

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have a petition again with respect to the gross revenue insurance program. We have received this and I'd like to present it today. I don't think we need to go through the complete petition. I think the three conditions that they lay out in it are the important things.

(Whereas) your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government to:

- (1) allow the 1991 GRIP program to stand for this year,
- (2) start working with the federal government and farmers to design a program that will be a true "REVENUE INSURANCE" program by the end of this calendar year, and
- (3) ensure that the new revenue insurance program be set up on an individual cost-of-production to return ratio instead of risk area formula.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present this petition. It has a number of names on it from all over south-west Saskatchewan, and I expect we'll be seeing similar petitions coming in from all over the province.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order, I have reviewed the following petition pursuant to Rule 11(7) and they are hereby read and received.

Of the citizens of the Province of Saskatchewan humbly praying that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to (1) allow the 1991 GRIP program to stand for this year, (2) start working with the Federal Government and farmers to design a program that will be a true "Revenue Insurance" program . . . and (3) ensure that the new revenue insurance program be set up on an individual cost-of-production to return ratio instead of (the) risk area formula.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to introduce to you and to the members of the legislature, 21 grade 11 students from the Muenster High School. They're accompanied by their teacher, Paul Reist, and chaperons Audrey Maier and Debbie Bendel. I'll be meeting with the group following question period. I want to ask the members to join with me to extend a warm welcome to the students from the good community of Muenster.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Langford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to all members of the Assembly, I would like to welcome 27 grade 12 students from Shellbrook. Shellbrook lies on the west side of my constituency. The teacher is Colin Neudorf.

I hope the students enjoy their tour today and they have a safe trip home. I will be meeting with them for pictures and refreshments after question period.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to introduce a group of guests in the east gallery, Mr. Speaker. These folks are from the Plains Mennonite School in Warman, Saskatchewan — 13 students from grades 1 to 9. They are accompanied by their teachers Alvin Zimmerman, Elizabeth Heatwole, and chaperons Wayne and Margaret Heatwole.

I look forward to meeting with them after they have watched the proceedings during question period and look forward to having a short discussion with them afterwards. And I'd ask all hon. members, Mr. Speaker, to help me welcome them to the Legislative Assembly this morning.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through to the Assembly, some members of the bottling industry, employees of the bottling industry, that are sitting in the opposition gallery today. I'd like to welcome them here. They're here to observe the democratic process as it takes place in this Assembly. I would ask you and all the members of the House to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I too would like to welcome the members of the bottling industry to the Chamber this morning. And we realize that they are here out of matters of concern as very important to their life, and we respect that, and we hope that we can meet with them later. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Soft Drink Container Handling Charges

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. Madam Minister, after zero consultation with experts of the soft drink industry, your department has made the brilliant decision to increase handling charges and deposits to a level that is unparalleled in the rest of Canada. It will place Saskatchewan consumers' costs higher than any other province. And I ask you to justify your decision to this Assembly.

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm very pleased to speak on this issue today. First of all, there

has been dialogue with the industry. Three times we met with the people in both Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola. We met with them on February 26 first, May 6 was the second meeting, and May 19 was the third meeting.

At the first meeting they expressed concerns about wanting an even playing-field. They also expressed concerns about the EPF (environmental protection fund) fund and the fact that they thought the EPF fund should be given back to the industry. We said to them that the EPF fund was indeed public money, and it would be used through the Department of Environment to take action on the environment in many different ways including education.

On May 6 we met with them to inform them that there will be an increase in the environmental handling charge and on the deposit side. Again they expressed concerns about a level playing-field because the soft drink industry was being targeted and the other container industries were not. They wanted a stepped-up implementation on the deposit handling fees on the other containers. We went back, we thought about it, and we said they were right; the even playing-field is very important. And we stepped up the date to July 1 instead of phasing it in later.

They also made mention . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The answer is getting fairly lengthy. I ask the member to direct a new question.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, the Peat Marwick study that you had done, and was released after sitting on it for eight solid months, has some very bizarre accounting in it — administrative charges by SARCAN increasing by 80 per cent in one year so that these costs eat up 44 per cent of SARCAN's revenues. I ask you: how can you justify your actions given the Peat Marwick study that you ended up asking for?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — In answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, the last government commissioned Peat Marwick to do the study. They commissioned Peat Marwick to do the study because SARCAN was at an operating deficit. There was about a \$3 million loss at SARCAN at this point in time.

SARCAN was one of the best things the former government ever did and I commend them for it. It's an agency that is noted across Canada, and we are hoping that other governments will take our lead and institute another . . . a similar agency for recycling and collection.

The fact that when they set it up they did not anticipate the administrative costs was unfortunate, but it's one of the growing pains we're going through now, and we have to increase the environmental fee in order to keep SARCAN viable. Part of the problem we have here is that the bottling companies, Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola, want to take over the recycling industries. They want to torpedo the SARCAN agency. And that is what is at the root of this whole problem. It has nothing to do with interest in the consumer's rights or anything else. It has to do with the Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola wanting to take over the recycling industry and wanting to have the EPF fund

applied to them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Madam Minister, I suggest that this report be examined carefully by your department. Because upon examination you indeed are going to find that there's a \$4 million profit in SARCAN, not a deficit, if indeed you look at all of the numbers, as I have, in this report.

This is a different question. In Saskatchewan, the guide to regulatory fairness states, and I quote that:

The public will have advance information and notice of proposed regulations, and

Affected sectors will be able to provide input.

Madam Minister, will you admit that telling the soft drink industry that you're changing the regulation whether they liked it or not on May 6, a mere 19 days before it comes into effect, represents a failure to uphold the Saskatchewan government's own guidelines?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, the Peat Marwick study is a very valuable tool and we don't see it in the same light obviously that the member opposite does. We would be pleased to release that study to the public. We're in phase 2 of it right now and the details have not been completed. But that is a very important study and we take it very seriously.

The fact that it mentions some problems that SARCAN is having are problems that are related to the expansion of SARCAN and we feel that the SARCAN agency is a very, very important tool as far as completing the total recycling and reusing system in Saskatchewan, and we don't want to take away from SARCAN any ability to do that. It's one of the best environmental tools that exist right now in Canada.

In *The Globe and Mail* this morning you can see a headline that says B.C. (British Columbia) is also planning an expansion into deposits and an environmental fee in all of their beverage containers. We are leading Canada in what we're doing and we're not . . . We have many consultations, and we respect that the public has the right to know and we have done that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — The Minister of Economic Development: you, sir, have the most important job in this government. And I'm sure that all government departments are required to consult with your department on policy changes that would have an impact on jobs and economic development.

Mr. Minister of Economic Development, was your department consulted on these changes to the soft drink industry, and what are the results of this impact analysis?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — The member asks questions about the economic impact that will occur as a result of these changes. I want to indicate very clearly that there

has been ongoing discussion in government to try to balance the needs of protecting the environment with the needs for economic development. And what every government right across Canada is doing is struggling with the balance. Where do you draw the line on the ever increasing mountains of garbage and . . .

An Hon. Member: — Garbage?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Yes, the garbage that people might throw out or use and then discard and become a problem for society, along with economic development. And it's a very, very important question.

And what we have decided, along with a number of other jurisdictions, is that we have to clean up the environment. People, especially of a younger age than yourself, are very, very concerned about the environment. And I want to say to you very clearly that as Minister of Economic Development we have been to a number of science shows and it's clear to me that the biggest growing problem in the world is in fact whether or not we're going to have a clean environment to live in. And as Minister of Economic Development, as Minister of Economic Development I am concerned about having more jobs. But I want to say clearly that our balance is the right balance and I would ask you to defend and support cleaning up the environment as opposed to getting on some quick and easy bandwagon which members opposite tend to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister for the Environment. The changes you have proposed, Madam Minister, could be devastating to the soft drink industry. And I met with the representatives from that industry this morning. They were willing to meet with me, Madam Minister; they would have been willing to meet with you had your door been open to consultation and negotiation.

You say that you met with them on three separate occasions. Mr. Speaker, I'll show you a . . .

The Speaker: — Order. First of all, before the member continues, could I ask the members please not to interrupt.

And secondly, I think the member should be aware that he can't use exhibits in question period . . . or in the legislature. May he continue.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the soft drink industry has said that when they were granted a meeting with the minister, they were informed that the minister was committed to a course of action.

Madam Minister, jobs are threatened with these changes. Will you not again meet with the bottling industry and their employees before the implementation date and not after, when things cannot be changed?

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, I think there's a lot of misinformation being touted about, and I would like to

correct it.

The net effect on the consumer is 3 cents per container. That's what it is. These changes that we're implementing has no effect on the cost of production of the bottling industry whatsoever. And the net effect is 3 cents on a container — this is a 3 cent environmental levy.

I ask the members opposite to join with us in protecting the environment and protect SARCAN. SARCAN was the best thing that they ever did. It's one of the best legacies you have left and you want to put it in jeopardy and you want to listen to the Pepsi-Cola and the Coca-Cola company.

The Coca-Cola company pays their president \$3 million a year. They can't put 3 cents back into the environment. Where is your sense of loyalty and where is your sense of respect for the environment? If you choose in Pepsi-Cola . . . We do not want to see jobs lost. We are very, very concerned about the fact that these companies are using these employees as pawns right now. There is no reason they . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Madam Minister, SARCAN was developed by this party. In fact we have a very good depot in my constituency at Redvers, a very good depot.

But, Madam Minister, we have some concerns with where any additional revenues you collect will go to. Can you assure us today that your government will set forth provisions that any additional fees will go to SARCAN so that they can carry on their very important services, so that they can continue to employ the very special people that work at those work sites? Can you assure this Assembly that this is not just another tax for the Minister of Finance's deep pockets?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Thank you very much. That's a great question and I'm very pleased to answer it.

First of all, the 3 cent handling charge, the maximum 3 cent per container, will indeed go to SARCAN and they'll be expanding and then hiring, as I understand it, 26 more people in order to accommodate these changes.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Carson: — So SARCAN will be using all of that money, yes, and they'll be using it to pay off their deficit. On the other hand the unrefunded deposits that are in the EPF fund now will gradually be diminished, because as you make the container more expensive the consumer will naturally bring it back and so there will be no money left in the EPF fund. And so the government will have no extra funds to . . . Right now what is left in the EPF fund goes to waste minimization, it goes to help the landfill situations in Saskatchewan, it goes to fund educational programs for the consumer. That is put back into a program to help reduce overall waste in Saskatchewan. It

is not used as a tax and it never is intended to be used as a tax.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. Madam Minister, people say they're willing to pay more to protect the environment. But, Madam Minister, human nature being what it is, people also shop around for a bargain. Along the southern border, Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, people will be shopping for that bargain across the line. They will be buying their pop and their juice and bringing it back into Saskatchewan. We know that's going to happen.

Madam Minister, what assurances can you give the employees in the bottling industry, those very important jobs, 417 jobs in Saskatchewan, that there will be no job losses because of these proposed changes. What changes will these increases force on industries along the U.S. (United States) border? What kind of losses of revenue are they going to have? What kind of assurances can you give for the jobs and for those businesses?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, the facts that the hon. members recite are quite wrong. There is about a hundred jobs in the bottling industry. There's two plants that employ between 80 and 100 people. The other jobs are in the distribution network, and those jobs should not be in jeopardy.

But if these corporations, if Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola, decide that they're going to shut down these bottling plants, it will have nothing whatsoever to do with these charges that we're implementing today. They have already decided to do it. They've closed down eight plants in the last three years already, and it wasn't because of these charges. They're doing it because of economies of scale. They're using this as an opportunity, as an excuse, to do what they were intending to do already anyway.

When I had my meeting with them, I asked them if they would guarantee that they wouldn't close down those plants in Saskatoon and Regina if we did not. And they said they could not guarantee it. So from that I take that they already are talking about it. And in their discussions with the employees they have already talked about it as well, far before we brought in these environmental and deposit levies.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, seeing that you've shut out the bottling industry and their employees, seeing that there's been very little consultation with these proposed changes, Madam Minister, will you commit today to push back the implementation date until such consultation and negotiation can take place. You could have had both the support for SARCAN and the jobs in the bottling industry if you would consult and negotiate with them.

