defence was identified months, months ago. And why don't we have it? What is the reason for not having a program in place right now when farmers are starting to seed and work their land in the south-west part of this province?.

**An Hon. Member:** — Could you make that question multiple choice or true and false?

**Mr. Upshall:** — If the Minister of Finance would again listen to the comments . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Speed things up a lot.

**Mr. Upshall:** — The Minister of Finance is chirping from his seat because he knows, he knows that eight months have gone by, at least eight months, from the time that farm groups are putting forward a scenario that said there had to be a cash payment in farmers' pockets this spring, because the GRIP program was not going to come into effect until the fall. And he sits there chirping from his seat, making a joke of this when farm families are going broke.

And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, one of the big problems of this whole scenario is whether or not the third line of defence is going to be hooked into the GRIP program, whether or not there's going to be any benefit from this program at all.

The point remains that it's the only game in town. They've seen fit to make it the only game in town. They've taken away western grain stabilization. They've taken away cash advances. There's no more two-price wheat. All the predictable, long-term programs of freight rates and fuel rebates and the like are gone. Mr. Speaker . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Oats and the wheat board. Don't forget that one.

**The Speaker:** — Order.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Yes, if the minister would come to order, I'll continue. Mr. Speaker, all these predictable programs are gone and there's no predictability, and this is the only game in town.

So I think, myself as a farmer, I have no choice. I have no choice but to go into this program. Not that I like it, not that it's going to be a saviour, but that people opposite have put farmers in the position where they have no choice. They've taken everything else away and said here's a program. You sign up for this whether you like it or not, because if you don't sign up for it, you know you're going to be out on your ear, and if you do sign up for it, they know they got you right here. Any changes can be made without the farmers' permission — good or bad — and they're locked into it for four years.

Mr. Speaker, is that any way to run government, to run programs, to run policies that are supposed to be here to keep the people of Saskatchewan viable, to keep the people of Saskatchewan operating and functioning in a world that is very competitive, in a world that is seeing subsidies put forward in a very forthright manner by the national treasuries of every other country around the world? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker.

Now I just wanted to, Mr. Speaker, end up by saying that I was truly appalled, like I . . . There's a lot of times that I listen to the Premier of this province speak that I think that

he doesn't know what farmers are talking about, that he is so far out of touch.

And then there's times where I think well, he must know, he's the Minister of Agriculture. He has how many members in rural Saskatchewan he's always talking about. But I listened to the Premier today. I've listened to him on other occasions and some of the things that he was saying I found very incredible.

He was saying well, you know, you got a program where it's going to put so many millions of dollars in your pocket-book. You know that in the beginning of the year you're going to sign up; at the end of the year you're going to get so many dollars. And if you want, you can hold your production or you can sell it the next year or you can feed it to your cattle or whatever. Well, Mr. Speaker, how unreal, in a province where two-thirds of the people in the industry of farming are being forced to live almost from day to day. And that's another aspect, just as a side bar of this GRIP program.

If I'm a farmer who can afford to hold onto my grain and sell it for higher than the average price, well I'd get the benefit. But if I'm a guy who's got the banker knocking on my door and I got to sell it right out of the combine in order to stop the . . . keep the wolf from the door and keep the banker from foreclosing on me, and I may have to sell it below the average price, then I'm going to lose that dollar. But that's a whole other argument, Mr. Speaker.

But this minister who stands up today talking about an unreal world in Saskatchewan agriculture, he's talking from his perspective, Mr. Speaker, from the perspective of a Premier of a province making a very tidy sum and won't get into the fact about some of his land dealings right now. But from the Premier of the province who doesn't have to worry about where his next dollar's coming from . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, they're pretty sensitive about that one and that's a discussion for another day.

But I'll tell you, for a Premier of this province who doesn't have to worry about where his next dollar is from, and I hear him talking about holding your grain over to sell it next year when the price is higher, well give me a break, Mr. Speaker. I mean there is thousands of farmers out there who simply do not have a choice of when they're going to sell their grain.

**An Hon. Member:** — They have a choice.

**Mr. Upshall:** — And that is right, as my colleague said, but these people do have a choice. They had a choice of creating with the federal government a program that was going to be predictable, a program that was going to be long term, a program that was going to provide some debt restructuring, and a program that was going to give farmers of this province a light at the end of the tunnel. And they chose not to do that. They chose not to do that because they thought, they thought that this GRIP program and the third line of defence, and the western grain stabilization payout that they knew was coming this spring, was going to be enough to tide them over to another election.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think they are sorely mistaken because I've travelled farm to farm for many, many, many hours, and days and months of this last winter. And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, I haven't heard one person — I do not exaggerate — I haven't heard one person say that this GRIP program, this third line of defence program, is going to be the saviour for their operation.

But what they are saying, is what choice do I have? They've put me in a position where they've taken away all my options. I can't get it from the market-place. I can't get it from programs I used to rely on. I can't get it from a government that is supposedly providing me with some stability. And I can't get it because one reason. This government and the federal government of this country has no, absolutely no commitment, no long-term commitment, and I say no short-term commitment to anybody but themselves, to tide them over another election, to make sure that they're going to feed their own pockets and the pockets of their friends for another four years.

Mr. Speaker, I predict that that won't happen. It won't happen because they can't be trusted; they're not being trusted, and if they knew, if they knew what the results could be with farmers when they get angry, I don't think they would have acted in this manner.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly will be supporting this amendment — this amendment that is urging the government to bring forward policies that are clearer and it's something that people can grasp on.

Get rid of the politics of delaying this payment. We've seen that in the past; we've experienced the political gamesmanship; we've seen the results. So get rid of the politics. Bring on \$550 million that is asked for, that is needed in this province in order to get farmers a bridge to the fall. Bring forward a GRIP program that is not going to tie their hands to a third line of defence. Give them some of their liberties back.

And, Mr. Speaker, I support sending a telex to the Premier as soon as this thing is passed . . . to the Prime Minister, rather, as soon as this is passed just to encourage him to try to drop his political agenda and to do something good for a change for the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Petersen:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to join in this debate and make some remarks about the comments from the member from Humboldt as well as the comments from the Leader of the Opposition.

I really think that the member from Humboldt was stretching the credibility of people in this Assembly. He was really really trying to get people to question the integrity of members of this Assembly, and he even stooped so low as to start dragging in things such as land deals and everything else. But we can't expect anything more from the opposition.

Tonight we've heard a new one. It used to be too little, too

late, or me too, and a little bit more. Now it's you didn't do it right and you should have done it better. But you know the one thing that we haven't heard from the opposition, either on GRIP or NISA or third line of defence or agriculture in general, is what their policy is. What's their policy? The silent majority.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think I may have some idea what their policy is going to be because the Leader of the Opposition stood up and he said we should send a telex, a telex off to the Prime Minister. Well as I recall, it kind of dates the member opposite because telex were around in the '60s. I understand today I send facsimiles, fax copies. I've got lots of fax numbers; I don't have any telex numbers. Now there's one thing about the Leader of the Opposition is that he's consistent. Yes sir. The man for the '60s. Once again we see it. The next thing you know he's going to be calling for a LIFT (lower inventories for tomorrow) program, like his liberal buddies put in. I mean that's their idea of policy.

Well let's take a look at another policy that they may be coming down with. Let's take a look at what we've got. Well they called for a moratorium. I've heard that. We've got to have a moratorium. And when you say, well what about the credit unions? I mean if you have a moratorium it's really going to hurt local depositors. Oh, we're going to exclude the credit unions. Well how are we going to do that? Well we're going to privatize the finance system and let the credit unions handle it. I mean that's one thought. So how are you going to exempt the credit unions from the moratorium anyhow? Most interesting.

The other thing the member for Humboldt neglected to do was his homework. Twenty-one thousand Saskatchewan farmers have signed up for the GRIP program . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And just let me repeat that for the member from Moose Jaw who is continuously chirping from his seat — 21,000 farmers have signed up for the GRIP program.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Petersen:** — Now 21,000 farmers walked into their crop insurance agent's office and sat down and thoroughly discussed the program that exists. I know because I walked into my crop insurance agent and sat down and thoroughly discussed my farm situation — the options that I had, what the program would provide for us.

