

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

The Deputy Clerk — I wish to advise the Assembly that Mr. Speaker will not be present to open this sitting.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise on behalf of concerned citizens of this great province of Saskatchewan to present a petition, and the prayer of relief reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are from Churchbridge, Langenburg, Melville. I so present.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I present petitions this afternoon, the prayer of relief which reads as follows:

Your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to relocate Highway 40 at the entrance to North Battleford to east of the David Laird campground in order to alleviate the congestion at the entrance to the city of North Battleford.

I so present.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I join my colleagues in bringing forward petitions today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people who signed the petition are all from Regina. I so present.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I too rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens concerned about the Plains Health Centre closing. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre

by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Those who signed this petition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are from the communities of Saltcoats, Langenburg, Bredenbury, and Esterhazy. I so present.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise again today to present a petition on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to regulate SaskPower and SaskEnergy so as to require them to provide electricity and natural gas at affordable rates for non-profit municipal recreation facilities.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by concerned folks who are just now firing up the plants in our rinks across Saskatchewan. And the people that have signed this petition that are concerned about it, Mr. Speaker, are from Imperial, Liberty, Stalwart and Penzance. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order two petitions regarding the closure of the Plains Health Centre presented on October 19, 1998 have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received.

Of citizens humbly praying that your hon. Assembly may be pleased to act to save the Plains Health Centre;

Of citizens humbly praying to cause the government to immediately start work on the rebuilding of our secondary highway system to provide for safe driving.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is too rare that we get a chance to introduce people that we not only respect in this legislature, but — and this is the critical part of it — we not only respect them, but we can claim them as very close relatives.

Today it is my honour to introduce someone that I not only respect but who is a relative of mine. And it is my pleasure to introduce, in the west gallery, Greg Trew. Greg will be better known to many members as working very diligently for SEIU (Service Employees International Union). And I ask all members to join me in welcoming my friend, my relative, Greg Trew.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I too would like to rise and welcome Mr. Greg Trew to the Assembly here this afternoon and congratulate him on his excellent work that he does for SEIU. So if everyone here this afternoon would just join once again and welcome him here to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whitmore: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate it that you remembered my seat.

I too would like to introduce Greg Trew today. Unless recently he still is a constituent of mine if I do remember, and we have had several chats on the phone at different times. So I too would like to welcome Greg here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Anniversary of Person's Case

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to have this opportunity today to recognize a very special day that's just passed on Sunday. It was on October 18, 1927 that the courts ruled that women were indeed persons and therefore eligible to sit as senators. The court stated on that historic date that the exclusion of women from all public offices was a relic of days more barbarous than ours.

This decision may not have been made had it not been for five brave and determined women who petitioned the Supreme Court of Canada to decide once and for all to determine whether women qualified as persons under the law. While it may seem ridiculous today that was not even a question seven decades ago. And if it weren't for such brave women as Henrietta Muir Edwards, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, Irene Parlby, and Emily Murphy, it might have taken even longer for women to take their rightful place beside, and in many cases ahead of, men in our country.

Today there's still a lot of work left to do as far as women's equality goes but this victory by women in 1927 equipped us with the tools we need to rise right to the top in Canada today, and we thank them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

90th Anniversary of Person's Decision

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, I have a connection to women's month in the history. And the connection is I'm the grandson, the direct descendent of Beatrice Trew, the first CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) to sit in this esteemed, august Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this all started October 18, 1929 when the question was put to the Supreme Court: Does the word person in section 29 of the British North America Act include female persons? On this anniversary I think it's important that we all reflect on the unanimous decision of the British House of Lords as stated by Lord Sankey. He said:

The exclusion of women from all public offices is a relic of days more barbarous than ours. And to those who would ask why the word person should include females, the obvious answer is, why should it not?

We've made some progress over the years and if you look at our Assembly, Mr. Speaker, today, especially in the cabinet benches, although the advancement has not been perfect it has been substantial. My grandmother would be very proud of the progress that has made. We should all be proud of my grandmother, Beatrice Trew, today just as we should be grateful and proud of the famous five Alberta women who launched the famous person's case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Eric Malling

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On September 28, a man who was a friend and acquaintance of several people in this Chamber passed away at the age of 52. Television and newspaper reporter Eric Malling was born and raised in Swift Current, attended the University of Saskatchewan, as well as Carleton University School of Journalism.

His son, Leif, likes to recall the story of how his dad did poorly in only two subjects in high school, one was typing and the other was woodworking. And of course then Eric went on to use typing and his words to influence tremendous change in his lifetime; and of course did woodworking through his great love of making furniture, which was his hobby throughout his life.

At his funeral a friend since university years was recalling something that meant a great deal to everyone who was there, and what she said was this:

It was unbelievable that a man like Eric could have the ability to interject, regardless of story, regardless of the amount of time that he was allotted, something about the prairies in each and every story, and he always made us so tremendously, tremendously proud.

He leaves to mourn his wife Pat Werner, his son Leif and his daughter Paige, and he will be missed very, very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Village of Livelong Booming

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Recently there was an article in *The Northwest Neighbors* in my constituency about a little town called Livelong on the prairies, which I'm sure that Eric Malling would have enjoyed.

This story is about a town that is surviving in our global economy. The headline of the article said, "Livelong booming with new residents and new ventures." The story backed up the headline.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the new ventures were not huge ventures, but they were enthusiastic and they were optimistic.

Volunteers are setting up a small library next to the post office. The post office is relocating into a new building. The local

lounge is planning its fall entertainment schedule, and the hair shop is opened and doing well.

No closures here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just ordinary people going about their ordinary lives with contentment. Lives by the way that include, according to the article, a couple of new homes, a wedding or two, and time to enjoy the peaceful and lovely fall scenery that I enjoy in our great north-west.

This is the attitude of optimism, of quiet joy, of contentment, that makes our province the best place in the country to live.

I value the village of Livelong and, as its name suggests, what it represents — live long.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Congratulations to the Community of Outlook

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night there was good news for a town in my constituency. Unfortunately I was not able to attend due to the legislature sitting but I would like to offer my congratulations to the community of Outlook. The people in Outlook have worked long and hard to improve the educational facilities for the young people in their community.

The initiative for this project came from the people themselves — the parents, the teachers, the business leaders, the farmers, and the trustees. They all had a vision and they stayed focused on their goal of rejuvenating education in their community not only for themselves but for the future of the students as well. But as a result of their dedication and belief in themselves after renovations and upgrades have been completed, the school will be a source of tremendous community pride for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, only a couple of weeks ago I was in Outlook to help them open their new bridge and I would to ask all members to join me in recognizing the good people of Outlook for their entrepreneurial spirit. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

10th Annual SADD Convention

Ms. Murrell: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. At a meeting in Saskatoon this weekend, a young woman named Dionne Pohler said the following: “It is hard to change people who are set in their ways.” I don’t have the slightest idea who she was talking about — certainly not me — but seriously the reasons behind her statement are well worth all of us listening to.

Dionne was one of 700 youth delegates to the tenth annual convention of students against drunk driving or SADD (Students Against Drinking and Driving). Although this is a group of students, it has already shown itself to be a very effective organization for change and change for the better in our society.

In 1996, SADD was instrumental in bringing about major changes to our legislation dealing with drinking and driving as well as with licensing new drivers. Because of SADD and with the work of the able legislative committee chaired by our

Speaker, changes including lowering the legal blood alcohol level were brought about. The reason for SADD’s dedication and effectiveness is simple and direct. They are tired of their friends, their relatives, and their neighbours being killed by drunk drivers and they want not a reduction, but an end to this senseless loss of our citizens.

I congratulate SADD on their work thus far, and I know we will be hearing from them until they successfully lobby themselves out of existence. Thank you, Mr. Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

University of Regina Convocation

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you. I was being unusually deferential waiting for the member for North Battleford to stand up again.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on Saturday the University of Regina held its fall convocation. And although I was unable to attend, I do want to congratulate the 418 students from the nine faculties who received degrees.

I especially want to congratulate Vanessa Stockbrugger of Regina who is a constituent of mine and was awarded the president’s medal as the most distinguished student.

Saturday’s convocation was also important for another reason, as Dr. David Barnard was formally installed as the fourth president and vice-chancellor of the University of Regina. Dr. Barnard is a distinguished scholar in computer science, and of all things, also in theology, which is an interesting combination if there ever was one.

Those of us who have met with the new president I think would all agree that he brings a fresh, inquiring intellect to the university during an interesting period in this institution’s evolution.

During his convocation address, Dr. Barnard spoke in English, French, and Cree as a symbolic recognition on his part of the influences that have come together in this university.

I know all members will wish Dr. Barnard well as he begins his tenure as president.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

First Woman MLA

Mr. Hillson: — Yes, in Women’s History Month I rise to inform the Assembly of the first woman MLA, the first woman member of this Assembly. I had occasion to research her life last week to be with a woman in politics class at the University of Regina.