Madam Minister, you have stated that these fees are just

the start. Will you commit here today that you will not implement these fee increases or any other fee increases without the appropriate consultation and reviews, impact reviews, before they take place?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, when I met with the industry, the presidents of the companies on Monday of this week, I asked them for a documentation to show me the effect on their company sales if these levies were placed, and they could not provide it to me. They made all sorts of statements about a decrease in sales and a negative impact. And I said, show me your documentation; and they said, it will take three weeks for us to get it to you.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, if they have that documentation, they had at least a month to get it to us, and now they're going around telling me stories that they're going to have to shut down these Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola bottling plants.

They were shut down . . . We had 11 of those bottling plants in Saskatchewan in 1988. Now we have two left. We have a hundred people working, and those hundred people are very important to us too. And I'm going to be speaking with those people and talking about them.

But Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola are . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Consultation on Government Policy

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Associate Minister of Finance. Today, Mr. Speaker, we have people in the gallery fighting for their jobs — fighting for their jobs as a result of your lack of consultation.

Mr. Speaker, we have people in Kindersley who are also fighting for their jobs. They share a common cause with the guests here today. Mr. Minister, I want to ask you, who did you consult with before you took the jobs of the people of the Saskatchewan Pension Plan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The matter of the preparation of the budget is, as the member opposite will know — or perhaps he doesn't — as the member opposite will know, the subject of some strict rules with respect to budgetary secrecy. It may be that at some point in time this House would want to consider that. But the current rules with respect to preparation of a budget require us to respect the privilege of this legislature. And one of the privileges of the legislature is they see the budget first.

If indeed the details of the budget with respect to the Saskatchewan Pension Plan would have been disclosed, you people would have been the first to take high umbrage.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact is, Mr. Minister, that you people did not consult with anybody about the changes in the Saskatchewan Pension Plan. You didn't consult with the bottlers. You haven't consulted with anyone in this province about any of the plans you plan to implement. Mr. Minister, your government is on a wrecking spree that is throwing people out of work all over this province.

Mr. Minister, I want you to give this Assembly a commitment that before you take anyone else's job in this province, that you will consult with the people affected and inform this Assembly before you outright throw more people out of jobs in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I say to the member opposite: to the extent that it is reasonably possible to do so, this government has consulted with people. The Minister of the Environment made it clear that she had consulted with the industry.

There is a difference between consultation and blind acceptance of every view that's forwarded. We did consult with the industry. We made a decision that the needs of the environment took primacy.

With respect to the Pension Plan, we did indeed consult with people in so far as we could. But again I say, we could not consult with the stakeholders without disclosing the budget and you people were in a state of high umbrage with respect to the budgetary leaks.

Now you can't have it both ways. Even from the Progressive Conservative Party some minimum of consistency is required if you're to have any credibility. You can't be insulted with respect to every budget leak, and at the same, want us to discuss the budget with all and sundry before it's tabled.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, there are people on the steps of the legislature today and those in the gallery who say that the government hasn't consulted with them about their loss of jobs. The Saskatchewan Pension Plan involves 44,000 women — no consultation.

My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, you have and are very well aware of a large livestock industry in the province of Saskatchewan, the hog and the beef industry. Did you consult with Pound-maker feedlot, with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, with Mohawk Oil before you pulled the pin on the feed grain assistance program? And before you decided to gut the industry and take away its foundation and lose those jobs with over a million hogs produced in the province of Saskatchewan, almost that many cows in terms of a cow-calf industry and in the meat packing industry, who did you consult with before you decided to take all those jobs and put them at risk?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — The member opposite ought to know

the rules that the Associate Minister of Finance has discussed with you in the last few minutes.

But the member opposite also ought to know something about the industry in Saskatchewan. We have a healthy agricultural industry in the livestock sector in Saskatchewan and you know very well that our hog industry is the lowest-cost producer group in Canada.

I have confidence that the livestock sector in Saskatchewan will compete. They will compete with other people who will play on a level playing-field. Your compatriots in Alberta who insist on putting money artificially into an industry in order to attract business into that industry is not an exercise we can match. Your Alberta friends are going into debt \$2.3 billion this year.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — If the members don't want an answer to their questions, that's fine with me. Then I'll call it the end of question period. If you want your questions answered then please don't interrupt when the minister is trying to answer.

You might not like the answer, but he'll give you the answer.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, all we're doing is asking the ministers here today is to please advise the Assembly and the public who they consulted with when they caused these policy changes to result in the loss of jobs.

Did you consult, Mr. Minister, with the Saskatchewan hog marketing board in detail? And if you did, would you tell us about that before you cancelled the feed grain assistance program? Did you consult with them in detail?

Did you consult with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and Pound-maker feedlot in some detail before you cancelled this program? And what did they tell you about the loss of jobs and the loss in that industry?

We've asked these ministers, Mr. Speaker, here this morning, did you consult with the people that are in the gallery and those that are on the steps? Did you consult? Were you open? Did you consult with the people that I've just mentioned, before you changed this program that resulted in the loss of thousands of jobs in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the member opposite that I have consulted and my department has consulted broadly with the industry, with a wide range of organizations. The question I'd like to ask the member opposite is: whom did you consult before you bankrupted this province over the last nine years?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I want you . . . I want the minister to go out and to say to the people in the province

of Saskatchewan, and to the industries like the hog board and the livestock association and the meat packing plants — Intercontinental Packers, Moose Jaw, that you put \$5 million into — that you have consulted with them and they have said . . . Bring back their information here that they have said, you are doing the right thing, Mr. Minister, for the livestock industry in the province of Saskatchewan — the right thing for the jobs in Moose Jaw, the right thing for the jobs in Saskatoon, and the right thing for Pound-maker; that your policies, through consultation, are the right thing for the industry. I want you to be able to table that in the legislature, and if you can't, Mr. Minister, would you then admit you didn't consult at all when you caused this potential loss of jobs in the industry?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — I want to, Mr. Speaker, assure the member opposite that we had a wide variety of discussions and obviously not in the kind of detail that you describe . . . as you would promote in terms of not being consistent with the rules of budget preparation. I want to say, though, that the industry that I met both before the budget and after the budget are much more understanding of the financial needs of the province than you ever demonstrated being here.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — I want to tell you that when I met with the industry they understood that the government has to be cautious in expenditures and they are going to work with us in examining the needs of the industry and we will continue to consult and design the kinds of programs that create a healthy industry here and a balanced budget for the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 19 — An Act to amend The Contributory Negligence Act

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Contributory Negligence Act.

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

Bill No. 20 — An Act to amend The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Act

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Act.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Renaud: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Does the member have

leave to introduce guests?

Leave granted.

Mr. Renaud: — To you, Mr. Speaker, and to the Assembly, I would like to introduce you to the guests that are just leaving, from Porcupine Plain. There are 30 students, grade 8 students.

Of course, Porcupine Plain is near Greenwater Provincial Park, a beautiful town. It is also the home of the largest porcupine in the world, Quilly Willy. And I ask the Assembly to please help me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave of the Assembly to introduce a motion:

That the television guidelines adopted on May 15, 1992, be amended by deleting the phrase “nor as light entertainment or political satire” in guideline 12(2).

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Amendment to Television Guidelines in Rules Committee

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, the Rules Committee report that was before the Assembly last week and which was agreed to by the members of the Assembly represented a consensus of all the members of that committee as to what should be put forward to the Assembly. And there was the result also, I might add, of consultation with other members of the House, and was also the result of 40 hours of meeting to which all of the media were invited to attend, Mr. Speaker.

Now it's been brought to my attention that some members of the committee, in particular the Leader of the Liberal Party and the member from Morse have indicated in the media that they no longer are in favour of their original decision to support this change in the rules, and as such this rule should be further changed to reflect their new position.

The original intention of this motion was to prohibit the use of audio-visual material in advertising and to avoid purposeful distortion. However, never was there an intent in this action to introduce any form of media censorship. An unfortunate combination of injudicious wording and, I might say, an overactive imagination on the part of some members of the media community has resulted in a situation that is clearly unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, we seek to change this situation with this amendment. Having said that, therefore I move, seconded by the member from Rosetown-Elrose:

That the television guidelines adopted on May 15, 1992 be amended by deleting the phrase “nor is

light entertainment or political satire” in guideline 12(2).

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the Assembly here today that the discussions that we had in relation to this whole book and the guidelines set out for the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures was a book that we set out as a group to discuss, and the changes that we made were part of an all-party decision — number one.

Number two, Mr. Speaker, it would have been very, very enlightening for the opposition to have had an opportunity to see this kind of an amendment that was not an all-party discussion.

When I received notice 15 minutes ago that the member from Regina Victoria was going to stand in his place and change the rules and the kind of conduct . . . Mr. Speaker, you told us all through the discussions on these 40 hours of meetings that when there was going to be a decision that was going to conflict with any member or party in that committee meeting, that you were going to say that would be set aside to have consensus built. And, Mr. Speaker, what we have had here today is a demonstration of no consensus building.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Victoria pointedly made these observations, I believe, entirely on his own. And, Mr. Speaker, I find that really repulsive. I find it degrading to the Assembly, to that committee, and I find that not only repulsive, but irritating.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I know the members like to show some levity this morning but I would ask them to give some respect to the member who is speaking. Let him make his presentation. Order. Order.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, the committee was open to the public. The committee was open to the media. The media could have very well been informed of what the discussion was all about. And, Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Victoria specifically wanted this as a part of it.

We agreed that it would be a part of a decision making at the conclusion of 50 days. And now we have an interruption in the centre, or not even in the centre. We haven’t even begun to have these changes. They’re going to be implemented on Monday and the member from Regina Victoria incidentally puts it in as a flippant sort of thing to conduct the rules of this House.

And I don’t believe that that’s the right thing to do. Why didn’t he ask the Speaker to call a meeting for us to discuss it? And, Mr. Speaker, that would have been far better.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the members of the Assembly that there will be some glitches in the system because we’re going to be trying a whole bunch of new

things. So why didn’t he have the courage to ask you to call a meeting of the Rules and Procedures Committee? It would have been the easiest thing to do. But five minutes . . . well two minutes before the final bell rang today we had notice that he was going to proceed with this kind of an amendment. And that, Mr. Speaker, is not the way to conduct the business of this House.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I’m going to move to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Substitution of Name on Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for River Heights:

That the name of Mr. Johnson be substituted for that of Mr. Lautermilch on the list of members comprising the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

And I ask for this by leave.

Motion agreed to.

Substitution of Name on Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, along the same vein I move, seconded by the member from Hillsdale:

That the name of Mr. Harper be substituted for that of Mr. Cline in the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Motion agreed to.

Substitution of Name on Standing Committee on Regulations

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Rosetown:

That the name of Ms. Murray be substituted for that of Mr. Kujawa on the list of members comprising the Standing Committee on Regulations.

Motion agreed to.

Substitution of Names on Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave I move, seconded by the member for Melfort:

That the names of Mr. Lautermilch, Cline, and Kujawa be substituted for that of Mr. Johnson, Harper, and Ms. Murray on the list of members comprising the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Shaunavon on his feet?

(1045)

MOTION UNDER RULE 42

Federal Opposition to Leaseback Program

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before orders of the day, Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to rule 42 of this Assembly on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. The issue is the federal government's announcement of intent to collect \$41 million overpayment from the western grain stabilization fund from Saskatchewan farmers, if necessary through the withholding of monies owing farmers under the GRIP (gross revenue insurance plan) and NISA (net income stabilization account) programs.

Given the crisis situation that Saskatchewan farmers are facing, this matter is both urgent and pressing. I therefore seek leave of the Assembly to move a motion along the following lines:

That this Assembly demand that the federal government deduct any overpayment from the 500 million owed to western farmers; and further, that this Assembly demand the federal government pay the balance of that 500 million immediately to western farmers.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of the Assembly on both sides of the House to join with me in supporting this motion today, and I seek leave to proceed.

Leave granted.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After my comments I'll move a motion, seconded by my colleague, the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Mr. Speaker, the year leading up to and including the election, the members opposite and their federal counterparts did a lot of promising. And in that promise was a promise of third line of defence, promise of \$500 million from the western grain stabilization. They made this promise many times.