**The Speaker:** — The hon. member will have his opportunity to speak next, if he so desires, and other hon. members as well. So the member from Kelvington-Wadena is giving an edifying speech which I'm sure we all want to hear. So let us allow him to do that.

**Hon. Mr. Petersen:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll try to be as edifying as possible. Well the member from Moose Jaw, who chirps from his seat, says you know this is no good, you know you don't have the good policies, you haven't done it right.

Mr. Speaker, we announced a program — the outlines of a program — and then we took it to the farmers, the producers, the people who are going to be affected by it.

Now had we not done that the opposition would criticize us for not doing that. So we did it. And they criticize us for taking it out to tell farmers about the program and to ask them for their input. And the member from Moose Jaw should pay attention. He might learn something.

The farmers were part of the development of this program. The broad framework was put together by the 19 producers, the producer groups, in concert with the provincial and federal governments. That was taken out to the farmers, and we said here it is. What do you think? Can it be made better? This is why it's being done. This is the concepts behind it. This is what we're trying to accomplish. Can you make it better?

(2030)

And it has been made better, Mr. Speaker. As we've travelled along, farmers have had a number of comments that they made about the programs. A number of changes have been made as we went along. Now those changes, Mr. Speaker, are not sudden changes in policy from one meeting to the next as the member from Humboldt would have you believe, but were rather decisions that occurred as the process developed. And I was at about 25 meetings myself, and at each meeting that succeeded the previous one I would add any changes that had been made to the program. I would update the farmers completely, and go through the process as to why and how come.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I can't help it that the member from Humboldt has got selective amnesia and only hears what he wants to hear and only sees what he wants to see. And I can't help it that the Leader of the Opposition, who has to put on a good show about knowing something about agriculture in this legislature, stood up for an hour and a half or two and berated this government and this program — left, right, and centre. Mr. Speaker, the member who is the Leader of the Opposition does not know a whole lot about agriculture in case you hadn't guessed already. He doesn't.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Petersen:** — His idea of walking out and meeting farmers is to say, hello rural person, nice dog — those kinds of things. Now that may be satirizing the Leader of the Opposition unfairly, but, Mr. Speaker, his knowledge of agriculture compared to that of the Premier and the Associate Minister of Agriculture and members on this side is minuscule.

And besides, what would you expect the opposition to say about this program? What would you expect them to say? Would you expect them to stand up and laud the efforts of this government? I doubt it; I really doubt it. They haven't had one positive thing to say in nine years. They would rather put politics before policy, and that's all they do. They criticize our policy and have none of their own.

Mr. Speaker, the GRIP program may not be perfect. I agree, it may not be perfect. But, Mr. Speaker, as I've said at all the meetings I was at, compare what you had — crop insurance, beef stabilization, grain stabilization — and then compare it to the level of support, the level of

insurance you have under the GRIP and NISA programs and it's quite a bit better.

Now it may be we can make it perfect down the road — the costs will go up — but right now the program is better than what we've had. I admit that. Let's work at making it better. Members opposite say it's got to be perfect right out of the chute. It's got to be just perfect.

Now the member for Regina North West toured around on an open-the-books tour, and he was talking about the GRIP program. And he said, well the GRIP and NISA will cost the provincial governments \$700 million in the first year. That's money that's got to be borrowed. The program does not even meet the needs of farmers. Well I guess he doesn't like \$700 million for farmers or 1.3 billion for farmers.

When you look at the cost to the provincial government, it's about \$126 million comes out of the provincial coffers to pay for the provincial share of the GRIP program. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's a far cry from 700. When you look at the returns coming into the hands of producers that will benefit this province to the tune of \$1.3 billion, Mr. Speaker, it's phenomenal.

If you want to put something in another perspective, if you would, Mr. Speaker, members opposite have said that \$11 billion is chicken-feed. It's nothing, a bunch of empty promises — promises, promises, promises. What's 10 billion here or there? The member from Humboldt said, oh 10 billion, it was only what you took away.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't quite believe that. And I think the member opposite was just stretching things a little bit. Farmers across Saskatchewan aren't going to believe that, Mr. Speaker. But members opposite have to dump on this program. They have to berate us for trying to bring in policy because they don't have any of their own — they don't have any of their own.

Now, Mr. Speaker, members opposite also know that you can't just sell your grain off the combine as the member from Humboldt would have us believe. We have a quota system in this country. You can't just unload your grain suddenly off the combine. You know that; you're a farmer. You know that. So why does the member opposite have us believe that we're forced to sell all our grain right off the combine? Why would he say that? He knows better — grandstanding at its worst.

Mr. Speaker, I know that I could go on for quite some time on this topic. But I tell you what, I think there are a lot of members on both sides of the House may have something to say about it. I know there are members on this side of the House that do. So, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

### Bill No. 52 — An Act to provide for the Division of Saskatchewan into Constituencies for the Election of members of the Legislative Assembly

**Mr. Chairman:** — Would the minister introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me is Mr. Doug Moen, co-ordinator of legislative services; Tom Irvine, Crown solicitor, constitutional law branch; and Darcy McGovern, Crown solicitor, legislative services.

#### Clause 1

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I spoke at some length on Friday regarding this Bill, but I'd like to just make a few summary comments, and I have a couple of colleagues who wanted to make a few comments as well, and then I have a few questions that I want to ask the minister . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Brief summary, right.

I spoke on Friday last about the undemocratic nature of the existing legislation, as well as some of the erosions of democratic practice as practised by this government over the last nine years, but specifically the last three or four. And rigging the electoral boundaries which have since, of course, been found to be unconstitutional, is just one of those many, many examples of undemocratic actions by the government.

For something interesting to do over the last few days, I've been re-reading some of the speeches from the government members prior to this last Bill being passed. And I found it interesting that some of the members hailed this legislation as some of the most progressive electoral boundaries legislation in Canada. They said that it would stand the test of the constitutional scrutiny. Some of the ministers said that this Bill and this legislation would further representative government in Canada, in Saskatchewan, and in fact said that this legislation was among the fairest in all of Canada and the fairest ever in Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman. In fact throughout those speeches there are many comments regarding self-congratulations by members of the government about this very progressive, democratic, and fair, boundaries legislation.

In the face of grave concerns by this side of the House, by the constitutional people at the universities, and by a number of people in the public, the government proceeded with the legislation as they have so often done in this House. In the face of concerns by the public, as they have done with the splitting off of SaskEnergy from SaskPower, where the auditor says that it was done without the proper authority. Like they tried to do with SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), again stopped by the courts.

It seems as though this government is always stymied by the courts, Mr. Chairman. And again I think that we're always in the courts and that says something about the way this government does business. We've been in the courts on many issues and that says something about the way this government conducts its business. And it also says something about, as an example, of how this

government has mismanaged the financial affairs of the province, where we're always in courts fighting court battles as a province because things aren't done correctly in the first place. And this is no more truer than has been the case on the electoral boundaries.

And so the gerrymander didn't work despite all the assurances, and by the minister, that this legislation would stand the test of the constitutionality. The court decision by the Appeal Court, Mr. Chairman, was clear. It was unequivocal; it was unanimous that the electoral boundaries of the government of Saskatchewan were unconstitutional, and here we are off to court again. Mr. Chairman, we're back here again, this time supposedly to do this job correctly. We made it clear to the government when they tried to make a deal outside of the legislature, that we insisted on coming back to the legislature to do this properly this time, in full public view, in the spirit of co-operation with all of the political parties, and no secret deals would be allowed, Mr. Chairman.

As I talked on Friday about my major concerns I emphasized . . . and I emphasize here again tonight, for the Minister of the Family who finds this amusing, who finds the fact that this government has brought the province to a constitutional crisis where they've botched up the economic affairs of the province. They've botched up the financial affairs of the province, and he has botched up the social programs of this province. Now they've brought the province to a constitutional crisis, Mr. Chairman.