Sarah Ramsland was a school teacher in Minnesota before her marriage. She was married to the MLA for Pelly who died suddenly during the influenza epidemic of 1918. After his death, many friends suggested she return to Minnesota with her young children.

She had no money. However, she wanted to stay in Canada and she decided to enter politics only one year after women received the right to vote.

The by-election campaign was a rambunctious affair. Her brother-in-law had to get out his shotgun to chase away demonstrators who were hurling eggs and tomatoes on the streets on Kamsack. It was probably some of the most excitement Kamsack ... I trust the present member for Kamsack has an easier time of visiting there.

She was not always accepted by the old boys' club. The premier of the day came to support her at a meeting and didn't mention her name. However, she did win the by-election and went on to win two further elections — our first woman MLA, Sarah Ramsland, a Liberal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Financial Assistance for Farmers

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Congratulations, Mr. Minister, you finally woke up. You finally recognized there is an emergency in agriculture.

There wasn't an emergency last Thursday when you spoke to the Saskatoon chamber and there wasn't an emergency yesterday when your House Leader tried to shut down this House. But today after the Sask Party called an emergency debate on agriculture, you finally figured out there's an emergency. I guess better late than never, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Minister, why did it take so long to figure out farm families are suffering and why is it taking so long to realize that a number of our farmers are going to go under this winter if action isn't taken?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would remind the member opposite that credibility goes a long way in politics. If you were at the meeting at the chamber of commerce or if you were at any other meeting I have been at for the last little while, or if you were to read the papers, you would know that I have written to and spoke personally to, on more than one occasion, the Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa.

I keep reiterating that we have to analyze the problem that's out there in making sure that NISA (Net Income Stabilization Account) and Crop Insurance, that are the accounts available to producers, are adequate. I've said that on many occasions.

The fact that the House is open today was an opportunity for all of us to join together, because I think you believe the same thing. I'm not going to make cheap politics on who is first or who is second or who did what ... (inaudible interjection) ... Well fine, I'll be second. Because this important issue is more than being first or second.

What's important is that we all join together and talk to Ottawa to ensure that we analyze the situation, that we know, if there is a need, who is responsible in light of the European and

American subsidies and the loss of the Crow transportation benefit in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well, Mr. Minister, your comments to the Saskatoon chamber shows how really out of touch you are. The October 16 *Star-Phoenix* says, and I quote:

Upshall ... said farmers would have to rely on ... (GRIP) and ... (NISA), although he acknowledged it might be difficult.

Well I'll say it'll be difficult. You were the guys that cancelled GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) six years ago.

The article went on to say the minister doesn't even want to talk to Ottawa about helping farmers yet. He said:

I'm not sure that ... would be ... (a) responsible thing to do until we know exactly what's going on in ... (this) province.

Well, Mr. Minister, if you don't know what's going on, I'll tell you — \$2 wheat, 70 cent barley, hog producers losing 20 to \$40 per finished hog, high taxes, and rising input costs. That's what's happening in this province. Farm families are suffering. And it wasn't until we called an emergency debate today that you even realized there was a problem.

Mr. Minister, where have you been? What have you done to address this crisis?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the member were to have read yesterday's paper, he would have seen the retraction printed by the paper when referring to GRIP. So I understand that you read the paper and didn't read the follow-up so I understand how you made that mistake.

But let's put that aside. The difference between you and this side of the House is a number. Number one, if you had representation as a federal party in Ottawa like we do, you could have had your member, like our member John Solomon stood up a number of weeks ago and asked for emergency debate but was turned down — number one.

Number two, you can stand in your place and you can holler for, as I said if you read the rest of that clip in the *Star-Phoenix* interview, you could stand up and say, okay, wave the flag; we need fill-in-the-blank dollars.

As a person who is responsible for the taxpayers of this province — not only the farmers, but everybody else — I say we have to do the analysis first. That's what we're doing. I know there's a cash flow crisis out there. But you're easy. It's easy for you to stand up and say, just give us money, because you don't have to have the responsibility. You don't need to take the responsibility of ensuring that there's a ...

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Crown Land Lease Rates

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well I disagree with the minister that having a federal counterpart is an advantage. We have Mr. Goodale who's done absolutely nothing for the farmers in this province. And I don't remember your party doing . . . your federal party doing a darn thing.

Mr. Minister, you like to blame everything on the federal government. And we agree that the federal Liberals have abandoned agriculture. And there is more that you could be doing as well though.

This spring your government nailed farmers and ranchers with a 25 per cent increase in lease rates. That's how you're helping farmers — by gouging them for more money. And you promised to review that decision, but we haven't heard a peep out of you since, Mr. Minister.

Will you stand in your place today and announce you have cancelled this unfair attack on farm families and adjust these Crown lease rates lower?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — The Crown lease rates have been set for this year. When we talked . . . We are reviewing the whole process for another year, and that process is ongoing and will come to fruition.

But I'll tell you something. You sit on your side of the House . . . I've told you what I've done. I've talked at length to the Minister of Agriculture; I've written letters. Table your representation today, I challenge you. And if you have and you've got it there, table it; I'll have to read it.

And if you have made representation to the federal government or the federal minister on this, show us, and then stand in your place today and support a common cause. Instead of standing there . . . I'll tell you my friend, the days of Grant Devine are over and that's exactly what you're advocating — throwing money at the problem without responsibility.

I'll tell you we're going to look after the people of this province in any way that we can. We're going to make sure that the federal government is first and foremost in any decision of support, as you know is necessary.

And I challenge you to stand in your place today and support us in calling on Ottawa to look at the situation of a very grave manner.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Emergency Hospital Services in Regina

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health or her union-busting assistant.

Madam Minister, it's ironic that the first thing your assistant,

the former head of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, did as an NDP (New Democratic Party) MLA was legislate 1,100 union members at SaskPower back to work.

Next up for the former nurses' union president, shutting down emergency services at the Plains hospital. Madam Minister, this morning the Regina Health District announced the Plains hospital emergency room will close for good on October 30.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what's next for the member from Saskatoon Eastview — busting her former colleagues in the nurses' union?

Madam Minister, will you assure the people of southern Saskatchewan that emergency services at the two Regina hospitals that have escaped the NDP wrecking ball will be able to handle the increased workload from the closure of the Plains emergency room.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, how do you respond to that long preamble and diatribe that really was incomprehensible on this side of the House. Let me say this to the member. As we all know in the province of Saskatchewan, the Plains hospital is scheduled for consolidation into the other two hospitals in the city of Regina — the Regina General and the Pasqua. We anticipate that the consolidation of services will occur by the end of November and that there won't be any loss of service as a result of this consolidation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A further question to the Madam Minister. Madam Minister, we already have the longest hospital waiting list in the country. Even before the Plains hospital closes we hear media reports that Regina emergency rooms have turned away patients because they have no room. The government's own polling, your own polling, Madam Minister, is telling your government that people are losing faith in the health care system.

Almost half of the Saskatchewan people think the NDP's health reform process will result in deteriorating health services over the next five years. Madam Minister, unfortunately, judging from today's announcement from the Regina Health District, those people appear to be right.

Madam Minister, do you really expect people to believe emergency services in Saskatchewan will get better when you are shutting down one of the busiest emergency rooms in the province?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me say this to the member. There is no question that over the last five years with the consolidation of various health services under one district board, that there has been change in this province.

We moved from a system where there were over 400 independent boards and agencies delivering health services in this province to a more integrated and a coordinated approach to the delivery of health.

As you know, your predecessor government had the Murray report. And one of the things that the Murray Commission told us was that there was a lack of coordination and integration between ambulance care, acute care, home care, mental health, and community-based services along with a whole host of other health services. And what we've tried to do is move to a more integrated approach.

Now does that mean that health renewal has failed? Health renewal has not failed. Change is difficult for people. Change is difficult for people, but I believe that we're moving towards a more coordinated and integrated approach to meeting the health needs of the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Public Utility Rate Review Process

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the minister responsible for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan).

Mr. Minister, on November 1 you're nailing Saskatchewan families one more time. This time it's a 12 per cent increase in SaskEnergy rates — one more attack on every family and every business in Saskatchewan. Of course you do have your phony-baloney rate review process to go through first.

So I want to ask you, Mr. Minister: how is your rate review process going? Do you think it is working well?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, if you judge our rate review process in terms of our rates for natural gas in Saskatchewan versus Alberta or any other province in Canada, it's working very well because we have the lowest gas prices in the country.

I want to say as well that in Alberta the rates have been announced to increase by as much as 20 per cent in the next few months, which will mean, which will mean that the rates in Saskatchewan even after the 12 per cent increase on November 1, if approved, will still be the lowest in Canada.