And the member from Morse attended many meetings in which he spoke openly of the \$500 million that was coming. In fact many of the members opposite during the campaign were actually able to be phoning some of the members, I know, in my constituency, because they got back to me on this issue. And they were able to actually calculate out the amount of payment that these farmers would receive.

They had all the facts and figures available and the members opposite, the members from Morse and Maple Creek all had these figures. They had the ability to calculate out what we were going to be receiving. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that was just cruel, cruel politics.

The fact of the matter is that the money never showed. We waited. We thought it was going to come in the fall. We

thought that they would use it just before or during the election. But it never showed.

Now instead, Mr. Speaker, the farmers are receiving a bill. They're being asked to repay some \$41 million back to the federal government. And I wonder, Mr. Speaker, is the federal government, are they punishing the farmers?

You know, I look at the last federal election where we had 14 federal seats in the province, of which the New Democrats filled 10 of them. And even as much political gamesmanship as the former premier of the province was playing at the time with these announcements, we still won 10 of the seats, Mr. Speaker. And I wonder if the Prime Minister isn't doing some punishment because of that.

But on this \$41 million, Mr. Speaker, the government members, the members on this side of the House were saying no, scrap it. But what are the members on the opposite side of the House saying? What are they going to say about that \$41 million?

A few weeks ago our provincial Agriculture minister moved some amendments in the House here, Mr. Speaker, to a motion put forward by the members opposite. And one of those amendments, Mr. Speaker, I'll read that amendment:

to call on the federal government to meet its outstanding commitment to provide farmers with the \$500 million deficiency payment for the 1990-91 crop year as soon as possible and to deliver on its commitment for the third line of defence program this year as agreed to at the recent first ministers' conference;

And, Mr. Speaker, during the throne speech I talked on these amendments, and I found it disappointing to see that the members opposite, they voted against that third line of defence, that 500 million. And at the time I was asking the members opposite, did they not realize the situation that we're in in this province?

The cash flow problem that the farmers of Saskatchewan are in, they're going out there to put their crops in and they don't have money. But yet the member from Morse at the same time at a rally in my constituency was saying, well why don't the farmers just go and hire some lawyers and start suing the government over program changes? They weren't concerned about whether or not there was money for seeding, putting crop in the ground. And I find it disappointing.

But the members on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, they were in full support of that third line of defence, that \$500 million. It's necessary. It's been necessary for a few years. It's urgent. We need that money. We need it immediately. And yet now we're receiving bills from the federal government.

The cash flow problems of the farmers in this province, Mr. Speaker, are astounding. And we know that many of the local businesses are carrying the farmers — our local Pools and Co-ops — for the fuel and fertilizer and spray, because these businesses are trying to keep rural

Saskatchewan alive. They're going to bat for the farmers, but yet the federal Conservative government decides not to. They're not coming through with the third line of defence. The members opposite are supporting those decisions.

What we ask, what the farmers ask is that the federal government stop off-loading. Stop off-loading onto the province, but also stop off-loading onto the farmers of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — They want the federal government and the members opposite to stop attacking the farmers, stop playing cruel politics, come up with the monies that you had promised up to and including the election.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to read from a news clipping that came out in the *Leader-Post* yesterday on the western grain stabilization fund:

... farmers will have to pay back to the federal government an accidental over payment of ... \$41 million from the Western Grain Stabilization Plan.

"I know this is a difficult time to be asking farmers to repay these funds, as many of them are under financial strain," (he does understand there is financial strain, I see) said Grains and Oilseeds Minister Charlie Mayer ...

Mayer said because farmers have little available cash, they will be able to get overpayments deducted from various existing federal programs such as GRIP, Net Income Stabilization Account, the Farm Support and Adjustment Measures part two or crop insurance (FSAM2, Mr. Minister).

So what that tells me is that they're fully prepared to not look at this in an open-minded way but they will unilaterally start deducting any monies that are going to come through our production shortfall payments, the crop insurance and such, but they're going to be deducting at a time possibly when farmers are getting a little cash in the fall and need to take that crop off and they will be deducting these payments at that time.

Mr. Speaker, our provincial Agriculture minister has taken steps to try to avoid these problems. And I'm reading from a January 21, 1992, letter in which the Minister of Agriculture and Food here in the province of Saskatchewan went to bat for the farmers of this province once again.

And he writes a letter here to the Hon. Charlie Mayer, Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds, House of Commons, Ottawa.

Dear Mr. Mayer: I am writing in regard to the recent announcement that the Western Grain Stabilization Program made an overpayment for the 1990-91 crop year.

In previous years the Western Grain Stabilization

Account made an initial payment in the spring and a final payment in the fall. Farmers are asking how the situation could change so dramatically during 1991. I ask you to provide a detailed explanation as to why this occurred.

The (federal) press release (he's referring to Mayer's press release) announcing the overpayments states

"no action will be taken ... until all options have been explored. . ."

I would urge you to simply write-off the overpayment. It is unreasonable of the federal government to try to collect these overpayments from producers during a period of reduced incomes and tight cash flows.

I look forward to a positive response from the federal government on this issue.

Signed, the Minister of Agriculture and Food for the province.

Well the federal government is accurate. Farmers enrolled in the program would receive an overpayment of between 330 and \$620 depending on the level of their coverage; 71 per cent of enrolled farmers would receive an overpayment of less than 500. That's from a press statement from Mr. Mayer. The federal release stated that no action will be taken until all options have been explored.

Now I'm asking, have all the options been explored? I don't think they have. It looks to me like they just know an easy way that they can unilaterally get \$41 million. In fact they're to come up with \$500 million; they promised it, we need it, and we want it now.

You take the 500 million, Mr. Speaker, and if they feel so strongly about the 41 million, I say deduct it from the 500 million, but come up with the \$460 million. Come up with it immediately. We need it this spring.

And we need the members opposite in this provincial legislature to start supporting that. They know full well that the farmers need that money. They promised; they were part of the promise to get that money here in Saskatchewan — 460 minimum or the 500 that they promised.

(1100)

Mr. Speaker, I will now read the motion:

Whereas the federal government has announced its intention to attempt to collect a \$41 million overpayment from the western grain stabilization fund from Saskatchewan farmers, if necessary through the withholding of monies owing under the GRIP and NISA programs;

And whereas the federal government through its own actions is responsible for this overpayment;

And whereas the federal government is now two years in arrears on 500 million third line of defence payment owed to western farmers;

And whereas Saskatchewan farmers cannot afford to continue subsidizing the federal government for its own inabilities;

Therefore be it resolved that this Assembly demand that the federal government deduct any overpayment from the 500 million owed to western farmers;

And be it further resolved that this Assembly demand the federal government pay the balance of that 500 million immediately to western farmers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kluz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in response to seconding the motion to deduct that 41 million overpayment from the 500 million owed the farmers and to immediately pay the farmers that balance of that 500 million. I was shocked to hear that the feds were going to deduct this . . . or take this 41 million and make farmers repay up to \$600 each. I was just shocked to hear this, Mr. Speaker.

Where does the \$500 million come from? Why are we talking about this? We all remember in the past, Mr. Speaker, about the third line of defence promised by the feds. We all remember when the safety nets were first implemented, Mr. Speaker, that the feds said under normal times when you're dry-land farming, if things are going along fine, you can afford to maybe take a hit once in a while — the safety nets will kick in and help you out.

But this is not normal times. Therefore the feds had said you're going to have this safety net, 500 million safety net. The members opposite were even promising that it would be delivered. But it is not here yet. We are calling on the feds to make good on their promise of the 500 million owed the farmers.

In this House we voted on an emergency resolution. And what that was saying, that we would extend the GRIP deadline, that we have a new GRIP committee and it would urge Ottawa to live up to its commitment of \$500 million. We voted in this House and the members opposite voted against it. I was just appalled, Mr. Speaker, to see that. Members opposite always saying that they are standing up for farmers. They voted against this emergency resolution. I just can't understand that, Mr. Speaker.

As a farmer, before the election on October 21 last year, I personally phoned western grain stabilization in Winnipeg, and as I was talking to many of my farmers in the constituency, they as well said they had called the western grain stabilization and were told, they were told, there was going to be a huge pay-out, a huge pay-out, a final pay-out for the western grain stabilization plan.

I personally asked them how much it would be. They had said, figure it out for yourself, but it's going to be a huge

pay-out. They kept harping on that. Just before the election, Mr. Speaker, they kept saying that.

The day after the election I called the western grain stabilization in Winnipeg again. You know what they told me? They said, oops, we made a mistake, we miscalculated, there's not going to be that huge payment any more. Just after the election — what had happened? Playing politics again, Mr. Speaker.

Farmers cannot afford to take this hit. They're trying to seed right now. They don't need another bill.

We're urging the federal government and we're urging the members opposite to vote with us in this resolution, to take this overpayment out of the 500 million owed to farmers and we need it to pay the balance of that.

An Hon. Member: — Do it for the farmers.

Mr. Kluz: — That's right. One of my colleagues says, do it for the farmers. Members opposite, please vote with us on this resolution.

The last time I drove through Bankend, as I was approaching town, I thought it was a Saturday morning. And the reason I say that, Mr. Speaker, is there was no stop signs on the railway track because in the past, Friday night they always had the habit of being pulled out by some teenagers as a prank, because the signs weren't there. And then I realized again that the signs weren't there because we already lost our railway track back in 1983.

At that time I started thinking about how the community of Bankend used to be. It was a bustling community. You go there on a Saturday and you couldn't find a parking spot. We had a school. We had stockyards, and as a young lad I remember driving cattle through those stockyards. We had a railroad station. I remember picking up freight from the railroad station. We had four elevators and 14 businesses, and one of those businesses was an equipment manufacturer.

And today when you drive through that town of Bankend, everything is gone but three businesses. There's hardly any homes left there, Mr. Speaker. Those four elevators, of course, are gone because the rail line is gone, back in 1983. Part of those four elevators were a number . . . in 1938 when the elevators reached their peak, there was some 3,550 elevators throughout this province. That number today is less than 1,500.

Look what is happening to our rural communities. When my grandfather first came here the rail line was just coming in. I stressed before, it is gone. Along with him there were many other settlers. Alex J. McPhail was one of his neighbours, and he became the first president of Sask Wheat Pool. I don't know if the members of the Assembly are aware of that, but he became the first member of Sask Wheat Pool and he's from Bankend and there is a memorial along Highway 35. If you're going by, stop and read it.

But back in those days it was neighbours helping neighbours. They had barn-building bees and they were

borrowing seed from one another. They helped each other. And it was also a time of governments helping governments, federal governments co-operating with provincial governments, helping for the good of the farmers and for the good of the people of the province.

When I was getting some of this information from the history book . . . we had a history book in *Emerald's Past in Prose, Poetry and Pictures*. And I was reading some of the RM (rural municipality) of Emerald's inputs into this book. And there was a resolution put in some place in the 1920s and the council said at that time that they sent the resolution to the provincial government to try to get some farmers on this vacant land, try to get some farmers on this vacant land. That's when they . . . at that time, many of the farmers started moving in that vacant land around Bankend.

From here I'm going to move a little bit off track and get into some of the rat eradication program and some of the promises that the members opposite when they were in government and the former premier, the member from Estevan, was stating at a SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) convention in 1988. It was a mid-term convention, about October 1988. And he said at that time, Mr. Speaker, he said at that time that we're going to bring in a plan and in three years we're going to get rid of all the rats. You know, in three years time we'll get rid of all the rats.

So they rewrote that program two or three times and then cost taxpayers a lot of money. All of a sudden they couldn't get this program under way so they scrapped it. But if you listen to some of the dates, when he first made this comment it was October of 1988 and he said three years later he was going to get rid of some of the rats, or all of the rats. Mr. Speaker, three years after that he did get rid of some of the rats. And I'm sure the members in this House know what I'm referring to. It happens to do with something with an election.

But why I'm talking about this rat control program is just how the past government said they would do things for us and they reneged on their promises. And with that rat control program we did a survey in our municipality — how many vacant yard sites there were in our municipality, and it's a standard nine-township municipality. We found that there were 305 vacant yard sites in that municipality — 305. Just think of the people that in 1920 they were getting them to move in and now all of a sudden they're gone — 305 vacant yard sites. And about in the 1940s there were over 3,400 people in that municipality, the RM of Emerald — 3,400. At last count, there was 848.