So I emphasize that our major concerns has been, after all that has happened, there has been no proper consultation on this Bill before us today, no proper consultation in the legislature. There has been no consultation in establishing the commissioners for this commission. I hope to get some explanation from the minister as to why the Clerk isn't a member of this commission. I hope to get some explanation from the minister as to why all the commissioners are men, and why they're all from Regina. I think these are valid questions that the government has got to account for.

(2045)

As well I think that the minister while he is now indicating . . . And we've seen him forward an amendment that would require public hearings, and I appreciate that. I think it's interesting how on earth the requirement to have public hearings could have been left out of this Bill. And, Mr. Chairman, it's not surprising that the requirement for public hearings were left out of the Bill because this government has not been concerned about public input and consultation, which has been obvious regarding the GRIP and NISA programs that were discussed earlier today, this evening.

Mr. Chairman, on balance — having made some of those critical comments that I feel had to be made — on balance I believe that the Bill does not violate the conclusions that were released in the Court of Appeal's judgement.

The commission is directed to follow the equality principles, section 11 of the Bill, and is to use its

discretion on any variations from the norm, Mr. Chairman. And I do have a couple of suggestions, when we come to those sections, for the minister that would relate to requirements, requirements that the commission put in writing exceptions to the norm. I think that's something that should be required from the commission.

What I do appreciate is that the government this time did not prescribe all the rules and tie the hands of the commission like they did last time. I think the commission . . . Well obviously I've expressed some concerns about the composition of the commission, and as my colleague from Saskatoon . . . I think the commissioners will make their judgements, I think, in using their professional integrity. They know that the province, and in fact because of the nature of this case to be held before the Supreme Court, that many in Canada will be watching these boundaries, and that the professional integrity of the commissioners will be shown in adhering to this equality provision. And I am confident, Mr. Chairman, that the commissioners will comply with the spirit and the conclusions of the Appeal Court decision.

As I indicated, I have a number of questions that I would like to ask the minister, but before I do that — these are on specific sections — I'll take my seat so some of my colleagues can make a few comments.

**An Hon. Member:** — Do you want to do them now, Bob? Do you want to do it all under the first . . .

**Mr. Pringle:** — Would you like me to raise all my questions now? Okay.

With regard to the Bill, I refer to section 2(g), Mr. Minister, and regarding voter population as being used to determine the constituency population quotient. And I understand what that means and I realize this is based on the '86 election results which is some four and a half years ago now. And I guess a bit of a concern I have is that with out-migration, the population shifts, I wonder how accurate those population numbers would be.

But, Mr. Minister, I'd like to maybe have your response to this section in relation to section 11(5)(b). Mr. Minister, this section 2(g) in relation to section 11(5)(b) where that speaks to using the '88 federal boundaries to define the constituency boundaries. In other words I found it a bit curious, if I understand this, a bit curious while we're using section 2(g) to arrive at the constituency population quotient and no reference made to the '88 federal numbers, yet section 11(5)(b) uses the federal '88 boundaries to help arrive at the provincial constituency boundaries.

So I'm not sure how on the one case where we're using the boundaries to the constituencies and we're using the '88 results, how we're not using those as well in upgrading the numbers in section 2(g). That's one question I have.

Section 3(2), commission members . . .

Do you want to answer that now? Okay.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Let me indicate, the hon. member



made a few comments and the . . . I was surprised after the hon. member from Regina Centre's comments on harmonization of GST (goods and services tax) that he would never make a comment to be read into the record again, but I appreciate very much the aside.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Having said that, the hon. member gave a somewhat lengthy criticism. Let me just indicate that the following jurisdictions with plus or minus 25 per cent as the deviation from the norm: Canada, B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario by custom, Quebec, and Newfoundland. Here are the following provinces that accept plus or minus thirty-three and a third per cent deviation: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and P.E.I. Here are the jurisdictions with no limit to variance: North West Territory and the Yukon.

It is interesting to note that in the North West Territories the individual who prepared the report, the boundaries commission, accepted no limit on variation, is the same individual wrote the judgement at the Court of Appeal in Saskatchewan — rather interesting. Secondly, Manitoba accepts plus or minus 25 per cent in a certain part of the province and 10 per cent in the other. I just read that into the record to respond to the hon. member.

A couple of other things. You said that there was no consultation. The hon. member may be aware that I did send letters to each of the parties . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well no, we weren't sitting at the time. And your point is technically correct that that's not in here. I suppose that the debate could at that point go on for quite some period of time. I think most indicated that they wanted to get certainty as quickly as possible, given the time constraints, and if you're offended by that, I'll apologize. I did send the names out; you're right, no consultation in here.

But the information was forwarded, and I believe the tenor of my letter, and I think specifically, words to the effect of it, the proposal meets with your approval. So technically you're right in here, but in fact that information was certainly out there. And as I indicated at the time, that I had raised the matter with the Chief Justice and certainly discussed the matter with him.

The point that you raised about the reasons . . . It's interesting to note that the last commission in fact gave reasons for variations in many cases, and did so in its report. As a matter of fact, one of the commissioners quite upset to have it tainted, that there were no reasons given. One may disagree with the reasons but in fact was quite, as I say, adamant that in the last report reasons were given for variation.

Now it may be a fair point to make an argument as to how specific the reasons may be. And I'm assuming — and I think I'm fairly assuming — that given the Court of Appeal decision, the constraint that the present commissioners are under that they will recognize if they're going to have some discrepancy, they will in all likelihood very much justify the reason for that or reasons for that. But again, I just do caution the honourable member that in the last commission's report they did indicate reasons for

variation.

You then make the point, the point about 2(g). One of the factors, and I've made it clear publicly, that one of the things we try to do in addition to complying with the Court of Appeal, was to have, you know, as few fundamental changes as from the previous Act so that this process could be accelerated and moved along as quickly as possible. That's, for example, the question of 66, why 66. We could have opened that debate up and numerous other matters could well have been opened up and discussed.

I think I've made the point publicly that this really is an interim measure. That after the next election I would expect that future legislatures deal with some of the peripheral issues that have been discussed by political scientists and those interested in the political process in Saskatchewan. For example, consideration of representation by population — that may well be a matter to be discussed.

An area that I have had a great deal of personal sympathy for, and matter of fact would say that I would like to see, is guaranteed seats for natives. And I've made that argument in this House. I was disparaged by the opposition when I raised that a few years back, and some may recall the debates. But I still believe that there are some merits in that proposal.

So there are some pretty fundamental questions that will have to be dealt with by future legislatures. And again I think that most recognize this as an interim measure.

So you ask the question of voter population, again that was the same. But that was also the Canada Elections Act 1988, this is your 2(g) . . . the question you raised about 2(g) in conjunction with section 11. And understand that section 11 . . . these are matters that can be taken into consideration, okay? So these are not mandatory; these are things that can be taken into by the commission. So they're not contradictory in any way and if you look at 11 as things to be taken into account, they may put different weight to them. That's very much in the hands of the commission. So if you keep that in mind then they're not contradictory.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Could I just clarify, Mr. Minister, section 2(g) does not refer to the federal '88 more updated information though. That's clearly just the '86 results.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Sorry, you're quite correct.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Okay, thank you. I want to come back a little bit, later on, to the request to have the commission put in writing specific reasons for variations from the norm, because I think that's very important particularly in light of the decision of the Court of Appeal in relations as well to the B.C. decision.

Mr. Minister, just in passing, a response to your letter to us. I was talking about the process of consultation inside a legislature, and so a letter to us I don't view as proper consultation. So, just to clarify that for the record.

The question regarding Section 3(2), the commission

members, and I did appreciate your comment regarding an aboriginal representative, but I want to just ask you how you arrived at the names of the commissioners. I would like to suggest that we would have been very open to discussing possibilities and could have handled that very quickly in the Assembly here rather than just appointing names, as you have done, I might add, when you appointed the Ombudsman, the chief commissioner, and the Provincial Auditor.