Now the member opposite will know full well that gas prices on the commodity market have increased and increased significantly. He knows that. And so to be truthful, what you should do is stand up and congratulate the men and women who run our Crown corporation — I know this would be unusual for the members opposite — who have kept the rates in this province the lowest in Canada. Why don't you just say thank you to the men and women who run that Crown corporation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, it's too bad for once you wouldn't try and confine yourself to the question. The question was with regard to your rate review process — you know, that phony-baloney little process that you've set up to review your . . . (inaudible) . . . to review your rate increases.

Well let me tell you how well it's working. In Saskatoon and P.A. (Prince Albert) about 10 people showed up, in Kindersley

there were six people that showed up, and in North Battleford there were three people turned out to the meetings. And in the meetings in Maple Creek, Humboldt, and Weyburn one person turned up at each one of those meetings.

Mr. Minister, there's more people at the Liberal caucus meetings than are turning up at your meetings. Do you think it's because they're concerned about the rate hike? Yes it is, Mr. Minister. They think your rate review process is an absolute joke. That's what they think, Mr. Minister. You've made up your mind. You've made up your mind; SaskEnergy's made up their mind, and there's nothing that anybody can do.

Mr. Minister, the Saskatchewan Party has a Bill sitting on the order paper calling for a truly independent rate review mechanism. Will you support this legislation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the members opposite that when it comes to gas prices, I have here an article I believe from *The Globe and Mail* yesterday, and it says that some homeowners face higher heating bills and it says, gas prices to rise as supplies tighten.

And this is a story not about Saskatchewan where there has been the recommendation of a 12 per cent increase, but this is about Alberta that the members opposite like to compare themselves to.

And it says here that the average customer of Edmonton-based Northwestern Utilities Limited, for example, will see gas bills going up by \$87 for the November through March winter period. That's a 20 per cent increase, 20 per cent increase.

Now they have a rate review process. But I want to say to the members opposite, how is the rate process working in Saskatchewan? It's keeping the lowest gas prices in Canada. I would say that's pretty good.

As to how many people are coming out to the meetings, I think we're getting a few more than the number of Liberals and Tories that have jumped across in the dark of night to join that little rump of a party over there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Dismissal of SaskPower Official

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question to the Premier is about former SaskPower diversity coordinator, Ed McQuarters.

Mr. McQuarters was a 28-year veteran of the company, however Mr. McQuarters made the mistake of disagreeing with one of your NDP management appointees at SaskPower. After a complaint was filed with his office, Mr. McQuarters recommended that a harassment complaint by an employee against a SaskPower supervisor proceed. An independent investigator agreed, and in a written report the investigator stated that harassment of the employee had taken place.

Then on July 14, 1997, in a confidential letter to the harassed

employee and contrary to the independent recommendation, SaskPower executive VP (vice-president) Carole Bryant quashed the harassment complaint. So much for process and fairness at SaskPower.

Now after all of this, Mr. McQuarters, who was just doing his job, was fired by SaskPower. Mr. Premier, why was Mr. McQuarters fired?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to say to the member opposite that as it relates to the issue of discrimination or non-discrimination, I want to make it clear that when the debate was going on over the last couple of days you would know that the issue of non-discrimination clause in the Bill was in fact dealt with.

And so you would be pleased . . . And I was interested that I think you took the occasion to vote against that. If the record . . . I don't have it here but if you, if you are concerned about that, I think you voted against that. So I think you should be clear on who's supporting and who isn't.

As it relates to Mr. McQuarters, I've had conversations with him as recently as yesterday at 10 a.m., and Ed says that he is satisfied that the negotiations going on at the present time are going well and he wishes that people would leave it alone so that it can be resolved.

Mr. Aldridge: — Supplementary, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the Premier or Deputy Premier. We want to know which one of your NDP appointees at SaskPower authorized that Mr. McQuarters be fired. And has any severance been offered to him?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — As I mentioned in my previous answer when I talked about the non-discrimination issue, we debated it yesterday and in the discussion that went on a commitment has been made to deal with that issue.

And as it relates to Mr. McQuarters, I said again, I have talked to him as recently as yesterday at 10 a.m. He believes he is being treated fairly. And there is discussions going on. And for you to try to play politics at this time I think probably doesn't serve the issue very well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, we want to know what sort of discipline that this government intends to put towards their appointees for treating SaskPower employees like dirt. In other words, can we expect to see Bill's hide?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — In dealing with this issue, we will deal with it in the proper manner.

And I want to say something and that is about the discipline that Mr. Melenchuk is talking about putting on one of your own

members, in a public and open way, saying that because he voted a certain way he may be disciplined. And I think it's because the House Leader from the Shaunavon area has said that he wants him disciplined because he doesn't have the wherewithal to use his influence through . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. If the members in the opposition are going to take the time to ask the question, they should take the time to listen to the answer also I suggest. So we would come to order, please.

Home Care in Saskatchewan

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question this afternoon is for the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, the most vulnerable in Saskatchewan and their families are in a quandary.

Individuals with chronic illnesses that prevent them from dressing themselves, from being able to get out of bed, even feed themselves, are unable to access home care. And some of the very nurses who provide that care are being sent into homes where in some cases they are in danger of not only potential physical assaults but contamination from filthy conditions.

Madam Minister, what is your response to both the people who are in need of this care and to those who are providing care, who are of the opinion that the system of receiving and delivering home care is in — to the most needy of course — is in chaos?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I want to thank the member for this question. Mr. Speaker, there's no question that in the last five years we've seen a significant increase in services delivered to people in their own homes. If I recall, I believe the home care budget has more than doubled and the number of people who are being served by home care has risen substantially as we make our way from institutional care to services provided in the community.

There is no question that there are some difficulties in certain parts of home care. And one of the difficulties is being referred to by the member from Greystone. I can assure the member that we are taking a look at how best to provide community-based services to the types of people that she refers to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Madam Minister. And I want to go into this just a little bit more because people are quite concerned with the amount of private care that they are now being held responsible for — the families in particular. And these things are inextricably linked.

Nurses are worried because they must work in some conditions that actually require them to disinfect themselves, from such things as bed bugs, before they move on to the next patient to whom they travel oftentimes to care, to care for. And they also do not agree with how some persons, some individuals are chosen to receive care while others who are much more disabled are being passed over. And there seems to be so much concern in this that even the Ombudsman's office has been involved in some of these cases and that there seem to be other

people pulling strings in this matter.

So we have home care nurses wanting to care for some people and are told they can't, home care nurses being sent into some situations which are horrific, and many individuals receiving no care at all.

Madam Minister, what can be done soon for the many families struggling to get much needed help for their vulnerable loved ones while other cases that are questionable as to the safety and security of nurses, are being funded?

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I want to thank the member for raising this because this is certainly something that we will need to address as we make our way away from institutional care to community-based services.

And I think the member will philosophically agree that one of the best ways to provide care to our citizens is to ensure that the care is provided in the community. And this has been a huge transition all across the country, moving away from institutions to community-based health services. I can assure the member that this is something that has been brought to my attention and it's something that we're hoping to address in the next short while.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Public Administrator at Kindersley Senior Care Facility

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we saw the trouble that patronage appointments has gotten this government into in SaskPower, but they didn't seem to learn their lesson, Mr. Speaker.

Looking through the health digest and the orders in council, we see that the NDP are at it again, this time in Kindersley, where they've appointed one of their patronage boys to run the Kindersley Senior Care Inc., and authorized the payment of \$800 per day, Mr. Speaker — \$800 a day. Now if you multiply that over the course of a year we're talking about something like \$200,000 or very close to it. But on top of that, they've also authorized extra expenses for travel and living allowance, Mr. Speaker.

Minister of Health, your former minister talked about \$100,000 nurses. The only one I know of is sitting in the rows of the NDP right now. Two hundred thousand dollars! At that rate we could pay for two nurses a year — at the regular rate, five or six. Madam Minister, can you explain this?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to say this, that one of the things that I have really grown to appreciate over the last 12 years that I've served in this legislature is the kind of respect that we show each other, and the kind of respect that we show each other when new members arrive at this legislature.

I would say this, that my colleague the Associate Minister of Health has come to this Assembly to involve herself in change. And I really don't believe that the kinds of comments that are being made by the members opposite elevate the public debate

that is so important in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as the member will know, that there was a public administrator appointed in July of 1998 for the Kindersley long-term care home. And the appointment was made to ensure quality and safe care could be provided to the 80 special care home residents at the Heritage Manor. What I can say to the member is that the public administrator has reviewed the financial position of the Heritage Manor and it's been determined that there are some cost savings that can be made.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would ask leave to make a statement about the death of the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada.

The Deputy Speaker: — As the legislature knows, the ministerial statements are usually to deal with the minister's department on policy but the Minister of Justice has asked leave to deviate from that and to make a special . . . is leave granted?

Leave is granted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Death of Chief Justice Dickson

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish to advise the House that retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, Brian Dickson, died in his sleep on Saturday, October 17, at his home outside Ottawa. I think it is appropriate to review the life and achievements of a great Canadian, who was born and raised in Saskatchewan.