And the point I'm trying to drive home is the federal government again. Back in the '60s, about 1967, there was a paper released on agriculture. And what it said, if you read that paper, it said that some of those farmers have got to go; we've got too many farmers out there. The federal government put this paper out. What happened? Look at all the farmers that left that land.

And if you really read the latest paper on agriculture that was put out some two, three years ago, again if you read that thing thoroughly, the feds are saying that another 20

per cent of farmers have got to go.

On one hand, the members opposite when they were in government and now, saying they're trying to help farmers, the feds say they're trying to help farmers, and they put out papers like this and they agree to it. Yet these farmers have to go, and that's what's happening.

It must be awful tough for governments to function and say they are going to help the people, and the back of their mind what they want to do is get rid of those farmers. Just think about it for a bit. That's exactly what they want to do.

And this 41 million overpayment, making the farmers pay for it right now, and if they don't pay for it they're going to take it off their GRIP and NISA cheques. This is just another point to show that the feds and the members opposite don't really care about those farmers. They want less farmers out there so that they have nobody to worry about. They want corporate farms. We have to change that. We have to change that, Mr. Speaker, and stand up for the people of this province.

And this last news release, the federal Minister of Agriculture's news release, that if the government of Saskatchewan goes ahead with its new debt programs to try to help the farmers out, that he's going to order FCC not to comply — FCC is Farm Credit Corporation — not to comply with our legislation. He's going to order them to do that. Again the federal government is driving another nail into Saskatchewan farmers.

An Hon. Member: — With their approval.

Mr. Kluz: — Yes. And one of my colleagues says with the members' opposite approval. It seems like there's a phone hot line here in this legislature to the federal Minister of Agriculture's office in Ottawa. It seems like they've been talking all the time; they're working together.

I think it's time the government started working together for the good of the people of this province and good for the farmers. And this, this thing, this 400 million is only going to make matters worse again, right at seeding time, Mr. Speaker.

So that's why I'm pleased to rise to second this motion which says to take this 41 million that they made this miscalculation, that was supposed to be a big payment — this miscalculation — take this 41 million, take it off . . . deduct it from that 500 million that they owe the farmers in this province and immediately pay the balance of that.

And we are asking, we are asking . . . That's \$459 million. We are asking the members opposite to vote on this because this is very important to the people of this province, not only to the farmers as well. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1115)

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure

for me to enter into the debate today. Any time that agriculture is recognized in this Assembly I think it's incumbent upon those of us that represent rural ridings to take part in such debates.

It is a little surprising, Mr. Speaker, that the government of the day, the New Democratic Party in this legislature, only talks about agriculture when they're laying the blame at the feet of some other jurisdiction in Canada. It doesn't seem to matter, Mr. Speaker, if it today is the grain stabilization fund or the GRIP program, feeding industry, any agricultural program that this government has reneged upon, they don't want to talk about. They don't want to tell the Assembly the consultation processes that they've gone through in discussing the wants and needs of agriculture in this province.

I have no problem at all, Mr. Speaker, in supporting the member in his motion about this \$41 million. The last thing that Saskatchewan farmers need today, particularly after the budget that this provincial government brought down upon them, is to have an added cost in their operations. The last thing that Saskatchewan farmers need today is cash out of hand when they're trying to perform that yearly megaproject called spring seeding in this province.

When you tack this \$41 million potential loss on top of increased GRIP premiums, on the loss of FeedGAP (feed grain adjustment program), on the loss of an interest free tax cash advance, paying for your fuel up front at your dealer, the increases that have occurred to farmers throughout this province in electrical costs, natural gas costs, telephone and other utility costs, yes, Mr. Speaker, farmers in this province don't need to lose another \$41 million. There's absolutely no question that the cash situation in rural Saskatchewan today is as grim as it has ever been in our history.

Mr. Speaker, it was only a short while ago in this province, last September and October, when I saw politicians from the New Democratic Party running around this province saying that you're not doing enough for agriculture, Mr. Member from Estevan. You have not designed programs that are going to allow farm families to stay on the farm. You have not designed programs that have cost of production built in them.

You, Mr. Member from Estevan, by your policies, are going to depopulate rural Saskatchewan, and along with the farmers you are depopulating our towns and villages; that you're taking the ability of small business in those towns and villages who rely upon the agricultural sector to survive. I heard that just a short time ago in this province, Mr. Speaker.

I heard the now Premier of Saskatchewan say, I am going to go to Ottawa and come back with \$500 million of new cash. I remember being down in the AgriDome with 7,000 farmers shortly after the election, and I heard that commitment made by the member from Riversdale. I heard that commitment made by the member from Rosetown-Elrose. And many of the NDP (New Democratic Party) members of this legislature were there that day and heard those commitments. Those commitments, Mr. Speaker, go far beyond this \$41

million.

So even though I commend the member for bringing it to the attention of the legislature today, bringing to the attention of the legislature that yes there is a crisis in rural Saskatchewan, I wonder at the hypocrisy of that member for not also talking about his campaign promises of a short seven months ago; the hypocrisy of not taking on his own Minister of Agriculture who has reneged on absolutely every one of those promises. For taking on his Minister of Agriculture, because that minister has said in a court of law in Melville, Saskatchewan, that he is going to ask each and every member of this legislature to stand in his place and help him break a legal contract with the farmers of Saskatchewan. That he will ask every member of this legislature to stand on their feet and deem that he sent a letter to agriculture producers in this province that was never sent.

And I say to the member who brought this very serious matter to the attention of this legislature: are you going to stand in your place, sir, and help your Minister of Agriculture try and override the courts of this province who said there was no letter sent? You cannot deem something to have happened that didn't.

And I say to the member, when we're going to go get \$41 million from the feds, which is a lot less than the 500 million that your leader promised a short seven months ago, that when you're standing up and defending your constituents in rural Saskatchewan and the men and women in the towns and villages and the small businesses, that you also stand in your place and say to the Minister of Agriculture: what have you done, sir, to the livestock industry in this province? What have you done to the meat packing industry in this province? What have you done for the potential of ethanol production in this province to help out our environment by your short-sighted measures that you announced in the budget of this Saskatchewan legislature?

Mr. Speaker, it is high time, as the member says, that politicians in this province start to come together on agricultural issues. It is high time that farmers in this province and indeed western Canada start getting a fair return for their investment. It is high time that the consumer in Canada, who has benefitted for decades by the fact that farmers in Canada are low-cost producers of foodstuffs for the benefit of the larger whole, that that endeavour be recognized by the consumers of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, many things in the world of agriculture are beyond the control of the individual farmer on his farm. We should be commending in this legislature today the efforts of provincial and federal politicians at the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) process. Because it looks like there is finally going to be some movement on the subsidies that the Europeans and the Americans place upon grain production.

Mr. Speaker, those results will have long-term benefits to Saskatchewan farmers. But in the short term, in the short term, Mr. Speaker, governments across Canada have to recognize their responsibilities. They have to recognize the commitments that they have made to agriculture and to agricultural families in the province of Saskatchewan.

And that is why this motion today, Mr. Speaker, why I will be making an amendment at the conclusion of my remarks. Because as I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, it simply isn't enough for members in this legislature to only seize upon agricultural issues when it has some short-term political benefit to their particular political party.

Mr. Speaker, the former government of Saskatchewan was roundly criticized, roundly criticized by the former opposition, every time that a particular program was brought in to this legislature to help Saskatchewan farmers get beyond some of the crises that they faced in Saskatchewan.

And yes, the former government did bring in a livestock cash advance that was interest free. Because one only has to remember back a short time ago, Mr. Speaker, before the Free Trade Agreement, for instance, when the price of pork in the province of Saskatchewan was absolutely in the basement, when there was countervailing duties at the border on both live, frozen and processed pork going out of this province in an export position.

Mr. Speaker, pork producers in this province were going out of business. That is why a cash advance system was developed in this province. Grain farmers for generations had interest-free cash advances in this province. Livestock producers in the early '80s in the beef industry were being devastated. Saskatchewan's cow herd went from 1.2 million down to 700,000 because of depressed prices. The costs of input, Mr. Speaker, in allowing producers to get through those humps and valleys in the international commodity markets necessitated a program such as interest-free cash advances.

Now the members opposite of the day always criticized those moves because they said it wasn't enough. It simply didn't give farmers enough. That they had to have true cost-of-production formulas built in besides interest-free cash advances.

So the former government came along with another program, Mr. Speaker, to try and mitigate some of those up-front costs. And that was the FeedGAP program. Everyone in western Canada knew that Alberta was subsidizing the price of barley to their feeding industry. Everyone knew in western Canada that there were still ongoing problems at the U.S. border. Everyone knew that feed grain had been moved out of western Canada into Quebec and Ontario at a subsidized rate for decades in this country.

Obviously if Saskatchewan farmers didn't have the true cost of production built into a formula they needed help in other ways. They needed to have a change in the programs, the insurance programs that they govern their lives by. They said that western grain wasn't enough. They said that we had to be protected at a higher level.

And that is why, Mr. Speaker, farmers from across Canada worked on building the gross revenue insurance program, something that would guarantee a farmer some level of income through the year — something that was predictable, something that was bankable, and something that wasn't countervailable.

And that is very important, Mr. Speaker, as we look at long-term solutions to the agricultural situation, that we designed programs that would not destroy Canada's credibility in the GATT negotiations. All during that process, Mr. Speaker, I heard nothing, nothing, nothing but condemnation in this legislature from the members of the New Democratic Party because they said it wasn't enough. It wasn't enough.

Well, Mr. Speaker, today we have the members of that same party stand up and say: Mr. Federal Government, our farmers can't afford to spend another \$41 million. Every farmer in Saskatchewan is faced with taking \$300 out of their pocket, minimum, to pay this back. This opposition agrees fully that Saskatchewan farmers shouldn't have to do that. But they also say, Mr. Speaker, if we're going to discuss agriculture, we're going to discuss responsibility. And that responsibility has to be shared on a fair basis.

Now I've heard the members of the New Democratic Party in this legislature go on and on and on about other people abrogating their responsibility. The Premier says we'd have a balanced budget in this province if it weren't for changes in federal programs. Well, Mr. Speaker, the former government had to deal with changes in federal programs on a yearly basis. They had to make priorities; they had to change programs; they had to change plans. But never once, never once, Mr. Speaker, through drought, low commodity prices — all of the things that Mother Nature could throw at Saskatchewan farmers — never once when the choices had to be made of whether agriculture would be sustained in this province, did those other reasons enter in and say you will not stand behind the men and women of rural Saskatchewan in their time of need. Never once.

(1130)

Accommodations were made and, yes, even deficits were run to make sure that those people had money in their pocket to go out and do the things that they need to do to stay alive.

Mr. Speaker, that is in very sharp contrast to what we've seen from this government. We have seen a provincial budget brought in that absolutely guts agriculture support in this province. We've seen a budget brought in that doesn't have ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan) backing off and lands branch backing off. We've seen 900 notices out of lands branch alone. We've seen the cancellation of the lease-to-own program. Farmers might as well be making those lease payments and owning the land that they are using rather than paying lease payments to this government.

We have seen the minister of Rural Affairs go out and arbitrarily say to farmers and ranchers in this province, I won't sit down and discuss with you when I move a million and a half acres into the habitat program. I won't sit down and discuss with you your current lease situation and whether you ultimately will be an owner of land in this province. He simply arbitrarily said, it's done, it's out, and I won't converse with you. Mr. Speaker, all of those things impact on the ability of farmers and farm families

and the businesses related to them to survive.

Saskatchewan Wheat Pool is presently running an ad campaign in this province that is in excess of a quarter of a million dollars to explain to the public of this province the importance that agriculture plays in their daily lives. Saskatchewan's largest farm organization has deemed it necessary to take their members' money and buy radio and television time across this province to explain the importance of our agricultural industry to the men and women who aren't directly related to it. And they're saying how fundamentally important it is for all members in our society to be part of that support system. Because once you take that \$4.5 billion out of Saskatchewan's economy, you don't have a lot left.