(2100)

This is what I was expressing a concern about earlier, is the lack of regard for consultation and input from the opposition particularly related to servants of the Assembly. And we see this practice here again in just selecting commissioners, and I'm not talking about the individuals here but just lack of a process inside the legislature which is a concern to the people of Saskatchewan.

So how you arrive at selecting the commissioners, I would like to know. And why you decided not to include the Clerk, I would like to know — or any gender parity. Why you chose to have just people from Regina. And I'd like to ask you if it's your understanding or your view that the Chief Electoral Officer, given his role on the last commission and I might say, his defence of the boundaries that have been ruled unconstitutional, his defence of those as being very fair, what role if any the Chief Electoral Officer will play as a staff member or in consultation with the commissioners?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Let me work backwards to your series of questions. One, we didn't make reference to Chief Electoral Officer given the comments of the Court of Appeal. And so the commission will choose its staff.

Secondly, again with the greatest respect to the hon. member, you are hanging your hat on the fact that we didn't consult in the legislature, which I have acknowledged. But to hang your hat and say that political parties have to wait till the legislature . . . you said that's not consultation until we do it here. I don't think you're going that far that political parties cannot consult unless the legislature is sitting. I don't think anyone would go quite that far.

And I did put in my letter we would submit this proposal for your consideration. And that's the exact word I used at that time. I have acknowledged that we didn't in the House. Obviously at some point the government would have to make some suggestions, and all would accept that.

The individuals, and again I indicated that I did talk to the Chief Justice, but Dr. Archer had been involved as secretary to the last commission. He's very familiar with the process. Mr. Justice Malone had been involved in the federal electoral boundaries, so he's very familiar with the process. And Mr. Barclay had been involved in commissions in the past, so certainly again very familiar with the process.

Again, your point about gender representation and geographic representation, that's fair criticism. I'm not

disagreeing with you, other than we were concerned, as I think most were, and I can refer to comments made by opposition members about get a new commission immediately and don't wait. We did try and get a process and a system that would move as quickly as possible, and certainly if we had a great deal of time, then as I say, more fundamental issues may well have been discussed as well as the commission.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, just a comment and I guess a question in passing. Number five . . . section 5(2) and (3), it says in the case of a vacancy, and I certainly hope there isn't, but in the case of a vacancy the Lieutenant Governor may fill the vacancy. The existing legislation says that the vacancy must be filled and I would suggest "must". It's not a big issue. But I assume that that may be because of the time constraints.

But section 3 I found interesting because it says that while we weren't consulted on the actual commissioners, the Lieutenant Governor is required to consult the opposition parties on a replacement in the case of a vacancy. So I found that inconsistent and should have been the case on both accounts.

But specifically, a couple of questions on section 7, section 7(2). And regarding the expenditures, and in keeping with the auditor's concern that expenditures be duly authorized — and I might be missing this — but I don't see any statutory authority in the Bill to be making payments, expenditures for commissioners. And I wonder if there's nothing here or I'm missing that somewhere.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Well you'll notice that there is provision in 7(1), entitled to an allowance to be fixed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and I'm advised that that's the authority.

Secondly, with regard to the "may fill the vacancy". Again, that could depend, for example, supposing the commission is . . . pick a percentage, 75 per cent completed its work and whether a third one is necessary if a vacancy occurs. So it's just a flexible position. Certainly the circumstances then become totally different.

At that point we now have a commission out there that is well working. It is in everybody's interest at that point to have that commission with a high degree of public credibility. And so if a vacancy occurs that has to be filled, then we've made the provision that the other two registered political parties with 5 per cent, I think, shall be consulted. It's not optional at that point because the commission will be operating in the public at that point.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Okay thank you, Mr. Minister.

Section 8(1) says that: "The commission is not an agent of Her Majesty in right of Saskatchewan." Now I understand what that's saying, this section is not in the existing Bill. And I'm wondering what the rationale was for adding this section. Does this have to do with liability or just what is the reason for this section?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — It's to confirm the independence of the commission.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Okay. Section 9(1) speaks to the requirement to prepare a report with recommendations respecting boundaries. Mr. Minister, it says a report is required but there are no time lines here, and it doesn't make any reference to an interim report so I assume that there's no interim report required here. And I guess given that we're four and a half years into the government's mandate, what's your reason for not giving a time line for the commission to return the report to the House?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — The commission is fairly well aware of the need to deal with this as expeditiously as possible.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Now I don't doubt that but I thought that was interesting . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Pardon?

**An Hon. Member:** — We don't want an interim report from you.

**Mr. Pringle:** — No, I was noticing that that wasn't here and was asking. But I guess it's a concern in this regard, Mr. Minister, and that is with regard to public consultation that you've agreed to put in as an amendment to the Bill.

When does public consultation occur? Before the report is drafted? Obviously then there won't be an opportunity after. It seemed that the interim report concept, the last time . . . while you weren't open to a number of amendments that many people would have liked to have seen, us and a bunch of the public, it seems to me that the interim report does have a . . . particularly since we've done this wrong once before, an interim report does have some merit. That is something to react to so that this is done properly and fair this time. So I am not demanding it personally, but I was a bit surprised that you didn't see any merits to an interim report.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Again that's simply a matter of time. I expect what the commission will do is begin work with the data and then draw up the map that they will agree on, and then take that map out for public consultation. I'm assuming that that's the process. An interim report would have obviously delayed the process. I can't tell you how long, but I'd expect that that's the procedure the commission will use. Once they have a map out for proposal, they will hold the public meetings. I do indicate to the hon. members, and I think I did in the second reading, that two ways to accelerate the process are to have fewer public meetings, without putting a number on that, and have those that are concerned go to the public meetings instead of have the commission hold a great number, say in every riding.

So that can accelerate the process. And as I said, an acceleration of the final map assuming, assuming, and I'm only assuming for discussion purposes, that the Supreme Court upholds the Court of Appeal, that another way to dramatically speed up the preparation of the final map is if the parties accept that the existing poll boundaries that are there under the present map be accepted for the next map. And I realize that there may be some changes whereby you may go back to some of those A and B polls and that sort of thing, but it saves a dramatic amount of surveying and drafting time if the poll

boundaries are accepted.

But that's not a decision that the commission has to make because the commission . . . Once the map is done and approved, then obviously the legislation all has to be prepared and the Chief Electoral Officer has to deal with the poll boundaries.

You understand what I'm saying — that all of those poll boundaries take surveys and everything else so just if we're trying, if we're trying to accelerate the process, and I think that was the interest of all, that that is one way to significantly accelerate the process and I doubt that it impairs anybody. I don't know how it would. But having said that, that is something for consideration.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Mr. Minister, are you saying that it's your expectation that the commission will hold public hearings once the map has been drafted? And then I assume that based on the public hearings, where there would be ample opportunity for representation, that changes could take place and then it would come back.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — I would envision it happening that they would have the map that they are comfortable with, hold the public hearings if there's matters that warrant them making the changes. They would do that or reject the changes for whatever reasons and then give us the report as to why they didn't accept them, at the end of the day, and why they did what they did.

**Mr. Pringle:** — So if I understand you correctly, what you're saying is that in fact there will be an interim report. Not to the same degree as last time, but if the map is going to be drawn and then public hearings will occur, and then some changes could result from those public hearings — in a sense that's an interim report, not to the House but . . .

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — I've explained how I would see the process working. If you want to call that an interim report, that's not what I would call an interim report. But I don't think that that debate takes us too far down the road. You know, I just assume that the process will be one, they will prepare and draw up a map from the data and whatever they're taking into account and that's what they'll take out for public discussion.

Those that have concerns about it can raise it at the public meetings and then if they are to make modifications or changes, and take into account what's brought to their attention in the public meetings, and then they would do the report to this Assembly after all of that's done. So I mean, if you want to call it an interim report, it's not how I would see an interim report. But I just think they're going to prepare the map for consideration.