Robert George Brian Dickson was born in Yorkton in 1916. He grew up in various towns in Saskatchewan, and attended school at Regina Collegiate Institute. Notably, two of his classmates were William Lederman, who went on to become one of Canada's most highly respected constitutional scholars, and Sandy MacPherson, who became a judge in the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench, a very high powered class indeed.

Chief Justice Dickson was well acquainted with this Assembly. His schoolmate, Sandy MacPherson, was the son of the then attorney general, Murdoch A. MacPherson. Apparently when this House was sitting in the evenings, young Brian Dickson and Sandy MacPherson would be allowed to do their homework in the attorney general's office. If they finished their homework in time they could watch this House's proceedings from the gallery.

In later years, Chief Justice Dickson would say that knowing Attorney General MacPherson was one reason he became a lawyer. Chief Justice Dickson attended the University of Manitoba earning his law degree in 1938 where he was the gold medalist of his law class.

When World War II broke out, Brian Dickson enlisted. He served with distinction from 1940 to 1945. While serving in the Normandy campaign, Dickson was mentioned in dispatches for his conduct, an important recognition in the military. He was

also seriously injured resulting in the loss of one of his legs.

Returning to Winnipeg after the war, Brian Dickson practised law with a private firm. He also was a lecturer at the College of Law in Manitoba. In 1963 he was appointed to the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench. In 1967 he was elevated to the Manitoba Court of Appeal, and in 1973 he was appointed Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, replacing Justice Emmett Hall who had retired. In 1984, upon the death of Chief Justice Laskin, he was appointed Chief Justice of Canada, a post he held until his retirement in 1990.

During his time on the Supreme Court, Chief Justice Dickson wrote an astonishing number of landmark decisions in all areas of the law. His knowledge of the law, his breadth of vision, the clarity of his reasoning, and his empathy for the individual all combined to ensure that his decisions are some of the most influential cases in our jurisprudence.

Although Chief Justice Dickson wrote decisions on a great number of legal issues, it is his work on constitutional law that is particularly impressive. He was on the Supreme Court during two crucial periods in our constitutional history: the debate over the patriation of our constitution from Great Britain, and the initial years of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In both areas, his sense of balance and fairness stood out. In the Patriation Reference, Justice Dickson was one of the majority of judges who held that while the federal government had the legal power to amend the constitution unilaterally, as a matter of constitutional convention, substantial provincial support was required. That decision, recognizing the need for federal-provincial balance in our Confederation, broke the political log-jam and helped lead to the 1981 constitutional accord.

Once the Charter was in force, Chief Justice Dickson wrote many of the initial decisions that set the framework for the implementation of the Charter. His decisions on freedom of religion, criminal law, and law in section 1 of the Charter all grappled with one of the essential issues of government — the appropriate constitutional balance between legitimate government action and the basic liberties and freedoms of the individual.

Chief Justice Dickson had an abiding belief in the individual, a belief that informed many of his judgments. Perhaps one of his clearest statements is found in his decision in *Regina v. Oakes*, one of the landmark cases on the presumption of innocence.

The presumption of innocence is one of the cornerstones of our criminal law and there are many legalistic ways to analyze it. However Chief Justice Dickson summarized it in a much simpler, non-legalistic fashion. He stated:

The presumption of innocence confirms our faith in humankind; it reflects our belief that individuals are decent and law-abiding members of the community until proven otherwise.

Brian Dickson served his country well in war at great personal cost and in peace to the benefit of us all. He's survived by his wife Barbara Dickson, their four children, and several

grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that all members of this House share in expressing condolences to Mrs. Dickson and her family.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Heppner: — To respond to the minister's statement.

Leave granted.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition I would certainly like to add my voice in expressing regret at the passing of Chief Justice Dickson. Sadly this is the second day in a row that we've had to mark the passing of a great Saskatchewanian.

Our province has a lot to be proud of, and in particular we should be proud of the quality and talent of citizens we have produced in Saskatchewan throughout our entire history. Brian Dickson rose to lead the highest court in the country, but only after serving his country honourably during the Second World War. Mr. Dickson served the court with dignity and dedication and was involved in several landmark cases.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the entire Saskatchewan Party caucus I would like to extend our deepest sympathies to Mr. Dickson's family. His work for his country will live on. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Does the hon. member from Melville request leave?

Mr. Osika: — Leave to respond, yes.

Leave granted.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I too would like to add a voice on behalf of the Liberal caucus. And I share on behalf of all of the people of Saskatchewan who on this occasion have the opportunity to celebrate the life of a great native son. There are truly a great number of people that excel, who are our native sons and daughters, and this Chief Justice Dickson is someone that I'm sure has been and will forever be remembered as a highly-respected jurist and with pride as a Saskatchewan native son.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

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

Mr. Boyd: — With leave, for the introduction of Bill 753 that I gave notice of yesterday.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has requested leave to waive rule 45, the notice, and introduce Bill No. 753. Is leave

granted?

Leave not granted.

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

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Before orders of the day.

The Deputy Speaker: — To?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Move a motion of urgent necessity in terms of the subsidies involved in other countries to agriculture and the fact that we should have this House put forward a motion to be debated in emergency so that we send the message to Ottawa.

Leave granted.

MOTION UNDER RULE 46

Farm Finances

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the end of my remarks, at the end of my remarks, I will be moving a motion along the following lines:

That this Assembly urgently calls on the federal government to address the issue of recent American and European grain subsidies and the resulting low commodity prices immediately; work with trading partners to reduce subsidies; and in the event no immediate progress is made, bridge the current cash shortfall appropriately in order to protect Canadian producers.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know this is traditionally private members' day and I can think of no better motion for private members and us all to debate today than this one.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I welcome the fact that I believe that the opposition members will support this motion because I think that they know the urgency and the necessity to ensure that the federal government understand the cash flow crisis in Saskatchewan today.

The member says, we agree, let's vote. I think the member from Wood River, I think that there's a little more . . . he might want to say a few words just so that we know what he's thinking before we vote. Now if anyone can figure out what he's thinking, then please let us know.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm going to start out by telling a short story about the changing farming scene in Saskatchewan. At one time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we were . . . simply farming meant growing grain and raising animals. That has changed dramatically. We had a grains mentality for the most part, and that went on for many, many years.

In western Canada, in Saskatchewan, we have diversified into many, many products. We've got bison, elk, herbs and spices, canola, like pulse crops, oilseeds, nutraceuticals, besides all the

traditional grains that we've raised.

In Saskatchewan, we the government have provided support for that. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Saskatchewan we, on a per capita basis, provide more support than any other province in Canada including the federal government. We provide 4.7 times the provincial average; 2.2 times as much as Alberta; and 2.4 times as much as Manitoba; and 4.1 times as much as the federal government. So on a per capita basis we do put in a lot of money into supporting agriculture in this province.

If you look at other countries, the majority of the support comes from the federal government, but in Canada that has been slipping dramatically the last little while. So this change from the grains mentality has been aided by the support of the provincial government. We have put money into research and development, into helping farmers find other ways of making a living because of the traditional low prices in the traditional grains sector.

Mr. Speaker, we've had to look at the institutions to provide a climate for that to happen. We look at the Canadian Wheat Board and made improvements there. We have to look at the single-desk selling of hogs and we made changes and improvements there. We have to look at other market institutions and probably make some changes there.

(1430)

Mr. Speaker, we had in this province at one time 19 million acres of wheat. If the member from Wood River would listen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he might learn something. Not too many years ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had 19 million acres of wheat sown in this province out of about 33 million acres of total plantings. Now we are down to 9 million acres of wheat and all those other acres, those 10 million acres, have gone into other commodities. The farmers have made a tremendous adjustment, tremendous adjustment, to try to survive the times that we're in.

In fact 72 per cent of the grain planted is not wheat today. Even though we're going to continue to plant and grow wheat and market it because it's a staple around the world, we have learned that we cannot totally rely on that and we have gone into other areas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I talk about farming within the margin at every opportunity I can. Farming within the margin means exactly what producers are doing. You can't own and pay for the high, high-priced equipment as we used to own equipment in the past that was not so high priced. It's very difficult today to buy a \$250,000 combine, use it for 25 days of the year, and have it sit for the rest of the year; or a tractor and air seeder for the cost of it and have it sit for that length of time.

So farmers are being creative. They're looking at machinery co-ops as some have done in this province. They're working together to share machinery.

And governments along with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have to look at some areas like farm tenure of land ownership, all the marketing institutions that we have, the ability for people to rent machinery from wherever. These things are discussion points

and going to be talked about in the near future, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in order that we might continue this change and ensuring that farmers have the support that they need.