And yet this government that we have in this province today would have the audacity to lay the blame at everybody else's feet when for a few million dollars selectively used through consultation, maybe the FeedGAP program didn't have to totally disappear; maybe livestock cash advances could be at a different level than prime plus two; maybe the farm fuel rebate situation didn't have to be done the way that this government has brought in.

This government can stand in this legislature and tell us that, yes, they're prepared to go into the insurance business in other jurisdictions in Canada with taxpayers' money. Mr. Speaker, the insurance business . . . And this does relate to it, because this member has said that Saskatchewan agriculture is suffering a cash shortfall and that the federal government should live up to its commitments.

And I'm saying it all comes to a matter of choices, Mr. Speaker. We have seen the cancellation of program after program after program. Many farmers in this province say that the budget . . . A hog producer in my riding — I think that you know very well, Mr. Speaker — he says, \$50,000 out of the pockets of he, his son-in-law, and his son. Three families on one farm — 50,000 bucks gone, 450-sow operation very near the end of the line.

Another rancher south of me — fairly large rancher, 1,500 head enrolled under the livestock cash advance — \$50,000. That ranch supports four families and a whole bunch of people in the surrounding community. That ranch moves 1,500 head of calves through the Wheat Pool livestock yards in Assiniboia, Moose Jaw, supporting and employing people.

My point is, Mr. Speaker, it comes down to a matter of choices. You say that you've got taxpayers' money to go off in the insurance business where you got burnt for 54 million bucks in the '70s because you didn't know what you were doing, and you're now going to do that rather than have private investors do it. But you can't take a few million dollars selectively placed to support the families that work at Intercontinental Packers, the families that work at Moose Jaw Packers in Moose Jaw, or the five and a half million bucks that this government has seen fit to put into the packing plant in Moose Jaw.

What are those people going to do now that the cattle aren't rolling through that plant to be slaughtered? What

are they going to do if the rancher at Spring Valley has to cut his herd in half, and instead of 1,500 head of calves going through that plant he's down to 750?

And that's why I say to these members, before they are so quick to jump to their feet in this Assembly and lay blame at the feet of some other jurisdiction, that they also have the fortitude to stand on their feet and say to the Minister of Agriculture in this province: Mr. Minister, I'm not going to stand on my feet and have you bring a piece of legislation in here that effectively says I sent a letter that I didn't. I'm not going to help you institutionalize misleading of Saskatchewan farmers.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that when the members of the government realize their obligation to Saskatchewan farmers, besides the obligations of other jurisdictions in this country of ours, then consumers, the very people that Saskatchewan Wheat Pool is trying to influence with their ad campaign, will say, yes, we agree that everyone is doing their part to support agriculture in this province and indeed in this country. Everyone is pulling their fair share. Then I think the consumers of this province and indeed Canada will go along with the members opposite when they stand on their feet and say, we have an emergency. We've got to demand that the federal government stop this wrong-headed decision.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to give them an opportunity with this amendment to debate the issue, to stand on their feet, and tell the member from Rosetown-Elrose that he has embarked upon some wrong-headed decisions. I move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member from Morse:

To add after the words "western farmers" the following:

And further that this Assembly urge the federal government to disallow the NDP provincial government's imposed changes to the national-provincial GRIP program as they are devastating Saskatchewan farmers; and further call upon the provincial government to accept its responsibilities for the agricultural industry by restoring the FeedGAP program, restoring the farm fuel tax exemptions, and honouring the promises of the NDP leader made to farmers in the provincial election of last October.

I so move.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. I have read the amendment very carefully and I wish to draw to the attention of the member from Thunder Creek Beauchesne's, page 153, the 5th Edition, paragraph 426. It says:

It is an imperative rule that every amendment must be relevant to the question on which the amendment is proposed.

Secondly, I want to draw to the attention of the member paragraph 437:

An amendment setting forth a proposition dealing with a matter which is foreign to the proposition involved in the main motion is not relevant and cannot be moved.

I want to alert the members to the main motion. The main motion deals specifically with the \$500 million and nothing else. And an amendment that is moved must pertain to the \$500 million. The amendment that you have moved, sir, does not. It deals with everything but the \$500 million and therefore I rule the amendment out of order.

I recognize the member from Thunder Creek if he has a point of order.

Mr. Swenson: — My point of order, Mr. Speaker, is that in deference to you when the motion was put forward I took my seat as you made your ruling and that I'm quite prepared to continue on debate.

The Speaker: — My understanding from the member from Thunder Creek is that once a member speaks and makes a motion, an amendment, and that amendment is ruled on, he can no longer speak. He has spoken and he loses his turn in speaking. You have already spoken and you've moved an amendment. Order.

(1145)

Mr. Neudorf: — On a point of order as well, Mr. Speaker, if I could just speak to that. The member from Thunder Creek did make an amendment and then sat down in deference for you to make that ruling whether that amendment was in order or not. He did not give up his place as far as speaking was concerned.

And, Mr. Speaker, whether this is a separate point of order, I'm not sure, I'll let you determine that. But I do know that in our rule 17, the amendment that was made by the NDP deleted everything after the word Assembly and then changed our motion completely. And that's what we debated. So I fail to see why we are in this legal hassle here.

The Speaker: — You're in the legal hassle because the amendment is out of order. Beauchesne's is very clear on that. The amendment is out of order. I will not argue with the member. I declared this amendment out of order and that's it. The amendment is out of order.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the Assembly that I want to talk about this in the context of the motion, and some observations about the agriculture situation in the province of Saskatchewan.

I want to indicate to the Assembly that the \$500 million that the motion talks about is a significant cost to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, to the taxpayers of Canada. And I've always said that money spent on agriculture is not a subsidy or a gift. It's always, in my view, considered to be a matter of very important security for the agricultural situation in the province of Saskatchewan and Canada, and I consider it an investment not a subsidy.

Mr. Speaker, the requirement for 500 million to come to the province of Saskatchewan is in my view extremely significant. It's significant in the fact that, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people in the province of Saskatchewan who have indicated to me over and over and over again that the problems that we have occurring today deal with a number of things. And I want to point them out to you today.

I want to point them out in the context of debt, GRIP, NISA, taxes, income. But I want to focus the attention on the part that deals with the income of the agriculture community in the province of Saskatchewan.

The income, Mr. Speaker, has gone down in the province of Saskatchewan significantly. It's gone down and I want to point out to the members of this Assembly it's gone down relatively strongly since 1985 — 1985 was a significant year in relation to agriculture. 1985 is a time or a period of time when the United States put in their first farm Bill. What did that do to the economy of agriculture in the international scene?

Mr. Speaker, it gave, number one, export enhancement to trade of grain and grain products across the world. And that income reduction at that point in time was significant. And if you take a look at a graph of income during the period of time from 1980 till 1990, you will see that income for agriculture was significantly reduced from 1985 and on.

Mr. Speaker, what did that do? It created a shortfall. It created a significant shortfall in relation to the economy of the province of Saskatchewan. It created a significant problem as it relates to income for farmers, in particular grain farmers, in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it impacted in Saskatchewan for a whole host of reasons. And those reasons are, in my view, a significant part of what we're talking about here today.

Why are they significant? They are significant because, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has almost 50 per cent of the arable land in Canada. That's why it's significant. It has enough land to almost include all of the agricultural land as a comparison in all of Canada. Canada is a big country and Saskatchewan has the majority of that arable land — 65 million acres of arable land that is used for agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, 50 million of that is used in grain production. And grain production in this province is a significant relationship to the kinds of things that we're talking about here today.

Mr. Speaker, the 50 million acres produce the income that had shortfall because of the 1985 U.S. farm Bill. That farm Bill provided a number of things, and I want to point them out to the Assembly here today.

It provided, Mr. Speaker, for what has become known as the export enhancement program. Export enhancement in the United States contributed annually in the neighbourhood of \$350 million to the economy of the United States farmers. We had other things that provided an impact into the Canadian income for farmers, and that was that the U.S. farm Bill provided payments to people

who had farm land to take it out of production.

Mr. Speaker, we have 50 million acres of land in the province of Saskatchewan providing income, and United States took out of production 71 million acres. Mr. Speaker, the content of the Canadian farmer, and particularly the Saskatchewan farmer, is only significant in its relationship to the international trade. Mr. Speaker, it is not significant in international production.

International production, for example, in Saskatchewan is about 25 million bushels of wheat. And, Mr. Speaker, in the world trade, that only represents a very, very small portion.

And the reason I bring this to the attention of this Assembly is because it reduces the income requiring the federal government to become involved in providing tax dollars to the province of Saskatchewan and particularly to the producers. That's why it's important that all aspects of the economy be discussed as a relationship to this program.

Mr. Speaker, the international scene directly impacts on a reduction in income, requiring the opportunity and the necessity for the federal government to become involved. And did they become involved? Yes, Mr. Speaker, they did on quite a number of occasions. They became involved in western grain stabilization. They became involved in many areas in the province of Saskatchewan and in Canada.

I want to point some of them out to you where they have. And the \$500 million, as referred to by the member from Shaunavon, deals primarily with what has traditionally been called the third line of defence component.

Mr. Speaker, as a part of the strategy to deal with a third line defence, it became my responsibility to consult with the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan exactly what they would want to have. And in dealing with that, on many, many occasions in the times that I was the minister responsible for the Department of Agriculture, I called on people from across the province to come together to see what in their minds was the best opportunity for us to present to the federal government. I consistently remember, Mr. Speaker, asking for \$300 million that came to the province of Saskatchewan, that gave in 1990, \$5.50 an acre, a cultivated acre, to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, that was a direct relationship of the federal government providing their support to the province of Saskatchewan. The need, Mr. Speaker, is there. The requirement to deal with the kinds of things that we have expressed in this motion and that we are talking about here today are the kinds of things that are a necessity for agriculture to succeed at this point in Canada.

And how does that impact? Mr. Speaker, 25 million bushels of grain . . . 25 million metric tons of grain in relation to the international production is a very, very small part of what the international production is. We have in international production 570 million tonnes of grain produced and also sold. We have on hand, Mr. Speaker, 124 million tonnes of grain that is on storage.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is also a significant amount.

What is even more significant about that number, Mr. Speaker, is that the majority of that surplus is in the European Community. It is not in the United States nor is it in North America. Therefore the income in the province of Saskatchewan, because we are largely grain and grain producing province, that has driven down the income showing to us that we need to ask the federal government for some money.

Mr. Speaker, what we needed to do as a part of an agenda for this Assembly and for the Minister of Agriculture to do would be to set up a third line of defence that was predictable. Mr. Speaker, it needs to be done. It needs to be done for the people of this province; it needs to be done in the grain industry.

Mr. Speaker, what did we have happen in this last budget and through the last six months? Mr. Speaker, we've actually had the very internal part of a stable agriculture, a reasonably stable agriculture torn apart by a number of program changes. And I want to point some of them out, because they have reduced the income, and that's why the members opposite say, well we need a whole lot more money from Ottawa. We need a whole lot more money from Ottawa.

What did they in fact do, Mr. Speaker? What did they in fact do? They in fact left \$200 million on the table that the federal government would have provided in a premium cost sharing as it relates to GRIP. That's what they left on the table. The members opposite left that on the table and now they're asking the federal government for another \$500 million. They don't understand their own math, Mr. Speaker, and that's a part of the problem.

Mr. Speaker, the third line of defence should be negotiated with the federal government. It should deal with a type of a program that would consistently provide the farmers with the knowledge of what would happen if, number one, other foreign markets would interfere in their sales, whether foreign markets would interfere with subsidies, whether a social program in Germany or France or Japan would interfere with the kinds of things that were happening in Canada and particularly in Saskatchewan. These kinds of third lines of defence are necessary for the people of the province of Saskatchewan to exist.

And I want to point out that in the society that we live in, the province of Saskatchewan today, there are a whole lot of people in this province who have a guaranteed income. There are a whole lot of people in this province who know what they're going to earn. They even know what their retirement is going to be. They know that beforehand.

But what do people in agriculture have, Mr. Speaker? They are completely at the mercy of the foreign markets, of foreign governments having social policies that relate to agriculture that causes an extreme problem to exist throughout the country of Canada and particularly in Saskatchewan.