(2115)

**Mr. Pringle:** — But, Mr. Minister, there will be a map. There will be defined constituencies. Hopefully there will be some explanation for variances from the norm. I would like to see that file — that initial report, that initial map filed with the legislature, in the legislature. Are you open to making that requirement?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — I have set no rules on the commission

and how the commission carries out its business. I will certainly pass on to the commission your suggestion. But I think that we should keep in mind if it's being made public — I mean if you want a copy sent here, but if it's being made public — then I would have thought that was adequate.

But nowhere in here are we setting rules on the commission of how it's going to carry out its business. And we certainly don't want those rules in. But I mean, if there's a request to the commission that the copy go first to the legislature, any member can go ahead and write that letter. I mean it doesn't matter. As long as it's being made public I don't quite understand why that may not be adequate. But perhaps there are arguments otherwise. I miss them if there are.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Minister, it seems to me that if we're going to do this properly, there should be a provision in here for some kind of interim report. At a minimal that interim report, as my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Eastview has indicated, should consist of the proposed map of constituency boundaries, a written description of the boundaries, an indication of the population of each proposed riding, and an explanation about how the boundary was arrived at.

And that should be filed with the Assembly as has traditionally been the case when boundaries are redrawn, and of course should be made available to the public. And there should be a specific indication in the legislation, Mr. Minister, that public hearings are then to be held, based on that proposed map or interim report. And I don't understand why you haven't put this in the legislation, and I'd suggest to you that you bring in a House amendment to make the procedure clear.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Well I am not going to . . . I have indicated that if any members of the Assembly or anybody interested in the political process wants to write to the commission, express their views as to how the commission should operate, what process it should follow, that's quite proper. And they may agree with alacrity to any one suggestion. But I am somewhat concerned about suggesting rules to the commission when the whole thrust of the Court of Appeal decision is to give them, you know, as much leeway as possible.

I don't for a minute expect the commission to be unreasonable. I don't for a minute expect the commission to not understand — and I went through the qualifications — understand the need to deal with this as fairly and as quickly as possible, with public input, a chance for the public to express their views or concerns or suggestions, before what they are prepared to stand behind they forward to this Assembly. And you'll notice that when they get that done, they are to forward it to the Assembly.

So I'm concerned about beginning the process now of starting to put rules on the commission. I have some confidence that if any member has matters to raise with the commission, or notify us, to let them know immediately. And again, one of the main thrusts here is that these people are going to make their rules on how

they're going to operate.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Mr. Minister, I guess the point we're trying to make here is that it is the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan that is charged with giving the mandate, and the clear mandate to the commission. That's the point we're trying to make.

And last time where you prescribed all the rules . . . it's just that you prescribed the rules in an unconstitutional way. This time you've given, in a sense you've given very broad discretion to the commission to get the job done, which I appreciate. But it's almost loosey-goosey this time, which doesn't satisfy us and many members of the public when this thing has been botched up once before.

And so a requirement of the process could have been started earlier. It didn't have to wait until well into April before the legislature came back into session. There are many reasons why we should have been back here earlier; this could have been one on them.

And the request for an interim report is not an unusual request and it's not an unreasonable request. And in a sense, you've indicated that in an unofficial way that's going to happen anyway. What we're trying to do is to do this correctly this time and to give the commission a clear mandate. And I've tried to point out, as my colleague has, there are a few areas where this whole thing is a bit too loosey-goosey, and that's no reflection on the commission members.

I wonder if you could just clarify. I wasn't sure just how you saw the role of the Chief Electoral Officer in all of this in terms of advising the commission. And I realize that the legislation allows the commission to appoint their own staff members, but I understand that the Chief Electoral Officer is looking at some of the boundary poll results and information already. So do you see the Chief Electoral Officer as playing any role here in advising the commission along the way?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Again I've made it clear that the commission has the prerogative of choosing its own staff and personnel. I would practically expect that they would be talking to the Chief Electoral Officer, but again, that's their call. That's where all that information is stored.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, as you well know the Chief Electoral Officer is a partisan appointment by your government. In my opinion, Mr. Minister, he should have no role in this process whatsoever. We should be looking at a situation where there are independent staff advising the commission and the Chief Electoral Officer, in my judgement, should not be one of those staff. And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you would be prepared to bring in a House amendment that would ensure that in fact from now on the Chief Electoral Officer doesn't play a role in this process because I really think it's highly inappropriate that he does. And I've no doubt about the current process being one in which he will play a significant staff role.

Last time we had the absurd situation of the Chief Electoral Officer being on the commission and that was

highly partisan, Mr. Minister, and it resulted in the gerrymander that we saw last time, in part, in my judgement. And I suggest to you, sir, that it is now high time to ensure that the Chief Electoral Officer, as a partisan appointment of your government, plays no role whatsoever in the drafting of constituency electoral boundaries.

Now let's do this thing right for once. Why not bring in a House amendment indicating that the Chief Electoral Officer will not play a part in the process?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — I've indicated that we have made no . . . put no requirements or obligations on the commission. But I do . . . And I have some difficulty because I hold the hon. member in very high regard. But where were you, sir, when Carole Bryant, now on your campaign strategy committee, sat as a fiercely independent Chief Electoral Officer and you held her up as being independent, fair, and non-partisan? Where were you when Don McMillan, a highly partisan NDP (New Democratic Party) . . . Where were you when Dickson Bailey was the Chief Electoral Officer? Dickson Bailey, an NDP candidate, an NDP candidate in the last federal election was the Chief Electoral Officer?

All I'm saying to you, sir, all I'm saying to you, with the greatest respect, is you can get into that debate for some time. You can get into that debate for some time, but don't stand here and say you've got clean hands, because you didn't, you didn't.

So having said that, what we have done quite clearly throughout this is that the commission will set its own rules, hire its people, do whatever it's going to do.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I respect the Minister of Justice for his debating abilities. But I must say, Mr. Chairman, that in this case the Minister of Justice has just made my point for me.

The point being, Mr. Minister, that the Chief Electoral Officer is a partisan appointment. The Chief Electoral Officer was a partisan appointment when we were in government and the current Chief Electoral Officer is a partisan appointment by your government and I accept that. The point that I'm trying to make is that the Chief Electoral Officer should not be playing a role in the drafting of constituency boundaries.

Now, Mr. Minister, when we were in government, the Chief Electoral Officer was not on the commission. Last time when you appointed a commission you appointed a commission with the Chief Electoral Officer on it and we found that to be highly inappropriate and I must say, Mr. Minister, that in my judgement affected the impartiality of the commission.

Now this time my suggestion to you is that we not only not have the Chief Electoral Officer on the commission — and he's not on this commission — but that we do not have him in a staff capacity either, that we in effect remove the Chief Electoral Officer from the process of drafting constituency boundaries. And I ask you if you would bring in a house amendment that would

accomplish that objective.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — The hon. member and I may find common ground if we are to accept his argument is on the following process, and that is an independent Chief Electoral Officer. And that may be a matter well to be discussed by the future legislature. I have raised a couple of matters on this including proportional representation and seats for natives and perhaps a permanent independent Chief Electoral Officer. And I think that that has some merit. And I say on that we would find common ground.

But again, I think that, you know, we have brought in legislation that they will choose their staff. And if you're arguing that these commissioners cannot deal with the matter fairly, then I think you should make that argument. Either they have the ability to deal with the matter and the information that's brought forward to them and to deal with it fairly or they don't. And I happen to believe that they do.

I am prepared to rely on their judgement. I am prepared to rely on their abilities to make those decisions. And again, I have freely acknowledged to the hon. member and the members opposite that if there was a great deal of time or a greater amount of time to get this task accomplished, then many changes would be made. And the debate would be, I believe, a rather interesting one, one that in the future I'll probably be sorry I missed.

But having said that, we do have — and I think the hon. member recognizes — the need to do this as quickly as possible. And so having said that, I have the confidence in the individual members of the commission that they will use their good judgement and will act fairly, take the information that they have from whatever source it may be, to deal with it fairly, and to give a map to the people of this province that they are prepared to submit as being fair, and I think that's ultimately what we all have to look forward to.