But what has changed mostly, Mr. Speaker, is the critical aspect of research to markets. We have a growing food processing sector in this province that is crucial in determining what the markets should be — what the markets will be rather — taking that information, feeding it back not only to the farmers who are people who will grow the product but right back to research and development. We do this so that we can be researching the right products to grow, so the farmers can grow it, so the food processors can add value to it, and it can be marketed around the world.

That is a much more integral connection today than it's ever been, and if we want to survive in this world, we have to do that. And it's a much longer speech than I'll give it today. It's very integral.

So the question is then, well what is agriculture today? Well agriculture today in Saskatchewan is \$5 billion worth of sales on the farm, off the farm. Agriculture today is \$4 billion of inputs to grow that \$5 billion. The problem is there's a lot of other costs involved there as well that has put us in a situation where our net farm income is going to be less than 50 per cent of the five-year average. It's dropping dramatically.

So then when we see what we've done, the support that we've given to agriculture, what farmers have done to try to survive and try to diversify and to make sure that their families are fed, try to contribute to the communities to try to add population to our country, we have a good thing going.

But there's a problem. Mr. Speaker, the problem is cash flow.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I was in Ottawa . . . in Ontario this summer, at the federal-provincial agriculture meeting, we announced after that meeting that we decided that as Canadians, as food producers, we wanted to increase our share of the world market in agriculture from 3 per cent to 4 per cent. That's about a \$15 billion increase or a little more, going from about 22, \$23 billion to \$40 billion — a tremendous objective, a great goal.

And we can achieve that. We can achieve that growth if we continue to diversify, continue to find better ways, more economical ways of farming to make sure that we can farm, try to farm within the margin, which is very difficult. We must never forget that we're continuing to try to increase the margin by lobbying federal governments, by talking to chemical companies to keep their costs in line, and all the other things that are going on.

But the fact of the matter remains, if you look at the long-term graph of prices for crops — a basket price — and the input costs, it goes like this: it goes, a parallel line up and down. As the price goes up, the inputs go up; as they come down the inputs come down, but the margin remains very, very much the same and thinning all the time. So it's farming within that margin is the challenge that we have and will be the success of keeping our people in Saskatchewan.

So we're going to try to increase our share of the world market.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in order . . . This is a great goal, but in order to do that you have to have people producing. In order to have people producing you have to make sure that they bridge the gaps that are there created by things beyond their control; created by things like the federal government in Canada coming back after the last round of WTO (World Trade Organization) and saying, well we're going to reduce our subsidy by 36 per cent like we said in the WTO. The agreement was basically that over six years you had to reduce your subsidies by 36 per cent but within those six years you could do . . . they had great flexibility.

But our government came back and said, we're going to do our share; we're going to cut the Crow benefit. They had a budgetary problem at the time. We in Saskatchewan were concerned about that. I wish they would have done it differently had they had to do it. That means a gradual reduction but they did it. They did it in 1995.

The other countries that are competitors — Europe and the U.S. (United States) — didn't. Oh yes, the U.S. farm Bill, the fair Act, said that they were going to decrease their decoupled subsidies over the number of years and they're doing that slowly. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm going to lay out some facts today that are going to be very startling I think to many people.

I'll tell you one thing. If there is a silver lining in Governor Janklow's actions of stopping the border . . . or stopping our trucks at the border, it is the fact that I think it has been a wake-up call for federal governments, for provincial governments, for local governments, for farm groups and for producers, a wake-up call that says we'd better figure out what our neighbours to the south are getting for subsidies compared to us and our farmer friends in Europe.

So we've gone ahead and done more research. And the federal government has to continue to do that and that's why this motion's put forward. We have to know exactly what they're getting.

If you look at, Mr. Speaker, some of the programs in the U.S., the fair Act for example, and this gets a little complicated, but under their fair Act they have added today, as a matter of fact, today the Congress in the United States is voting on — get this — a Bill that was vetoed by the President a week or two ago. The Bill had \$4.6 billion of money for farmers. The President vetoed it, not because it was too little — too much rather — but because that it was too little.

The vote in the Congress today is for \$5.9 billion of farm aid — 5.9 billion to U.S. farmers. In Canada we have very, very little, if any, subsidy in terms of fair trade. We've got the marketing assistant loans program in the U.S., the loan deficiency payment program, the production flexibility contracts payments, 3 million going to the market loan payment, 825 million designed to cover crop losses over the last five years, 200 million for livestock assistance, 1.5 billion earmarked for disaster relief for 1998 crop losses, a billion to Texas, 400 million to North Dakota, 370 million to Iowa, 320 million to Minnesota, all from the national treasury of the United States — all of it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the result of this . . . Just let me put this in

a picture. And I'll get to the European subsidies in a minute. The result of the Canadian government knocking out the \$320 million of assistance through a Crow benefit that would've been in Saskatchewan this year, in fact there's been a billion dollars taken out of our economy because of that. As I said I'm not whining, because we're diversifying and we will someday fill that, but in order to fill it we need the people.

So you've got that loss coupled by subsidies from the Europeans and the U.S. dropping the international price, putting Canadians in a squeeze. I'll describe that squeeze to you, Mr. Speaker, like this. I have here the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) 1997 crop comparisons of export subsidies. I'll read them out for the record. This is 1997 crop subsidies as investigated by the OECD.

And it found the level of producer subsidies on wheat and barley as a percentage of price — and oil seeds rather — as a percentage of price as this: in Canada the subsidies compared to price in wheat were 10 per cent, in the United States 32 per cent, in Europe 36 per cent.

Other grains, the subsidies as compared to a percentage of price in Canada was 7 per cent — other grains, that's barley, oats and the like — in the U.S. 28 per cent, and the European community 45 per cent.

In oilseeds, producer subsidies on oilseeds as a percentage of price are in Canada 10 per cent, the U.S. 28 per cent, and the European community 48 per cent.

And you wonder why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you wonder why we see the farmers in Saskatchewan, the producers, the farm organizations and governments in western Canada especially, calling upon their federal government to make some action.

I always describe it to producers like this. If somebody says, well why don't you do something, Mr. Minister of Agriculture of Saskatchewan, why don't you do something; I say, we put on a per capita basis more than anybody else. But I'll tell you something; think about it.

If we were to make a payment — if we could — out of Saskatchewan, in a traditional manner on a cultivated-acre basis, there's 50 million cultivated acres in Saskatchewan; \$2 an acre is a hundred million dollars. Anybody that can read knows what the budget surplus is this year because of the debt that we have and because of the demands in education and highways and health care and everything else — a hundred million dollars when we've got a small surplus.

And you know what \$2 an acre means — and all the producers know this — you know what \$2 an acre means as far as getting you over the hump goes? I'm sorry, not very much. That's the dilemma we're in in Saskatchewan. And I'm sure the members opposite will stand up and say, well you do something. Well we're partners in everything as far as Crop Insurance and NISA, and I don't expect that'll change.

But I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was nobody — nobody — in this government and few producers who asked the federal government to take away the Crow benefit the way they did. It

was a unilateral Liberal decision in Ottawa that was started by the Tories.

And I'm saying today, Mr. Speaker, that the federal government has to do a number of things. Number one, it has to show — and this is the catch — this the Governor Janklow thank you. The Government of Canada has to do the analysis even better than was done here, and we're continuing to do it, to show the difference in subsidies between Canada, the U.S., and Europe. They have the nerve to come forward and say, here's the comparison. And then have the responsibility to do something about it.

If this were a result of actions in local government or provincial governments in Canada, then I would say, yes, we are part of the solution. And I always say we always contribute to the solution.

But in this particular case I'll guarantee you, if you think of it this way, in 1980 compared to today's basket of prices: wheat is down 23 per cent over the five-year average; durum's down 30 per cent over the five-year average; barley's down about 15 per cent over the five-year average; canola's down only a few per cent, 3 or 4 or 8 per cent; flax is down a couple of per cent; and mustard's down 1 per cent, not very much. But you take that basket of prices, compared to the 1980s when we went through the last major exodus, there's not that much difference.

Input costs have risen, yes; but this year fertilizer went down 7 per cent, fuel went down 2 per cent, chemicals increased 2 per cent on average. But so the input costs have gone up but they haven't been the sole contributing factor. But you know what the difference is, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The difference is \$320 million of transportation that we pay now that we didn't pay a few years ago. If we had those dollars in Saskatchewan, I'll guarantee you we wouldn't be debating this issue today.

So where does the responsibility lie in terms of making sure that we have producers for all the good reasons and all the good things that are happening in this province? Where does the responsibility lie to make sure that we have a gap-bridging mechanism to ensure that we have producers when the commodity prices come back out of this? And it's all commodities. Pork is down, livestock is down marginally — or beef cow rather — and grains, like I say, down.

(1445)

But it's the transportation costs, 140 per cent increase over the ten-year average that's really killing us today. So what we see is time lags and issues change but the results of decisions made in Ottawa a number of years ago are really, really hurting today.