We have some suggestions of alternatives that need to be

provided to the people of Saskatchewan and this Assembly, and I want to point them out to you here today. One of those things would have been not to change the FeedGAP program. Feed grain assistance program, as we noticed today in question period, the minister did not consult with the pork industry; he did not consult with the feeder industry. And I have letters from the president of the Saskatchewan livestock feeders association where he said, we did not have an opportunity to talk to the minister about it.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Brian Perkins wrote a public letter to the people of Saskatchewan and to the Minister of Agriculture, asking him to respond to a number of very serious problems that are going to occur because of his policies that reflect negatively in relation to the things he's doing.

Mr. Speaker, he is going to take money from the livestock cash advance, he's going to take money from the feed grain assistance program, and what's he going to do with that, Mr. Speaker? He is going to take it away and thereby jeopardize the whole industry.

Mr. Speaker, it's important for us to realize that the opportunity in agriculture has to deal with a stable and a stabilized income for agriculture. And that can come from more than the taxpayers. That can come from the market-place. And maybe the member opposite doesn't realize that. But the market-place is being eroded by people in other countries and in other provinces, providing incentives and initiatives to prevent the provinces like Saskatchewan from being able to produce in a competitive basis.

(1200)

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that in 1974, '75, '76 probably was the toughest years in agriculture for the livestock industry. Mr. Speaker, why? Because other countries were involved in this. There was Australia and New Zealand were putting meat into Canada at an unprecedented rate, driving down the price of cattle. We had an oversupply of cattle at the time in relation to consumption.

What did the federal government do at that time, Mr. Speaker? They said, let's go and open the door for opportunity for these other countries. They never protected the Saskatchewan producer; they never protected the Canadian producer. It reduced the income. And the requirement then later on, as a result of that, in 1985 and '86 the Government of Canada said, we have to restrict the Irish beef, the Danish beef, so that the producers in Canada have a capacity to deal with the social programs that are initiated through agriculture in other countries.

That's why the necessity is for the federal government to become involved. And that's why . . . and I think they should be involved in the kinds of things that we're talking about here today.

Mr. Speaker, the income reduction is what we're talking about here. The requirement for the federal government to provide cash is because income has been reduced.

And that is the reason why we're talking about this. The income has been reduced not only by the federal government and the market-place, but it's also been reduced by the Minister of Agriculture for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has taken away the opportunity for Saskatchewan producers to be competitive. And, Mr. Speaker, did he ask anybody? Did he ask the president of the Saskatchewan livestock feeders association? He even has them on a committee, and he works for him in a committee that was set up to handle the beef stabilization. That, Mr. Speaker, is exactly why he should have at least asked him.

What has that done? It's reduced the income so that the requirement is that the federal government has to pay the people of Saskatchewan. And that's simply the way it is. He's reduced it in the FeedGAP. He's reduced it in the livestock cash advance. He's increased the costs in a whole lot of places. And then he says, on the other hand, go get it from the federal government. Go get it from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, the assumption is that he has to carry some responsibility for this himself. And, Mr. Speaker, that's what he's deliberately doing to the province of Saskatchewan. And I find it very, very interesting, Mr. Speaker, that a person like that who is responsible for the various areas of agriculture and is a farmer himself, would even think of those kinds of things in relation to the kinds of things he's done for the province of Saskatchewan, for the producers in this province.

Mr. Speaker, they came out in numbers, telling him and others that there was going to be changes to the GRIP program. And what did he do? He left \$200 million on the table with the federal government. And, Mr. Speaker, that is almost unpardonable. The farmers in the province are going to find that very disgusting.

Mr. Speaker, he not only did that; he said, I will deem to have written a letter to the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And he's going to ask the people in this Assembly to put that together for him. He has deliberately said that he is going to ask this Assembly to talk about changes to the GRIP, where he left \$200 million on the table with the federal government, in a way that was going to provide access for opportunity for farmers to access federal funding. And that is what he deliberately did.

And I don't understand why he would ask the members of his caucus to bring forward a motion like this when he himself is a part of the problem. He has been a part of the problem ever since he got appointed to that position. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we have to debate this here today, and why we have other things that we need to do.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that he is leaving \$200 million on the table in agriculture as it relates to federal government. He's doing that and he's going to say to the farmers of Saskatchewan that he is going to provide amendments to the GRIP program that are going to be deemed to have been provided to farmers prior to March

15. Now that, Mr. Speaker, in my view is not only degrading, it's disgusting. He is bringing this legislature to the lowest level that I've ever seen it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out a few more things that I think have to be brought to the attention of this Assembly and to the people of the province. Mr. Speaker, this minister has said that income is a necessity for the people of the province. He's also said that he's going to ask the federal government for more money. He's going to ask the federal government to provide \$500 million.

Mr. Speaker, he had the opportunity to put \$200 million more on the table at that time. Mr. Speaker, he has asked the federal government to provide \$500 million in the motion that he has provided for today.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the members of this Assembly that \$200 million was left on the table. That, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what was done. It was done on a program that would provide predictability to the farmers, with no politics. It would provide bankability with no politics. It would provide security for the people of the province of Saskatchewan in a way that they knew what was going to happen, in a way that was going to provide a definite benefit to the people of Saskatchewan.

Now what did the Minister of Agriculture do? He took \$200 million away from the people of Saskatchewan that the federal government was going to provide. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a fact.

I want to point out a number of other things that he could have done. We had today a discussion and in the media about GATT being changed; GATT providing more income for farmers in Canada and North America. And that, Mr. Speaker, is also going to have an impact. My observations to the Minister of Agriculture would be, what did he do in providing some alternatives to the federal government on that vein. And that, Mr. Speaker, is important for us to consider as a part of the \$500 million that we're going to give to the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, what I find most interesting with the Minister of Agriculture for the province of Saskatchewan in asking his back-benchers to provide this information to this Assembly here today was the fact that he pushed his back-benchers into doing something that he should have been doing with the federal government himself.

Mr. Speaker, in November, Mr. Speaker, in referring to the Minister of Agriculture, he said, come with me to Ottawa and we'll get some money. Come to me to Ottawa to get some money . . . Come with me to Ottawa to get some money. What happened, Mr. Speaker? All that he did is brought home a bill of \$140,000 — \$140,000 that he cost the people of the province of Saskatchewan. That's what he cost the people.

What did he do when he went to Edmonton to ask the people there for money? He came back with nothing. He's always come back with nothing. In fact, from my discussion with other ministers, he provides nothing at the meetings. And that's the kind of Minister of Agriculture that we have in the province of Saskatchewan. And that, Mr. Speaker, is not the way to

get money out of Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, in the 10 years that we were government, we provided \$13 billion to the farmers' agriculture in Saskatchewan. That was what the total volume of money paid to producers. And, Mr. Speaker, the member from Shaunavon received that money. The member from Indian Head-Wolseley received that money. The member from Nipawin received that money. All of the rural members in this Assembly received that money as a part of a federal contribution to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, what did the federal government and the treasury in Ottawa and what did the treasury in Saskatchewan say? Mr. Speaker, give us some predictability. Give us some predictability about the volume of cash and the requirement for the people of Canada so that we can know, that the taxpayers can know, what it's going to cost us.

And, Mr. Speaker, we did have that. Mr. Speaker, we had that in a program called GRIP. And, Mr. Speaker, what did we have this minister do? He deliberately gutted it. He took it away and he is going to say that he is going to deem to have sent a letter out to the people of the province — 60,000 contractors are going to be told that he sent a letter when he didn't. And I don't know how the minister in clear conscience can provide that letter to the people, the farmers, the contract holders in the province of Saskatchewan. I don't think he has the right to do that. I don't think this Assembly should take upon itself that freedom to do that. Because that is a breach of contract with 60,000 producers — 50,000 contract holders. And I think that that is a serious problem.

Mr. Speaker, this province needs to have agriculture become a focus of attention in more ways than one. It needs to not only have the focus of attention from the people in Ottawa, but it also has to have the focus of attention of this Minister of Agriculture, and I don't believe it has.

What did he do with giving some benefits to interest rates and interest problems in the province of Saskatchewan? He cuts the program. Mr. Speaker, the grain producer . . . and I heard people all over this province stand up and complain about the fact that the grain producers were not given a cash advance on grain that was interest free. I heard that from every part of this province.

What did the federal government do? They said, well we'll change that. We'll make it back to the way it was. Mr. Speaker, the interest rates went down to zero in the cash advance on grain. And, Mr. Speaker, what did the federal government do? They said, we will provide that cash advance to the people of the province of Saskatchewan. We'll provide that cash advance to the people of Canada.

What did the province do in relation to that, Mr. Speaker? They said, it is important for us to consider a cash advance, interest free, to the livestock producer. So what did that do? That, Mr. Speaker, provided an opportunity for the livestock producer to become competitive with the Alberta livestock producer. Mr. Speaker, that was a

very important part of the competitiveness of our pork industry and the competitiveness of our feeding industry in the beef.

Mr. Speaker, in the letter that I was sent from Mr. Perkins, it said this: The Alberta people are being given an opportunity to have 8 per cent of their volume being met by tax dollars supporting the industry.

What have we got in Saskatchewan? With the reduction that we've had in the province of Saskatchewan, that reduction is going to cost and lower that from 8 per cent in Saskatchewan . . . which is in Alberta, 8 per cent in Alberta — it was five and a half in Saskatchewan — it's going to reduce that to half a per cent in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province in dealing with the livestock industry need that, Mr. Speaker. I want to point out to the people of this Assembly that the highest priced livestock was not in 1991, the highest priced livestock was not in 1992, the highest priced livestock was in 1979, Mr. Speaker. That's when the highest return to the livestock industry occurred.

(1215)

What have we had in the pork industry? Mr. Speaker, we've had incomes decline in the pork industry. Mr. Speaker, we have had incomes in the hog industry decline. We've had incomes in the beef industry decline. What has made the total volume of dollars improve or increase? And the total volume of dollars has increased.

Why, Mr. Speaker? It's because of the productivity of the people of this province. The efficiencies that the hog industry took, the efficiencies that the beef industry took have provided the opportunity for them to continue to exist.

What did this minister do? He raised the rent on pastures. He raises the price of the breeding stock in the community pastures. He raises the prices on everything that he's got control of and cuts everything else out. And what does that do to our competitiveness in Canada? Well, Mr. Speaker, it just moves it all over into Alberta. And I'm not sure whether that's his motive, and I would hope it wasn't.

Then I want to talk a little bit about what that does to the packing industry. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Economic Development provided about a five and a half or \$6 million loan to the Mitchell family to build and to buy into the Canada Packers plant in Moose Jaw. What did we have happen there? Now he's going to reduce the volume of stock available to the people of Moose Jaw. And what's he going to do to the packing industry in the province? Mr. Speaker, it is in serious, serious . . . in a serious position.

I have visited with these packing plants, the people from the packing plants. They are on very, very slim margins. And if they have to transport that livestock from Alberta into Saskatchewan, you know what Mr. Perkins says. And I believe he's absolutely right — the feeding industry moved from Manitoba to Alberta.

The feeding industry, because of these reductions, is going to move from Saskatchewan into Alberta. And what are we going to have with secondary industry in the province of Saskatchewan? Nothing. Because they won't be able to price them back out to be competitive, to bring them back and to kill them in Saskatoon and in Moose Jaw.

That's what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker, and that's why it's important for us to talk about what makes . . . what is the reason why this minister would give us this kind of a time when we need the money, we need the money in agriculture, we need the opportunity to deliver a better diversified agriculture, and what's he done? He has just gutted it all out.

What did he do in GRIP, Mr. Speaker? He made it so that people don't want to seed lentils. He made it so that they don't want to seed sunflowers. He made it so that they don't want to seed any speciality crop that there is. He just deliberately did it.

And what is going to be shown in the statistics I believe, Mr. Speaker, is that wheat production will be up, seeded acres in wheat will be up. That is, Mr. Speaker, what I find the most disgusting about this.