(2130)

**Mr. Prebble:** — Mr. Minister, my point here . . . I've made most of the points I want to make on this regard. We clearly disagree.

But the final point I want to make is that let's not be under any illusions about how this process works. It is the staff who will presumably draft a plan for the commissioners to see. It is the staff who will review the population data and then make a determination about what the new boundaries will look like. Obviously the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Minister, has full access to the poll-by-poll voting results in each riding.

And what I want to ensure, Mr. Minister, is that we don't have a situation in which the information with respect to population is integrated with the information on poll-by-poll voting results. That, in a nutshell, is what I want to ensure does not happen. I want no regard at all to be paid to poll-by-poll voting results when these new maps are drawn up, Mr. Minister.

And therefore I'm not questioning the integrity of the

Chief Electoral Officer, but I am saying that he is a politically partisan appointment who should not be involved in providing staff information and proposals on what the boundaries should look like. I just think that is common sense, Mr. Minister, and I ask you to suggest otherwise. I mean why not just take the Chief Electoral Officer out of the process entirely, and why not have independent staff provided to the commission that are not associated in any way with the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, so that the boundaries are, in effect, drawn up with no regard at all paid to previous election voting results.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — I don't know what factors they're going to take into account and they have the option to take whatever course of action they wish to take. That's precisely why we have not put any requirements or obligations on the commission as to how they want to proceed. But again, I think the hon. member has to recognize that if you're prepared to accept that these people are individuals of integrity, that they will take information . . . I have no doubt, with the present member excepted, that whatever information is brought forward by any member of this Assembly, or any candidate out there, will probably have at least a modest amount of partisan taint to it. And when they appear before the commission expressing support for, or concern with whatever the map may look like, that someone from your party, or someone from our party, or any other political party out there appears before, they may have — again I've accepted the partisan matter, the hon. member — some partisan interest in making some change.

Now I will have the confidence — well I should accept both of them, my apologies — that the commission will hear all of us out. They will hear all of those interested in the process out, and then they will have to make a decision. And they will get lots of partisan information. They will get it being brought forward, I suggest, by all of us or all political parties. That again, as you say, is part of this process.

So I just don't assume that they will bend to that or bow to that. I know they won't. They recognize, I think it fair to say, that the map ultimately being presented by them to this Assembly is one that they will have to not defend so much but at least understand that it's got to have a very high degree of public credibility. And again, with that, I take comfort in that.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, I think you skirted my colleague's issue. We're not talking about any concern about the commission appointing and hiring their own staff apart from the Chief Electoral Officer for the regions that were indicated. And I think that it's a little bit naive to believe that if the Chief Electoral Officer, who is partisan, is drafting the plan with all the information on computer from the last exercise, that the commissioners are going to be in a position to take issue with those numbers and boundaries. But the need to take the Chief Electoral Officer out of this relates to a question I have on section 11, the rules for fixing the boundaries.

And as per your last, or the existing legislation, the commission can vary from the norm for geographical reasons, physical features of the ridings and third, a

special community of interest. Now, special community of interest — whatever that means — was the major argument of the government's position in the two days of court hearings in the Court of Appeal.

In fact, your lawyers were not able to define what special community of interest means to the satisfaction of the judges, even though your lawyers said that special community of interest is more important than equality of voter rights. Yet they could not define what that term meant. And I guess in the face of the B.C. decision, as I understand it, that said that deviations could only be allowed if they were demonstrably justified and in many respects the Appeal Court decision in Saskatchewan was more clear on this point because it related, as well, to the charter, that there had to be equality under the legislation — equality of voters rights — and they made some reference to favouring something like plus or minus five per cent.

I guess it goes back to my question regarding written reasons for exceptions that vary from the norm. And I would like to see some requirement in the Bill that requires the commission to specifically identify why any particular riding might vary from the quotient.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Let me respond. If you go back to the Bill that went into effect in '81, I believe, under the New Democratic Party administration, it made reference that the commission could take into account any special community or diversity of interests, inhabitants of various regions of the province. So that's the source of that phraseology and section.

Secondly, the Court of Appeal did, in fact, find community of interests as it applied to the northern ridings. So it's not that they . . . they did. Very difficult to define. I'm not taking issue with the hon. member, but they did in fact find some community of interest.

Thirdly, we should keep in mind the plus or minus 5 per cent, one of the errors, at least in our view, in the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal made reference to the federal Saskatchewan boundaries commission whereby . . . and they said plus or minus 5 per cent. In fact that was based on total population, not voter population. So they were comparing apples and oranges when they made that reference. So we were a little surprised that they didn't pick up the difference.

Having said that, I've given you the source of that. I have not in any way disagreed with the point you make that that can be difficult to define, but there is some track record for it and we do have at least the northern seats as an example where that community of interest may well be.

Whether the court could do . . . or the commission, and I only say it because I would only be speculating whether they decide that there should be rural and urban ridings combined. I don't know whether that would fit under community of interest or not, but it's certainly something that one may or may not make the argument that that would fit in that category.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Mr. Minister, I wasn't taking issue with the

notion of community of interest. There's nothing wrong with that being one of the exceptions, considerations to the exceptions from the norm. I was using that in the context of my concern about the Chief Electoral Officer being part of drawing up the boundaries.

And secondly, that you used that concept unsuccessfully to the satisfaction of the judge, but that concept has been more important, without being able to define it, more important than equal voting power. So those are the points in which I was . . . the context in which I was mentioning that. But you forgot my question related to the requirement that any variations, that is under the norm, be put in writing by the commission.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — We should keep in mind that these commissioners now have the Court of Appeal judgement and its reasons to take into account, so I have little doubt that they will take those into account in their deliberations.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Mr. Minister, when I talked to you earlier about time lines, no time lines for the commission, I mentioned that for another reason. And it's a potential concern here that I have.

If the session is in progress, then as I understand it from the Bill the report will be filed with the Speaker which would then immediately be available to all members. I assume that's the case. Okay. The potential concern I have is if the session is not . . . if we're not in session. Then if the commission is required to submit the report to the Speaker and it would not be made available to members until five days into another session, if I understand the Bill correctly.

And a concern I have about this: does this mean that this report could in fact go potentially a number of weeks without being made public after it is drafted?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — That's not the intention and I've just mentioned that to the officials. We'll look at a House amendment that when they've got it done, whether the House is in session or not, that it be tabled with the Clerk for public . . . you know, and available to the public at that time. Will that satisfy the point that you're raising? It wasn't the intention. It was just taken from the traditional way of filing documents or reports before the Assembly. It wasn't to stop the information being made public. So we'll look at a way to draft that up so it can be tabled when it's ready, whatever the situation in the House may be at that time.

**Mr. Pringle:** — So just to clarify this, I think I understand you and I like what you're saying, that you will draft a House amendment. When it's filed with the Speaker, it'll be made public even if the House isn't sitting. Okay, I appreciate that.

I guess another question, section 13, Mr. Minister. Once the report is filed with the new boundaries . . .

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — If I could, if we just . . . And we'll work along this line, if we just take section 12:

. . . shall immediately submit the report to the

Speaker . . .

who then may make the report public, who shall make the report public, and then take out all those other references to whether it's in session or not. Does that meet the point being made by the member?

(2145)

**Mr. Pringle:** — Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Minister. We appreciate that.

Section 13, it might just be that I need this clarified, Mr. Minister, that is, once the report is made public with the new proposed boundaries, it seems to me this section doesn't require the legislature to deal with this in any timely way. And again I think about getting close to the five year deadline constitutionally for a government.

If the House isn't sitting, so the report is public but the report could just sit there and have no action until the fall, which may very well put the province in a constitutional crisis, and I wonder if you'd thought of that. And first of all it doesn't seem to me that the Bill requires the report to come back and be dealt with by the legislature in a timely fashion. And assuming that that may not be the case until the fall, would that not put us in a major crisis?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — We're certainly making the assumption throughout that this commission is going to report as quickly as possible. It would be dealt in this session, also keeping in mind the possibility that the Supreme Court may overrule the Court of Appeal. Keeping in mind that the Supreme Court may overrule the Court of Appeal, in which case, do you want the commission to continue? It shouldn't. We obviously will have the legislation before us that's already been passed if it's . . . as I say, if the Supreme Court overrules the Court of Appeal.