And so what happens in the U.S.? Oh, they want to play this game. Well the Wheat Board's a subsidy, you've got to count it. The Wheat Board's been challenged seven times by the U.S. in terms of subsidies and seven times they've been denied by the international panels judging them — seven times.

I talked to the U.S. — in fact I did a Kansas City radio program not too long ago, a phone-in — they were saying, well you got this transportation subsidy. I said, no we don't anymore, it's gone. Oh yes, you do.

It's incumbent upon the federal government to explain to their counterparts. It's incumbent upon us as provincial governments to explain to the States and cross those lines. It's incumbent upon producers and farm organizations to talk to their counterparts in the U.S. and explain in good, true, fact what the situation is.

And when we do this — and this is why this motion, Mr. Speaker, is doing a number of things — first of all, we're asking to go to the Europeans and Americans and say you have to stop this craziness. And if that doesn't happen, then they have to clearly identify the difference in supports and make sure that we have appropriate support for our farmers in Canada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can go on about this for a long time because it's a very compassionate subject for me. But I know other members want to speak, and so I want to end in a few minutes by reading the motion.

I've got a lot of information here, but one of the things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the Europeans' grain area payment. Do you know what the support payment for grains was in Europe? — \$175 an acre, Canadian — \$175 an acre, Canadian. This is why we have to . . . Do you know what durum was? — \$307 an acre.

These are the things that the federal government has to bring forward, be honest — bring forward, identify, talk to provinces and farm organizations and farmers and producers and say look it, what are we going to do about this? And I think that we can come to a solution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to end by saying that in Saskatchewan we have a tremendous opportunity. We have producers who have survived many, many things. Some have been lost over the time, every downswing we lose a few, and I expect, unfortunately, this will be similar. It can be helped and buoyed — they can be helped and buoyed though by some government in Ottawa doing their job. All of us will be there to support in whatever way we can do it.

But identifying the problem is key. So this Bill says, Mr. Speaker, talk to your counterparts in Europe and the U.S. for immediate action on trade. If they don't respond, then put in place a gap-bridging mechanism that will allow our producers to be there when the commodity prices come back up. If we do that, Mr. Speaker, if we stand in our places today and all of us send that similar message, I think we can make a difference.

I'll tell you one thing in closing. I've got to know Lyle Vancief, the federal Minister of Agriculture quite well over his term in office, and I'll tell you I have a lot of respect for the man. He's a farmer and he understands when I talk about farm cash flow problems. He understands. I think he has to go to his Treasury and help them understand too. So the light of the tunnel is we have someone we can talk to. That's a big plus. We have someone that understands.

And I think if we all pull together that we can today send a message to Ottawa that will help the farmers of this province be equal or almost equal to those farmers in the United States and Europe.

Because if we don't, I know and you know, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, what will happen. Unfortunately we will lose more farmers. And our objective to try to create rural population, increase rural population through diversification, through value-added processing, is working. But we have to have producers there to provide the raw product so we can add value to it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone to support this motion and I move, seconded by the member for Redberry:

That this Assembly urgently calls on the federal government to address the issue of recent American and European grain subsidies and the resulting low commodity prices immediately; work with our trading partners to reduce subsidies; and in the event no immediate progress is made, bridge the current cash shortfall appropriately in order to protect Canadian producers.

I so move.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to rise to second this very important motion. And I want to indicate my support for this motion today. Personally I started farming when I crawled on my tractor in 1959 and actively farmed until the tractor crawled on me in 1991.

As a farmer in the Parkland region, I have personally dealt with many tough situations over my farming years, but I'm not sure that it has ever been any tougher than right now. And I have two sons that are attempting to become established in the farming industry.

We as farmers were informed that our federal government had negotiated deals to protect us from the likes of European and U.S. subsidy wars. Such is not the case, and because of that unsuccessful effort, virtually every farmer in this country is in a loss position. Add to that the drought situation that impacted in some of our areas, and we have a very major problem. Today we are calling on Ottawa to accept some responsibility and to assist our farmers through a tough situation that is not of their making.

I want to take this opportunity to also talk briefly about the transportation dilemma. We as farmers find ourselves in a tough situation. As a landlocked region of this country, our province is vulnerable to many problems other than commodity prices.

We as provincial governments must work with our federal representatives to demand that Ottawa undertake programs to support our citizens, particularly our farmers, as we face unfair trade subsidies from the U.S. and Europe.

I want to take this opportunity to discuss transportation as it impacts on us in this province.

Recently I represented the Minister of Highways and Transportation at a grain transportation seminar in Glaslyn. I was pleased with the minister's interest in the problems of farmers in my part of the province. Many options are being considered but the facts of the matter are quite simple.

Ottawa has abdicated their responsibility by privatizing CN (Canadian National) and turning the power to redraw the map of rural Canada over to the railways. They can do it and they are doing it with the co-operation of the grain companies. This is an example of how the Tories and now the Liberals rape and plunder rural communities.

We as a provincial government, and including the rural municipalities, will not bear the costs because we cannot bear the cost to provide an adequate road network to replace that rail system.

Over 130 years ago the leaders of this country had vision enough to realize that in order for this country to exist and to prosper, government had to provide a national transportation system, a system paid for by general revenue to service all citizens across the entire nation for the good of us all.

With just a little look back at history of the great free enterprise system as it impacts on rail transportation. First of all the CP (Canadian Pacific) was built by the taxpayer, then turned over to private owners complete with land grants and coal deposits. We all know that success story was very well received by the corporate elite. Or as Tommy used to say: the system works on the basis of survival of the slickest.

Besides CP success, some small private lines got in financial trouble. Well the Liberals and the Tories of the day bought them out so that the poor little capitalists would not be hurt. That is how we had a national rail system. One public; one private. Then, and this time it was the Liberals, the government placed the CN on the Toronto Stock Exchange— privatized. So now we have railways for profit only.

Canada and the U.S. are the only two developed nations in the entire world that tolerate private enterprise in anything as important to their nation's lifeline as their transportation system.

Over the years, we as the taxpayers have had the privilege of paying the bill to upgrade the rail lines as well as to buy the rolling stock. But now we must not interfere with free enterprise, so we have a government that freely turns over what we have bought and paid for to some huge corporations. I guess that's where the free part comes in.

Now we hear the term "rail rationalization," which means shut down lines, close elevators, build on the main lines, destroy communities, wreck roads, and then hand the bill to Saskatchewan people. I have no idea what is rational about that.

I want to make a prediction — before this country is 150 years old, that some government will come up with a brilliant idea, a new idea that the best way to move grain is by rail, and what would really work well is a national rail system bought and paid for by the taxpayers. Too bad our governments hadn't realized a good thing when we had it.

Before I leave this subject, I want to say a few things about the new fragmented system that some point to with great pride as a newly formed success called short-line railways. There may be a place for them and no doubt there is, but not as long as the CN and the CP control the main lines. Our own local town has not

been served properly by CN in the last 50 years; why would it be served better by them if we owned it locally?

Just consider two facts. The elevator companies will not invest on such insecure lines and the CN as well as the CP know full well that they will get the grain on the main line in the end. The big corporations win again. Or as the late John F. Kennedy stated so many years ago, that the farmer is the only one who takes what he's offered, pays what he's asked, and pays the freight on it both ways.

(1500)

Nothing seems to have changed. Our provincial government and our federal members must lobby Ottawa for some control of input costs or some fair trading practices as well as some compensation for transportation.

1998 Saskatchewan net farm income is projected to be zero. The last number of years it has averaged around \$500 million net. Just think what the one item, the Crow benefit, meant — 300 to \$400 million per year.

I know, I know you've heard it all before — farmers are never satisfied. In fact I had a guy tell me the other day that the difference between a 747 jet engine and a farmer is that the jet engine quits whining when it lands in Hawaii.

Well my farmers aren't whiners, but thanks to Ottawa's lack of action, many may not survive.

Well not just the farming industry but the whole economy is affected by the Asian flu as our export demand drops, and what do we hear from the right-wing governments is more free trade, less restrictions, hands off, let the market system work. But it doesn't seem to be working all that well for business, let alone government, or the lowly worker.

We need the government in Ottawa to stand up for us. And I will now take my seat to give others the opportunity to speak on this very important matter. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to stand today to speak to this emergency motion that we actually originated first thing this morning. And the agri minister saw it, realized there must be a problem in agriculture, and called for the same motion.

I agree with some of what the past speakers have said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I'd like to quote some of the things that our ag minister has said in the past week. And I go on to quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He says that:

If I wanted to be totally political and be popular, I'd just say, "Ottawa, we need fill-in-the-blank dollars." That would be easy for me to do. (And) I'm not sure that . . . would be . . . responsible thing to do until we know exactly what's going on in the province.

The last spring session, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've told this

government and the ag minister that — on a number of occasions — that there is problems starting back in agriculture as we've saw in the past. The only thing this time they could be a lot worse.