The Europeans announced today that they're going to cut production in wheat, and what do we do? We increase it. We don't go into the speciality crops that have an opportunity to be sold in Saskatchewan and in Canada and then go market them, build up a base of volume that is in a position where other countries will want to buy.

No, we go and say, well, we'll quit with this diversification in the livestock industry, we'll quit with diversification in the grain business, and then we'll let it all go to Alberta, we'll let it all go to Manitoba, or we'll let it go south of the border.

Just recently, Mr. Speaker, there was an article in the *Leader-Post* that talked about livestock sales moving to United States being up. What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? That means that secondary industry in grain production, secondary industry in the livestock business is slowly and slowly eroding from the province of Saskatchewan.

What's that going to do? Mr. Speaker, we are going to be again back in the position where we'll only be primary producers. And that's what's wrong with the way this minister has responded to the federal government. Everything he has done he has done to irritate them, to totally disregard them because he doesn't want to have, number one, the things that were done in the province of Saskatchewan under our administration ever to have any success. That's number one.

Number two, he's going to make sure that everything that he does contradicts the federal government, and that's because they're not the same stripe as he is. That is exactly what his agenda is. It's exactly what the agenda of the Premier's is. And that's what causes us a concern, when we deal with these kinds of issues.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why I find this kind of a

motion by the back-benchers in the NDP a little bit sad, I would say, because they have not even been able to initiate the kind of responses that they ought to have had in their own caucus.

Mr. Speaker, what did we have as it relates to the 500 million as it relates to leaving \$200 million on the table with GRIP that the Minister of Agriculture here did? Does he want to have an industry in agriculture and research? Well what has their administration ever done for agriculture in this province?

Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan were asked to contribute what was equivalent to \$4 a cultivated acre in this province — \$4 a cultivated acre. That's what the taxpayer was asked to contribute. And that, Mr. Speaker, is what we as a government at the time asked the taxpayers to contribute.

What have we contributed in education, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of a cultivated acre? Mr. Speaker, health costs the people of Saskatchewan \$32 a cultivated acre. That, Mr. Speaker, is a significant amount of money. And, Mr. Speaker, I agree with that tax, with that money being spent there. But let's get some relationship to the kinds of things that that impacts on, and what does agriculture impact on?

Agriculture has 60,000 producers with an extended base of about 180,000 people. Those are the people who are directly involved in agriculture. Who else is directly involved in agriculture? Half the people of Regina's work-force are involved in providing the benefit because of agriculture. And that, Mr. Speaker, is an important part of why I believe that we should be looking for as much money from Ottawa as we can.

However, we have to make sure that we have an industry base that is going to be strong enough to support that. And, Mr. Speaker, as I have watched this Minister of Agriculture talk about the kinds of things that he has been doing, I don't see any support for agriculture at all. In fact I see an erosion of agriculture.

What did he do with our gas tax? Well, Mr. Speaker, he said, well that's not significant; it's not significant to agriculture. But, Mr. Speaker, in my mind it is. He said, well the people are ripping off the system. Well you know, Mr. Speaker, there is about a billion dollars income to farming from off the farm — a billion dollars a year in the province of Saskatchewan. That's what accrues to agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, if farmers were making enough money off the farm they would provide that opportunity back to the people of Saskatchewan so that we could have more people working.

But what have we got here? We've got a government that is bent on reducing the competitiveness in the province of Saskatchewan on our agricultural base. And I think that that's wrong.

Mr. Speaker, he's done it in many cases. He did it in providing a reduction in the benefits to

municipalities. The Minister of Education did it in reducing the benefits to the school boards. The minister responsible for SaskPower did it in relation to more increases in power rates.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, it's been brought to my attention, and I'm going to investigate this further, at least two people that I know of are not going to irrigate this year because of the increased power rates. And I know that that's going to be something that people are going to start to talk about.

And if they haven't got a contract with SaskPower to buy power, I'm sure that there's going to be many others who are going to be doing exactly that. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because they can't afford to pay the increased rates. That's what's there, and that's what's going to happen across this province.

What's going to happen with farmers and their insurance costs on their vehicles? They're going up. What's going to happen with the cost of telephones? Mr. Speaker, that's going to go up. It's going up all over the province. And what does that also do, Mr. Speaker? It impacts on small business in this province.

Mr. Speaker, a very good friend of mine works for National Cash Register and did the 8 per cent change . . . or the interest change on the . . . or the percentage change on the E&H (education and health) tax as it relates to the increase. And, Mr. Speaker, what happened when he went around and did the changes in the E&H tax? Well, Mr. Speaker, he said there are some very, very angry people out there. And that, Mr. Speaker, is going to reduce the effectiveness of the small business in that community.

And, Mr. Speaker, what's it going to do to the cost to agriculture? It's going to increase the cost. Who pays for that? Mr. Speaker, who's buying that service? And, Mr. Speaker, if we would have had harmonization in the first place, the farmers of this province would have benefitted. They would have benefitted a whole lot, Mr. Speaker. And that is an important part for the people of this province to consider.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other areas that I think need to be addressed. What did we do . . . what did these people do with the natural gas in the province of Saskatchewan? That is a part of what we have to consider. Mr. Speaker, all of these things are part of why this government brings forward this kind of a motion, asking the government for \$500 million more.

What did they do? They didn't support agriculture in their budget. They have never supported agriculture in this province. In fact I know that a minister of Agriculture from that party that was here for years and years, was minister responsible for Rural Development, he said: my 1946 pick-up can still haul all my wheat. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the mentality they have — 1946 and they haven't graduated past 1950. But today, Mr. Speaker, there are more and more requirements by agriculture in this province to be competitive. That, Mr. Speaker, is very, very important.

Mr. Speaker, I find it almost hypocritical to have the members opposite bring forward this motion. I've tried to

point out why and the reason is because they have not provided a reasoned approach to asking the federal government for more money. They haven't. They have cut their own programs, they've deducted many, many times the ability for people and the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan to compete. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a part of the problem.

Now I'm going to be taking my seat, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to be asking for this Assembly to consider the points that I've made in relation to that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to move an amendment, seconded by the member from Moosomin, that the following be part of it:

That insert before the words "demand that the federal" the following:

Recognizing the worsening crisis in agriculture caused by the provincial NDP's destructive changes to GRIP, acknowledging the failure of the provincial government to accept any responsibility for agriculture, and voice that if the federal government does not act to counterbalance the irresponsible actions of the provincial NDP

And continue on with the rest of the motion. And that, Mr. Speaker, is moved by myself, seconded by the member from Moosomin.

(1230)

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I enter this debate, I do so somewhat reluctantly and yet I also enter the debate in support of agriculture producers across the province of Saskatchewan. Not just across the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but certainly men and women who over the years have given and devoted their time to agriculture production in this province and across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues have indicated today the motion that has been brought forward by the government of this House, certainly is a motion that we really don't have a big, major problem with.

And I want to indicate to you as well that yesterday upon hearing of the intentions of the federal government to try and recoup the overpayment in the western grain stabilization plan, I took the time to call my local federal MP (Member of Parliament) and indicate to him that I didn't believe it was a very wise move on his part and that he should indeed speak out and talk to his colleagues and certainly the colleague . . . his colleague, Mr. McKnight, and indicate that this isn't a wise move.

And I would have to ask if indeed the cabinet of the day, as was indicated in a recent editorial in this province, if the cabinet of the day federally wasn't taken in by the cabinet of the day provincially when they dismantled the Pension Plan by their employees and certainly by the bureaucrats within the Department of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, we all realize that farmers in Saskatchewan

are facing a crisis. But we all realize that agriculture producers across this province — and not just the producers who are directly involved but certainly people who are indirectly involved in agriculture in this province — have been affected by the crisis in agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, the idea of the amendment is to bring to this House the . . . remind people, not only in this House but people across the province of Saskatchewan, that I believe and we believe the people of Saskatchewan certainly have been let down by the government of the day.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would have to ask: why do we need the motion that is being presented today? Why would a motion of this type be brought forward? It would appear to me that the motion again is just another way or another form of deflecting public criticism that is mounting on the government at this time for the actions they have taken, Mr. Speaker. Actions which have not only hurt men and women across the province, women specifically through the elimination of the Saskatchewan Pension Plan or men and women because of the elimination of support in the health system and increasing the payments, the direct payments through the health drug program, Mr. Speaker, but also it would appear to me that the government of the day are trying to deflect the criticism that is mounting up on them for their lack of showing leadership for agriculture producers in this province who are facing a crisis.

And the amendment we brought forward had indicated that it's a growing crisis and in many cases brought on directly because of the government's lack of ability or willingness to show some support to the agricultural sector.

And when I speak agricultural sector, I don't speak, Mr. Speaker, directly of the producers out there putting the crop in the ground, but I also want to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that — as my colleague from Morse indicated — agriculture production and people on the farm directly affect . . . the income off the farm directly affects men and women right across this province. I believe it was just on the news recently, or not on the news but in an advertisement, the indication that some 28,000 jobs, I believe, if not more than that, in this province are directly or indirectly affected by problems on the farm.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen over the past number of weeks this government fail to live up to its responsibilities. Certainly it's fine for us to condemn the federal government for their lack of, if you would, leadership, or the indication by the Minister of Agriculture in this government that the federal government has a responsibility and as opposition members we indicate that as well.

Yes, the federal government does have a responsibility to agriculture producers across this great nation. But we must also indicate to people in Saskatchewan and to the agricultural community that the provincial government has a responsibility as well.

Mr. Speaker, when the former government introduced the FeedGAP program . . . why did the former government

take a look at the FeedGAP program? Mr. Speaker, we took a serious look at trying to help the packing industry in our province because of the fact that numerous millions of dollars had been placed into the packing industry prior to 1982; and since that time, Mr. Speaker, because of support programs in other parts of Canada — certainly in Alberta and in Manitoba and then across the line, Mr. Speaker — we were seeing a greater number of the livestock produced in this province being shipped out of the province to be marketed in other areas of not only Canada but the United States, which in turn was affecting the jobs of people working in the province of Saskatchewan, people working in the packing industry in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the FeedGAP program was a program introduced to give the farmers and the feeders and the feedlot operators and the hog producers in this province a level playing-field within which they could work to be competitive with their counterparts in other parts of Canada.

And not only do we need to create a level playing-field for producers in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but we're all aware of the ongoing discussion that is taking place federally at the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to bring a fair and even playing-field into the international market-place so that, Mr. Speaker, our producers would not be held at ransom or be put in jeopardy by decisions made in London or being made in Paris or being made in Brussels or even for that matter, Mr. Speaker, in Washington, D.C. (District of Columbia).

So, Mr. Speaker, when we talk of the FeedGAP program, the FeedGAP program was a way of creating that level playing-field. And I would have to ask the Minister of Agriculture and the government of the day, why did they pull out from under the feedlot operators and the meat producers of this province a tool with which they created . . . a more equitable playing-field was created for the producers of this province.

Mr. Speaker, what about the livestock cash advance? If that wasn't the way of helping producers, helping men and women in the feeding industry, men and women in the cow-calf industry in Saskatchewan through the crisis that they were involved in, through the worsening crisis that they are facing, then I don't know what was.

Mr. Speaker, the grain producers had a way of drawing on some cash so that they could pay the bills until they were able to move their product to market. And they had a cash advance put in place, Mr. Speaker, where they can borrow up to \$50,000 at no interest and repay it as they market their product.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the livestock cash advance was put in place for that purpose as well, to give producers an avenue of drawing on some revenue so that they could pay their bills while they were waiting in turn to market their product, and derive the income to not only pay the light bill and the fuel bill and the feeding bill, but certainly give them money to operate on.

And this cash advance was based on a limited dollar per head, per animal, and no interest on pay-back, Mr.

Speaker. And certainly it's become a roll-over program as well as the grain cash advance has been.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the cash advance . . . and I know that there are many people in my area who have been voicing concern over the last number of days as well over the elimination of the cash advance on livestock. First of all, Mr. Speaker, the fact that the government has pulled this out from under their feet as well without . . . We would have to ask what kind of consultation would appear with very little consultation with the feeding industry, with the packing industry, with the stock growers, with the Pork Producers Marketing Board, or even producers in general across the province?