So we're just making the assumption that this matter is going to be dealt with fairly quickly and in this session, this spring, and I think everybody's trying to work to that.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I want to come back to this question of the possibility of the Clerk being on the boundaries commission. I was listening for you to answer that, and I think because there were a number of questions that you weren't able to deal with it.

I'd just like to say that we would like to see the Clerk of the Assembly on the commission. I certainly would very much like to see that because I see the Clerk as a position that is politically neutral. The Clerk works with all political parties; the Clerk has a very good understanding of the process that's involved here and I think the Clerk has the respect of all parties inside this legislature and, I suspect, outside the legislature.

When members of this side of the House were in government in the 1970s, the Clerk was always on the boundaries commission and I wonder if you would not consider at this point adding her name to the list of commissioners?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Again, at this time, there's obviously no reflection on the Clerk. I indicated earlier that we were making as few changes, still complying with the Court of Appeal, as possible. But secondly, there is a debate, and I think a fair one, as to whether the Clerk should or should not be involved in this process.

Some make the argument that the actual operations of the legislature should be separate from this process completely. And that has some merit and that's not a reflection of anyone when the argument is made. So the debate is not quite as clear-cut as the hon. member has indicated. As I say, there are schools of thought which indicate that the actual operation of the legislature should be separate from the development of the boundaries, setting up the seats that the members will represent.

**Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to point out the fact that this process, with respect to drafting constituency boundaries, has been going on for some time. In fact before the boundaries Act, that got into so much trouble with our Court of Appeal in Saskatchewan, was brought forward by this government, there was a mechanism on the statute books that provided for the establishment of an impartial commission, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that provided for an independent process by which constituency boundaries in the province of Saskatchewan could be drawn up.

But what happened is this government decided to get cute with the democratic rights of the people of Saskatchewan. And they came to this legislature with an Act that set up a different set of rules. And I remember the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden shouting across the legislature at that time saying they were going to win an election on their rules. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, their rules have turned out to be illegal.

I want to point out specifically that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was on the independent committee in the former legislation that was on the books before this government decided to tamper with it. They removed the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly from the commission and instead put on the Chief Electoral Officer, which is a partisan appointment as we heard the member from Saskatoon University speak about.

And as we heard the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden reply to and attempt to, of course, distort the debate that was taking place in the legislature on the appointment of the Chief Electoral Officer to an independent commission to draft constituency boundaries in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now this new Act that came forward from the PC (Progressive Conservative) government — which at the time we had told them was probably unconstitutional and which I'm sure their battery of lawyers told them was probably unconstitutional — but in spite of all these warnings and concerns, they pigheadedly proceeded with this legislation which we now know to be declared, at least in part, unconstitutional by the Court of Appeal in Saskatchewan.

They arrogantly ignored very basic fundamental

democratic rights of the people of Saskatchewan and came forward with their own tailor-made legislation which has in effect been thrown out by the highest court of the province of Saskatchewan. Now I know that that is under appeal to the Supreme Court but I still feel, personally, that it offended, the legislation that came forward, offended very basic democratic rights of the people of Saskatchewan.

The Court of Appeal decision refers to the urban and rural sections in the legislation with a clear indication that this sort of division is artificial and completely unnecessary. And this speaks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the attempt by the PC government to divide people in Saskatchewan, to divide farmers against workers, and to pit different peoples in the province against each other. And that's been the policy of this government for the last four years as I've sat in this legislature and witnessed what's been going on. And they've done it in a number of different ways, and we've spoken at it in this legislature at length.

They've attempted to divide people and pit people against each other, and they have had no compunction whatsoever in flagrantly ignoring people's basic rights. We've seen them attack the Legislative Counsel for example. We've seen them attack the Provincial Auditor. We've seen them cut back funding to the Human Rights Commission. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are things unprecedented in this province.

These kinds of attacks, this manner of ignoring people's very basic, fundamental rights . . . and I get the feeling that this government simply does not have a good sense of ethics, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the broad sense of the word. They do not have a good sense of ethics, and they do not understand basic, fundamental rights.

And then after this legislation was overruled by the Court of Appeal, we see the government wanting to establish an independent commission through The Public Inquiries Act. But obviously the correct procedure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to come before this house with a piece of legislation which they have now come to realize they have to do. But I believe they wanted to avoid the legislature once again, by going through The Public Inquiries Act. And I want to just say something about some of the problems that occur as a result of the change of boundaries initially in 1989, and now we may be looking at yet a further change.

If you look at the constituency of Regina Lakeview, for example, it was cut right in half by the drafting of the boundaries in 1989 — cut right in half. As a result, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had to, in looking at new constituencies, leave behind half of my former constituency. And that wasn't an easy thing to do. And it causes disruption in the lives of people in the constituency who come to rely upon you as their representative in the legislature.

And now we may be looking at a total new redraft. And so once again people are wondering what is going to happen. Are constituencies going to return to their former self? Is Regina Hillsdale going to be moved further south? What's going to happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker?



And here we are on the verge of having an election and we're looking probably at some fairly significant changes to constituencies in the province of Saskatchewan.

I have no reason however, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to doubt the integrity of the commissioners, and so I believe that they will review fairly and properly the information that comes before them. And in that regard, I wish once again to reiterate or to underline rather, the comments of my colleague from Saskatoon University, when he expresses concern about the Chief Electoral Officer being staff to the commission.

The constituents of Regina Lakeview, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whom I now represent, and many people from the constituency of Regina Hillsdale, are most anxious to see an expeditious and fair resolution of this very serious problem that's been created through the incompetence of the government opposite.

The constituents of Regina Hillsdale and Regina Lakeview simply want to get on with an election with their fundamental rights being adhered to, and they want to see an election, Mr. Speaker, so that this province can be put right side up once again with a New Democratic government.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — It's wearing on me when I always have to take the high road in response, but I'll continue to carry that burden, Mr. Chairman, and I will indicate to the hon. member that the Court of Appeal decision . . . and there is, I don't think, a lawyer in the country that doesn't believe that the Court of Appeal decision is precedent setting. It does go contrary to that decision of the B.C. Court of Appeal, for example.

For the hon. member to say that past history is always better, I think it fair to say that if we continued with the 1981 boundaries, that those would have been challenged.

Thirdly, the hon. member should keep in mind that in the Northwest Territories, which had an independent boundaries commission which brought forward legislation, that independent boundaries commission was chaired by Mr. Justice Tallis of the Court of Appeal in Saskatchewan. And that Northwest Territories legislation followed truly the recommendations of the independent boundaries commission. That is now being challenged in the Court of the Northwest Territories as being contrary to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

So I think the hon. member has to recognize that one of the advantages of a charter is that there is hardly a piece of legislation around that can't be challenged by anyone. But I will now list for the record the following provinces and jurisdictions that have intervened on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan: Parliament of Canada, the province of British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, Northwest Territories, and the Yukon, have all intervened, as well as the Alberta association of rural municipalities.

(2200)

Those that are opposing the intervention are John F. Conway, Equal Justice for All, B.C. Civil Liberties Association, the voters group for Northwest Territories, in the city of Edmonton. So I read that into the record that we can have a partisan debate here, to the hon. member; that with a charter you will have, as I say, most pieces of legislation will . . . can face challenges because of the charter, even though we have a process trying to bring legislation within the charter. It is precedent setting and virtually every other lawyer in the province — and I think in the country — accepts that it is precedent setting. So having said that, the Supreme Court will be making the decision. Yes we'll try and move expeditiously.

If I could come back to the point about the Clerk as well. We were the only province using the Clerk; no other province had done that. So the debate is that, that should the legislature be involved in the process — as I say, some say no, but it's a matter of fair debate. But keeping the legislature's office away from the process has also some merit, in response to the hon. member.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — It's interesting to note that when the Minister of Justice in Saskatchewan is taking the high road, he is very careful to identify to the people in the Assembly that he is taking the high road. There must be some reason for the Minister of Justice having to identify that fact.