The ag minister goes on to say, and I quote:

“We're caught in the squeeze. We've been the good guys on the block. We've cut our subsidy.”

Well he's very definitely right there. It seems like we're the only country in the world that's forgot about agriculture and our farmers; everybody else still seems to be looking after theirs.

He goes on to also say:

If the meltdown spreads to South America Upshall said, Saskatchewan's pork industry could be hit especially hard.

“By this fall, we're going to have capacity to produce two million hogs a year. A year-and-a-half ago we were producing a million hogs a year.

“We may have to eat our way out of that.” (which is an impossibility Mr. Speaker).

(Mr.) Upshall added (that) “there is optimism because things go in cycles. We always see the cycles.” (Pork . . . comes up pork goes down).

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government should have known when they got behind the pork promotion into the big, big pig barns that hogs are probably the most radical market we ever see in this province. And they should have known that we're going to go through highs and lows before they promoted the expansion at such a speed. They should have known that we were going to have troubles down the road, possibly not have known though that they would come this quick.

I should mention too that we have noticed that Quebec has stood behind their farmers to the tune of \$30 million; our government hasn't even really said: is there a problem here.

I'd like to touch on the federal government a number of times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to talk about the funding that the federal government has cut for agriculture, just in agriculture transfers or agriculture programs.

In the '90s alone the federal government — early '90s — were putting \$400 million into agriculture programs. And at this time according to the Provincial Auditor they're putting \$50 million. That shows how they've downloaded on Saskatchewan farmers. And doing that, we have to remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and I think this number probably still holds true — that 45 out of every hundred jobs in Saskatchewan works off of agriculture. Agriculture is still the backbone of the Saskatchewan economy and no one seems to want to acknowledge that any more.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to touch on NISA because that's one of the programs that farmers do have out there and I feel it's a good program if you can afford to be part of it. And if you can't, it doesn't do you a whole lot of good.

Some things that have happened in NISA this summer though I think should be brought to light. And I have contacted Mr. Vancief about the exact thing because what they have said now that freight is not an expense; it's an after sales cost so you cannot show it towards your expenses and income so it cannot be shown and cannot be contributed to accordingly.

So what they have done . . . and I believe some bureaucrat in his wisdom has said, we'll penalize these people 20 per cent until they give us the actual facts. So they sent out a questionnaire.

Now if you were late filling out the questionnaire they took over 20 per cent of your account and who knows when they're going to return it to you. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we know many NISA accounts have thousands and thousands of dollars in them and many farmers need that money this fall or next spring and these people are sitting on 20 per cent until they get the bureaucracy out of the way.

Another thing I think we've found out lately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the federal auditor is now considering removing the interest-free cash advance. This isn't the first time we've heard some person from down East decide that we don't need the interest-free cash advance, can't see any reason for it, doesn't know why we want it.

It's the one thing that we have here to help our farmers get through until they can actually move their grain. And it's really not a loan; it's an advance on our grain that we supply and sell. As soon as we sell our grain, the cash advance is returned. It's a program that Saskatchewan farmers rely on, have to have to survive.

And it scares me when we get some high-powered bureaucrat saying that we don't need something like the cash advance, and probably has never so much as seen a barn, a farm, a pig, a cow, or anything else, and is dictating what we need and what's good for us out here.

I would hope that the federal government, especially Mr. Vancief and possibly Mr. Goodale — if he's still down there, we haven't heard of him for a while — would send a message that this is not going to be put up with and the cash advance, interest-free cash advance will not be removed.

I'd like to touch on crop insurance a little bit, Mr. Minister, too and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and say that I still believe there's probably a third — and I'm sure you can correct me if I'm wrong — but a third of farmers do not carry crop insurance. And I think a number of the reasons are very plain and simple. They feel for the cost of the premium for what the coverage they have, it's just not affordable.

Now had this spring's drought stayed with us for even another two or three weeks and the heat had have come, we would have saw a disaster in this province and farmers going down like we have never seen them before. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think crop insurance is another area, even though it has been improved.

I think we could maybe even look at the Manitoba Crop Insurance and take maybe some hints from theirs. I believe, and I could be corrected on this, but I believe the first 50 per cent is

free and then you buy it accordingly from there on.

It might be one avenue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we can get all our farmers to some degree insured, because there's a disaster coming. We know there always is. It's a cycle no different than the pig cycle. We have highs and lows. And what happens if we get caught with approximately a third of our farmers with absolutely no insurance?

I'd like to just touch for a minute on, and we have talked about it in question period with the minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is Crown leases. And as we all know, they went up 25 per cent this year. I believe that was probably the worst time that we could see an increase in any of our costs that we have again no control over.

And I would hope that the minister, as he had told us in the spring that it works off a formula, so as prices have gone down now, I hope that same formula will return us to the prices they were at before or possibly even lower. And today he had told us in question period that they are studying it. I would hope we would get an answer and the farmers out there will get an answer on that. And a little good news would be very welcomed out there, yes.

I'd also like to talk about our road system which is very close to the problems in agriculture right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think this is a little bit to do with both levels of government. But I'd like to start with the federal government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to go by some numbers. And we've talked about these before but I think they are somewhat amazing.

These numbers come right from Transport Canada and it shows the breakdown of how much the federal government puts into our highway system and into roads in each province: Newfoundland, \$671 million is their forecast for a five- to six-year period; P.E.I. (Prince Edward Island), \$42 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that does not include the bridge in Prince Edward Island; Nova Scotia, \$253 million; New Brunswick, \$630 million; Quebec, \$447 million.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we get out of eastern Canada and we come to Ontario: \$96 million; Manitoba, 35 million; Saskatchewan, 35 million; Alberta, 30 million; B.C. (British Columbia), 30 million.

I can't believe these numbers, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When you look at what . . . Take for an example what Newfoundland, a little province like that, gets for their highway system and look at the measly \$35 million over that six- or seven-year period that Saskatchewan is going to get from the federal government for our roads, when we have the most roads in this country.

It's totally unacceptable. And where are people like Ralph Goodale who should be sticking up for us with the federal government and is doing absolutely nothing. I would hope Mr. Goodale does not expect to get sent down there anymore. I'm sure the farming community alone will be enough to put him in retirement.

I think another area that the provincial government has a lot of input that's hurt farmers is the downloading on municipalities. What has happened — farmers, municipalities have had to raise

their mill rates and pass it on to the farmers directly. And it doesn't stop there because the downloading on education is just another avenue that's been dumped onto our farmers.

You've taken funding out of education from 60 per cent government to 40 per cent municipal to reverse; 40 per cent government and 60 per cent municipal and they've had nowhere to pass it on but to our farmers. So our taxes in some cases have almost doubled. It's adding to the problems that farmers are facing in this cash crunch this fall. And it's a cash-flow problem but that's not the only problem out there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We have low grain prices; livestock prices are not at an all-time low, but they certainly are not at an all-time high. Hog prices are in the tank. Many producers that I've talked to in the last month are losing from 20 to \$40 per head; of every finished hog they sell, they're losing 20 to \$40. And I've talked to some of the farmers, the pig farmers out there, big and little; and I believe it was one of the farmers out there who farms with his dad that was the fourth biggest hog producer in this province that said they probably will weather the storm. They're big enough, they could get through it. But he said he knows, and has had many good friends that are smaller producers, that will not survive the winter unless hog prices improve.

And I believe you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government is a wee bit responsible for that. Because when the Sask Wheat Pool said that we want to get into hogs, we want to remove SPI, let's promote the hog industry, they jumped in with all fours — hands, feet, everything. We pushed the hog industry, double production. And oh, oh, look what happened! The bottom fell out and that's happened before. When government gets into private business, they usually see the best hog producers going down.

(1515)

The problem out there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'm getting it from RMs (rural municipality) already where tax arrears are rising. My local RM, where the highest I believe tax arrears have ever been were 21 per cent, are at present day 28 per cent and climbing. And that's another indication of the shortfall in cash and the problem in agriculture.

I think what we're going to see and I believe you would agree with me, Mr. Minister, that unless the federal government gets on the ball, lobbies all over around this world and tries to stop the ridiculous subsidies that the Europeans are putting on and the Americans, that we're going to see a whole new round of foreclosures. We're going to lose a whole new round of farmers, and actually on top of that, even the fellows that can carry through are going to be in a lot worse debt situation than they even were before.

I've sat on RM councils, Mr. Minister, and I'm sure you've talked to people that have, and it's not a nice thing to have to do is foreclose on one of your own, apply for title to land. It is one of the hardest things that I've ever done, when you have to do that to one of your neighbours. And it's no different than any lending institution, no different than anything you deal where you deal with people and have to be responsible for public money. At some point you can't let it keep going; you have to apply for title.

And I'm sure as you know and I know, but it's coming back where we're going to get into another round of that, and it's a very, very poor feeling for the councillor, the reeve, and so on. So you can just imagine how the poor guy feels that they're taking his land. It might be third generation land, paid for once probably, and it's going down the drain.