It would appear to me, Mr. Speaker, that if the government was indeed going to live up to their commitment in the throne speech of being consultative, that they would have taken the time to sit down with the industry in order to lay out a plan and to look at what they were proposing so that they wouldn't be so disruptive to an industry that was facing such great difficulty at this time.

Mr. Speaker, we just have to look outside. Certainly in the last few days and through the spring there's an area of the province that has seen substantial rainfall and it certainly is setting with a good growing situation, Mr. Speaker. But there are other areas of this province where farmers are becoming desperate. They're beginning to wonder whether they're going to be able to see this fall, whether they're going to be able to see themselves getting through the fall or even getting to the point of being able to market product, for the simple reason that moisture conditions are not as favourable in the south-west.

And in fact in today's paper I also noticed not only are they facing a problem trying to grow a crop or germination on their crop, but the major problem facing many people in the south-west is drought in the agricultural area, in the dry-land area and the pasture areas of this province.

And so I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, the crisis that these farmers are facing, not only are they facing the fact that they may have to downgrade their herds because they don't have the pasture, but they're also facing a problem of having to be now asked to repay cash advances which they had used to create an ongoing rolling-over of revenue in order that they could meet their commitments.

Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is this government has pulled the rug out from under producers in this province, rather than going to the federal government and asking the federal government for assistance and indicating to the federal government, as we have joined with them on numerous occasions, to indicate the federal government does have a responsibility to protect agriculture in this province. But I would also suggest to you, sir, that the provincial government has a responsibility to indicate their support for agriculture in this province as well.

So why did they do away with the FeedGAP? Why are they putting a high interest rate charge now on the livestock cash advance, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is that to continually put blame at the feet of someone else? Are

they just pulling programs so they can blame someone else for their ineptitude, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the grain stabilization program, and you will find there are many people across this province as well who felt that the grain stabilization program was indeed a good program. And as one of the members indicated today, the feeling last fall was that there would be some form of pay-out due to the fact that grain prices had dropped in the crop year of 1990-91.

In the start of the year the initial prices had dropped for that year compared to the '91-92 crop year, and the indication would have been that there should have been a pay-out under the grain stabilization program. And I would also have to indicate that that was the information that I had and felt there would be.

(1245)

And I was very disappointed last fall, Mr. Speaker, when the federal government indeed took the funds that should have been available and indeed rolled them into the shortfall in the pool. Because the grain pool was allowed . . . or the delivery of grain under the '90-91 crop year was allowed to proceed three weeks into the new crop year which indeed created a shortfall in the pool. And at that time then the federal government then decided that well they'll take what's left to pay producers to balance the pool off.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would have to suggest to the federal government certainly that, in my opinion, that was not the right thing to do. But I was also informed, Mr. Speaker, that the federal government also were facing a possibility of asking producers to repay an overpayment. Because it's very simple when you're dealing with a lot of dollars, and when you don't have all the numbers and figures in, it's very simple sometimes to make a mistake and not have all the numbers accurately before you.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it can be simple. And we've seen it over the years, of making an overpayment, and how do you go back to somebody when they're in a crisis, when they're facing a price squeeze and ask them for a repayment?

And so, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you, and certainly our members of this Assembly would be indicating to the federal government that we don't feel that at this time or at any time should they be coming back to producers asking for an overpayment of a mistake that they have created.

Mr. Speaker, there are other areas where we believe the provincial government must exercise its responsibility. Mr. Speaker, the former government brought in a program called the lease-to-own program. The idea behind the lease-to-own program was to give men and women and young people across this province an opportunity to invest in the land that they were farming that they had been leasing from the government for a number of years. To give them the opportunity to continue the lease with the idea of over a period of time turning that lease fee into a payment on that land, and then by that, Mr. Speaker, being able to eventually have title to that property.

I believe people across Canada, people in this province, men and women who came and settled . . . our forefathers who came and settled this land, that settled this great country, came and settled here because they desired to have the ability to own and to put their name on their own property.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have to ask, where is the lease-to-own program? And many people across my constituency have asked that. Here again I believe, Mr. Speaker, is another indication of where the provincial government is not showing its responsibility as well.

It's certainly easy to always look at the federal government or to look at other governments and put blame at their feet, but we all have to accept the fact that we have a responsibility. The provincial government must show some leadership, not only in agriculture but in the area of health, in the area of education, Mr. Speaker, and certainly in the area of caring for those less fortunate than we are.

So I would suggest, and I would ask the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Rural Development to put their heads together and re-visit that lease-to-own program, and continue to give agriculture producers and young men and women who desire to own their land or would like to take over the land — their family farm from their parents — that they look at that program, and that they indeed give producers that option, and extend that opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

What about the vendor mortgage program, Mr. Speaker? I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not sure — we haven't heard a lot lately — but I would suggest that the minister send . . . or get more information out and encourage men and women across the province to take a serious look at the vendor mortgage program.

One of the biggest problems we have in agriculture in our province, and one of the crises facing men and women and young people in particular across this province in trying to attain the farming operation or the farm base that they would like to become involved in, is the fact of high debt and high interest and high payments. And, Mr. Speaker, certainly the vendor mortgage program was a way of allowing men and women, young people, to get involved in the family farm and allowing parents to pass on to the younger generation without having to carry the full load of carrying the mortgage.

Mr. Speaker, how did that program work? That program worked on the basis of coming to an agreement of sale between your parents, devising a down payment that you would agree to, and then carrying . . . going to Agricultural Credit and Agricultural Credit would guarantee the principal.

That, Mr. Speaker, gave a young person, a young farmer, a young farm couple, the opportunity of entering into an agreement which would give them the ability to own their own land and continue on the farming operation, and in many cases the family farm. And, Mr. Speaker, we have in this province a number . . . over the past number of years in my area alone, we have farms that have been in the

family name for over 100 years and there's another one coming up this spring. So I think, Mr. Speaker, the vendor mortgage program is an excellent program, and I would ask the government to seriously take a look at expanding on the program and making sure people are more well informed because of the problems we face in agriculture. It's a way of helping people to become involved in the farm.

Mr. Speaker, for the government as well to leave the impression that the federal government has shirked its responsibility is not really fair. I believe when we look over the past nine years, Mr. Speaker, there hasn't been a federal government, over the years, that has put more into Saskatchewan, not just in the area of agriculture, but has certainly given Saskatchewan an opportunity to become involved in programs like the Atomic Energy of Canada agreement — a program that would give people in Saskatchewan an opportunity to become involved in high tech, in the science field, and certainly would create jobs for the young people of this province.

But let's look at agriculture. This motion put forward by the member from Shaunavon suggests the federal government owes this province some money. Well, Mr. Speaker, over the past number of years, when we look at the billions of dollars that have come into the hands of producers across this province, I don't think anyone could argue that the federal government hasn't endeavoured over the past number of years to support agriculture, to support this province, to support producers across this province.

And we can all argue that, yes, they owe more. They owe Saskatchewan producers more. They owe Saskatchewan, whether it's farmers, whether it's business people — whomever in this province; whether it's transfer payments to health and education, Mr. Speaker, we can always look at somebody else. But I believe we must accept our responsibility here.

Mr. Speaker, what about the . . . what kind of support has the province shown agriculture as well in the area of GRIP payments? What have they done with the GRIP program, Mr. Speaker? And we've had a fair bit of discussion on this program over the past number of weeks. Certainly we've seen farmers gather across this province in great numbers to voice their opinions; in fact, in some cases vent their frustrations as to what the provincial government has done with a program that was equitable, with a program that they certainly could sit down with, and as one producer indicated to me the other day, he said he didn't mind the premium. And certainly I think we've all heard of the fact that the premium was an area that a lot of people were concerned about. But he said, when I looked at that premium, yes, it seemed that the premium was high, but he said, I also knew what the bottom line was in the fall. I knew what I was . . . I was paying a fairly good premium but I also knew what my bottom line would be.

Mr. Speaker, what the provincial government has done with the GRIP program right now has left farmers without a bottom line. They don't know, they really don't know today, what they're going to have tomorrow. They have the crop insurance component, but that, to many producers, Mr. Speaker, really doesn't address the total

problem that is out there.

And the question that has been raised by the motion as well regarding another pay-out to producers, I believe in some of the ongoing negotiations that were entered into with regards to the federal government, Mr. Speaker, and the third line of defence, the federal government indicated at the time that they would be more than willing to put in place a third line of defence. However, we must work out a program and a format that would give producers the option and the opportunity for them to choose how they could stabilize their incomes.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we entered into a program called GRIP. And we entered into a program called NISA. And then came the third line of defence if it was necessary. Mr. Speaker, there is an onus on each and every one of us, not just the federal government, not just the provincial government, but even on us as producers to show to the taxpayers and the labourers across this country and across this province that we are willing to do something to help ourselves as well.

And I think if you talk to a lot of people across the province, men and women in business and the young people who are employed across the province, they would indicate that maybe there's . . . they've become a little annoyed with some of the farm community. But the fact that the farm community would step out and try to protect themselves is something that they appreciate.

So what have we seen? What has the provincial government done to support the agriculture community in this crisis? They've again pulled the rug out from under them by changing a program in mid-stream, by taking away the ability to know what the bottom line is, and by doing it without following the consultative process that was laid out under the original agreement.

Mr. Speaker, by deciding that . . . and we're waiting to see whether the provincial government will even go as far as to bring in the legislation that they said they would in light of the recent court . . . the decision made by the court regarding the fact that farmers were to be informed and have the information in front of them in writing prior to March 15 of the crop year, so that they could make a well-informed decision regarding programs.

Mr. Speaker, as we've discussed over the past number of weeks, what we have asked of this government is that they give the producers . . . if they're so adamant that the '92 program is so much better than the '91 program, then give the producers the option to choose. Mr. Speaker, I believe many producers across this province are just asking for that. They're not saying, go back totally to '91 GRIP, Mr. Speaker, because they know that there was some problems with the '91 program.

But if we gave people the opportunity to choose between '91 and '92, Mr. Speaker, it certainly would create a better atmosphere in the province of Saskatchewan that probably would create a feeling of greater comfort and knowledge in knowing that they had at least the ability to choose what they felt would be best suited to their farm, and be able to carry the insurance that they felt they needed.

Mr. Speaker, we also can look at other areas that the provincial government has shirked their responsibilities. They've placed a greater burden on agriculture producers in this province in this time when the grain prices are low and when we're just nicely getting into cropping rotation, and when people are facing lenders on their back, Mr. Speaker, by asking them to pay higher power rates and higher telephone rates and higher insurance rates, and then to top it off, Mr. Speaker, placing an added burden by putting higher taxes on their fuel costs, Mr. Speaker, and turning around and suggesting that they won't be able to get the fuel costs or the taxes taken off at the source, as we had in place prior to this, Mr. Speaker, but indeed turning around and asking producers to go back to a rebate program, to a rebate form, Mr. Speaker.

And that is something over the years, Mr. Speaker, that many people — not just farmers but consumers alike . . . rebate programs are something that people detest, Mr. Speaker. And for me it would indicate that the provincial government has again shirked their responsibility of protecting agriculture in this province.

Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, yes we can put blame at the feet of the federal government. But I believe we must also sit down and realize the federal government has made a real commitment to this province. They've made a commitment to agriculture. They've made a commitment in many areas that affect the people of this province by putting tens . . . billions of dollars into the hands of people across this province. And certainly a number of members in this House have had the advantage, Mr. Speaker, of the benefit that the federal government has placed and given to them.

Mr. Speaker, that's why we have added the words to the motion, because we recognize that there is a worsening crisis in agriculture, because we believe the provincial government has a responsibility as well to people across this province, to agriculture producers in this province. We do not believe that the provincial government can continually turn around and blame somebody else for their ineptitude, Mr. Speaker.

And I believe, as I've indicated earlier, this motion that has been brought forward by the member from Shaunavon certainly was a way of trying to deflect criticism from this government for their failure to live up to the promises and to the commitments they made to the people of Saskatchewan prior to the fall election, Mr. Speaker, in which they said: well we'll be able to do so much better because we're going to eliminate . . .

The Speaker: — Order. It now being . . . Order. It now being 1 o'clock, this House pursuant to an order of the legislature stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

The Assembly adjourned at 1 p.m.