I have two concerns about this legislation, Mr. Chairperson. And the main, major concern, of course, has to do with this Minister of Justice and his government's blatant attempt to manipulate the voters of Saskatchewan. That is my main concern, and that's been dealt with extensively here this evening.

I want to deal with the secondary concern that I have with regard to this whole area of discussion and, Mr. Chairperson, that has to do with how does this process get started?

First, the government brings in legislation, as they did before. Then they establish the commission, as they did before and give it the instructions. The commission has hearings which last for some time. The commission prints a report and draws maps and prints maps and circulates the maps, and I know that because I got the constituency of Westmount which had a error in the boundary of the constituency. Later on I saw the final maps which had corrected the error and the final report is presented to the legislature.

Now as a matter of interest, could the Minister of Justice tell us what that process costs? What is the cost of preparing the legislation, setting up the commission, having the hearings, printing the reports, drawing the maps, and all those costs associated with that?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — I don't have an answer to that question. We'll try and get an estimate. One should keep in mind that if you take a look at the legislation, members of the commission other than members who received a salary pursuant to the judge's act, so the judge's don't get paid additional salary because of that. So we'll have to try and perhaps get an estimate. I'm not sure exactly where. I

don't know what the last one cost, but we could try and find that information and get back to the hon. member.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — I would appreciate getting that information from the Minister, Mr. Chairperson. And of course all of those costs have to be duplicated again because the Appeal Court has ruled that the Act is not the Act that should be in place in Saskatchewan. So all of those costs will have to be virtually doubled again.

May I ask the Minister the next question. Mr. Minister, what is the cost of you and your department appealing this to the Appeal Court in Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Again we'll have to . . . that's an estimates question. We'll try and get costs. You may note that we did make a financial commitment to those opposing the reference, I forget the exact amount that we were paying. I can't tell you that. I can't tell you how much time in the law college was used by some of them to generate the case. I can't answer that information. I don't know whether I can get it all for you. We'll get what information we can for the honourable member. Obviously there is a cost but I can't give you the exact amount.

If I could submit this to the opposition — and it's the proposed House amendment to deal with the matter of the legislature in session — and if I could just interject now to send it over to you and give you a chance to look at the draft.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Mr. Chairperson, I would have thought that it would be a matter of interest to a government who is interested in cutting down the costs and increasing the efficiency of government, that they would have calculated the cost of setting up the commission, the cost of setting up the commission and going through it all again, the cost of going to the Appeal Court.

And on top of that, Mr. Minister, I want to know what you have estimated or set aside to go to the Supreme Court of Canada? What are the costs there?

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — We haven't received an estimate, for example, from those intervening according to the offer. So we don't have all of those costs.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — What we have here, Mr. Chairperson, is a minister and a government who manipulates the voters of Saskatchewan blatantly, and doesn't know the cost of their setting up their commissions, of printing, of their lawyers, banks of lawyers going to Appeal Court, has no estimate, not even a ballpark estimate of the cost of going to the Supreme Court of Canada. All this from a government who spares no cost to manipulate the voters of Saskatchewan.

That is what concerns me, Mr. Chairman. The blatant effrontery of a government that will go through all of these steps at great cost to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, to take away the rights of the people of Saskatchewan, to circumvent the rights, the democratic rights of the people of Saskatchewan. And that's very serious in my view.

Any government who will go to that extent and hang the cost is not a government that should be re-elected in Saskatchewan, quite frankly, Mr. Chairperson.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — I wish to indicate to the hon. member again, I have made reference to the fact that judges paid under the Judges Act do not get paid additional salaries because of this, and that secondly, we are using in-house counsel again, and I indicated to you we don't have an estimate from one of the ones that we had agreed to pay that were intervening against the government.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Mr. Chairman, let not the minister attempt to fob off the question with answers like, we're using in-house counsel. I am sure that his in-house counsel is busy on several fronts trying to keep this government out of jail, quite frankly, trying to keep this government out of the courts.

They're fighting on all fronts. They're under police investigation; they're under inquiries; they're before the courts. So to say that we're using in-house counsel, they're taking staff away from some other case they must be fighting against the people of Saskatchewan.

I want to see the actual figures or in the case of the Supreme Court, an accurate as possible estimate of the cost that each step of this travesty of the democratic process of Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairperson. And I want to see that as soon as possible if the minister can possibly provide it.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — I indicated that those were questions for estimates. I'm not going to demean the House, quite frankly, in responding to some of the comments you made and I'm not sure you want to get into some of the political debate about some of the comments you made. So having that, it is a proper question for estimates and we can deal with it at that time.

**Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to intervene just very briefly on this debate, to make I guess, three very quick points, short points. First of all, I want to reiterate — it's been said many times tonight — that we on this side of the House, from the very beginning when this sorry episode began a couple of years ago, argued that the government's original legislation was flawed and amounted to a violation of the Canadian constitution — Charter of Rights.

And as importantly as that . . . it certainly, if it didn't violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, violated the spirit of the democratic process, which is as important as the actual letter of the law. And I regret — and I want to share the observations of my colleagues — that at the time the government saw fit to simply bulldoze ahead and to proceed with the legislation which is now impugned and subject to a Supreme Court decision.

The second point that I wish to make is that we note by this legislation that the government now appears to be moving in the right direction, although belatedly, and I would add also, listening to the Attorney General, reluctantly. But they're moving none the less under

pressure from the courts, the courts of law and the courts of public opinion. For whatever reason, we think that this is a good direction and a good move and I can only hope that it's carried out with dispatch, but more than dispatch, it's carried out with dispatch and it's carried out in fairness, integrity, that the right decisions are made.

I wish to state on behalf of the official opposition that we do not question the integrity of the commissioners that the minister has put forward for us to consider. We know that they are independent. We accept them. We know that they will do their best. They will do their job fairly and appropriately. I say that without any equivocation whatsoever on behalf of all of my caucus members. And I say so, while at the same time supporting the observations made by my colleagues from University and from Eastview and others, that leaving the personalities aside here for the moment, there needs to be improvement in future legislatures and future legislation as to the process of consultation to make it even better and more complete.

But as far as the three individuals are concerned, we know that these are men of integrity and quality, and we have every confidence that they will do their job fairly and appropriately.

The third and final point which I wish to make, Mr. Chairman, is as follows. While we support the appointment of these people as commissioners, I think it's correct to say — and I would not be remiss in my duty in stating — that we in the opposition none the less reserve our right to comment on the commission's final report and to suggest improvements, of course, if necessary.

This, I think, is only a natural right and duty of any opposition, and I'm sure that the government opposite understands, as do the commissioners understand, that we will be of course monitoring and observing and reserving our right to make such observations as may be necessary.

So in conclusion, we hope the commission's able to do its work quickly and fairly, because that's what the people of Saskatchewan want — an early election on fair and appropriate boundaries. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 11 inclusive agreed to.

(2215)

## Clause 12

**Mr. Chairman:** — There is a House amendment to clause 12. Moved by the Minister of Justice:

Amend the printed Bill by deleting section 12 and substituting the following:

12 On completion of the commission's report required pursuant to section 9, the chairperson of the commission shall immediately submit the report to the speaker who shall make the report

available to the public and who, at the first opportunity, shall lay the report before the Assembly.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 12 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 13 to 16 inclusive agreed to.

## Clause 17

**Mr. Chairman:** — House amendment to clause 17. Moved by the Minister of Justice:

Amend section 17 of the printed Bill:

(a) by striking out the word "may" where it appears therein and substituting therefor the word "shall".

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 17 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 18 and 19 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill as amended.

## THIRD READINGS

### Bill No. 52 — An Act to provide for the Division of Saskatchewan into Constituencies for the Election of Members of the Legislative Assembly

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

Motion agreed to.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — I move that Bill 52 be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:21 p.m.