I think another thing that's adding, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to our problem, is native land claim settlements and the way the taxes are going to work from it. And I'm sure you're very aware of this, Mr. Minister. And I think you would agree with me on this, it's just another problem that many RMs and many farmers are seeing out there. And I have RMs in my constituency that have as high as 60 quarters of land that have been settled out with native land claims.

And they're honouring claims from years ago, and I guess they have to be honoured, but then the federal government should have the intestinal fortitude if they're honouring these claims, to honour the grant in lieu of taxes along with them as they did the other claims. The first set of claims they gave 22 times in lieu, and all of a sudden in their wisdom say no, four to five will be adequate.

And I can't understand this, but here we go again. We're having people from eastern Canada deciding what's good for us, and we hear absolutely nothing out of our own representatives . . . I'm sorry, representative, from Saskatchewan. Once again Mr. Goodale is quiet.

So as these native land claims add to the burden of farmers out there, the few farmers that are left to pay taxes are going to be asked to pay more.

I'd just like to touch on the Wheat Board for a minute, Mr. Minister, and I know we definitely don't agree on this issue. The Wheat Board is actually adding, I believe, to our woes when they come out with ridiculous initial prices like 2 bucks for wheat; at my local point, 68 cents for barley.

That 68 cents that the Wheat Board announces for barley sends a message to everybody in western Canada, feedlots included, what will we have to pay for barley this year? Well the Wheat Board's not very optimistic — 68 cents. And yet on the open market right now, barley is not a fantastic price, but I believe in some areas about a buck sixty.

Well that leaves a whole dollar on the table. So they've not only left the message out there that barley is going to be a terrible price all year, they've kept a buck of our money. And yet you people sit there and say no, there's no room for improvement in the Canadian Wheat Board.

Well I think it's time the Wheat Board had a little competition and we wouldn't see garbage like this coming out of them. We would see just how efficient they could become. At present time we have no idea is the Wheat Board efficient, because they're competing with no one.

And I found it interesting, Mr. Minister, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we check just to see how big the Wheat Board is. And we find that a year ago the Wheat Board had 500 employees. Well now, think about that for a minute. What

would those 500 employees do this fall? They're not moving wheat. We're told that very little wheat will move until New Year's. Absolutely nobody is selling them barley at 68 cents, unless they're in need of medicare — the psychiatric kind. So what would 500 people do?

And yet you're telling us that the Canadian Wheat Board is very efficient, but it takes 500 people to do absolutely nothing. Well, I shouldn't say that. They give us an increase in our last year's initial price, I believe of \$8. So it will take 500 people to work out that little increase, send us our allowance for what? — the third, fourth, fifth time this year. Like little kids, we're going to get a little bit of pawn to make us happy.

I think the biggest thing the Wheat Board needs is competition, Mr. Minister. The payroll costs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of those 500 employees is \$26 million. That's not administrative costs alone. That is just employee costs and benefits. That's \$26 million that comes out of our pools before we get our final payment.

So, Mr. Minister, I think you've got the message from us, I think especially from myself, where I feel there is room for improvement. And I think there is things that you could do, Mr. Minister.

I agree the biggest thing you have to do, and we would hope you would do, is lobby hard on the federal government, Mr. Vancilief, the Premier's friend; Mr. Chrétien. Let's call in some debts that he owes the Premier, and maybe we'll get somewhere for a change.

So there's things that you can do, Mr. Minister. The Crown leases was one example; high taxes is another problem that farmers, no different than anyone else, are trying to abide with and pay. Lower taxes would help them. Lower fuel taxes would certainly help farmers and all business.

You could quit downloading on RMs and all municipalities. In fact it would be nice if you even started to return some of the money you've taken from them since you've come to power in 1991.

But you know, an example of what you could do as a province is just a couple of states south when we see what the governor of South Dakota did. And yes, he was playing politics. But look at the attention he got the farmers in South and North Dakota.

And they're no different than our farmers; they're going through exactly the same things we are. And I think you would agree, Mr. Minister, he brought to light some of their problems and it looks like he's getting some action.

And I guess what we're calling on you to do, if you have to play politics, do anything you have to — cause a fuss, get the federal government's attention, and please let's start addressing this problem now, not a year from now when it's far too late for many of our farmers.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Murrell: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to join in this debate and to speak in favour of the motion.

I'd like to raise some points that are worth noting. The fact that there are 56,995 farms in the province of Saskatchewan in 1996. The fact that the average age of a farmer in Saskatchewan today is 49 years old. And the fact that the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool is closing 235 elevators in rural Saskatchewan in the upcoming year.

What does the future hold for rural Saskatchewan? Is there a future for rural Saskatchewan? And are we prepared for our future?

I'm a farmer's wife and a partner. I have experienced 30 years in rural Saskatchewan watching the changes, enjoying the good years, and worrying through the bad years. 1998 is a year of extreme stress. The north-west part of the province has experienced severe drought in many areas. Since last fall the average rainfall there was 3 to 4 inches. And this did not bode well for crops nor pastures.

My husband fed cows until the middle of May, and in late September started to do so again. The pastures are bare and the water source is dry. Sloughs that had water in the '30s are empty. And the crops that were planted with such high hopes — canola averaging 8 to 15 bushels; wheat was number one, high protein but poor yield; peas, 25 to 40 bushels per acre and little market value.

Rail line abandonment, elevator closures, school closures, farm sales, bankrupt businesses, smaller tax base, vacant communities. How do you remain optimistic when you are so dependent on the weather.

When CN and CP rail informed the public that rail lines were going to be abandoned, producers, government, and marketing companies began to look for solutions — solutions that would help to keep rural Saskatchewan viable. Discussions regarding short-lines and highways have been taking place the past four years and changes are being implemented.

For those of you who travelled throughout Saskatchewan this summer, you may have experienced highway construction. For example, Highway 21 is being upgraded to accommodate heavy grain traffic to the new terminals in Unity.

Terminals are being built in targeted centres to handle grain from a larger trading area. Unity elevator used to handle about 100,000 tonnes of grain. Now the Sask Wheat Pool terminal and the north-west terminal handle about 400,000 tonnes of grain.

Yes, Sask Wheat Pool phasing out more than 200 elevators will be devastating to some rural communities, but let's not forget that when our forefathers settled in the rural areas they had to be creative and innovative to survive, and that is exactly what these communities are doing now.

The closure of Sask Wheat Pool has opened the doors for competitors, and Louis Dreyfus Canada recently announced plans to construct a large capacity elevator in Wilkie.

And all is not gloom and doom in the livestock industry. The marketplace is brimming with emu, elk, buffalo, hogs, and cattle. Hog production has increased, providing jobs for our young people in our rural areas.

We have also seen growth in the beef industry which is increasing interest in feedlot operations. Since we lost the annual 300 million Crow benefit, we as producers must be as cost-effective as possible and use our grains to feed our stock, our hogs, our beef, our chickens, our elk.

I do believe the Saskatchewan prairies will once again see buffalo grazing in large groups. Factories for processing are developing. The Battlefords are seriously being considered for this venture from North Dakota, and what better place for it. We have the buffalo, we have the space, and we have the labour.

I had the opportunity to tour an emu ranch in Luseland this summer with our friend across the floor. Eggs were being incubated, chickens were being raised, and the oil and meat is being marketed.

Maverick Tannery in Unity opened a store several years ago. This business now tans ostrich, bears, bison, deer, elk, moose, and coyote hides. A group of entrepreneurs in Wilkie are soon to open a business that is a plus for elk producers.

People are venturing into new crops to make their land viable. The community of Lucky Lake has seen this happen. Potatoes are being grown for export. Last year the people of Lucky Lake and Outlook area and the Lake Diefenbaker Potato Corporation built a fresh-pack plant in Lucky Lake.

There's construction for a new flaking and dehydration plant began this spring, creating 125 full-time jobs and 100 seasonal jobs for the Lucky Lake, Beechy, and Outlook areas.

Fifty-eight hundred acres of seeded potatoes were grown this spring with planned expansion to 8,000 seeded acres by the year 2000. And in addition, the company plans to create a trucking division to transport its products to the north-western United States.

DELSA Manufacturing of Delisle is providing jobs for people in this area. Here potato and cabbages are being processed for Kentucky Fried Chicken franchises. Coleslaw and potato salad by the bucket. Local products are being purchased here first, then from Manitoba and Alberta. The potential for growers is increasing, as Saskatchewan doesn't grow enough to meet their demand.

Echinacea is being grown in small quantities but there are more farmers getting interested. It is a high investment crop but it also has a high return. At one time it was grown for an Asian market, but now North America is becoming more knowledgeable about its use. And our farmers are experimenting in spices such as dill and caraway. These crops have an unlimited market, but once again are very dependent on the weather.

Which takes us back to our future. I believe that there will be fewer farms in Saskatchewan and throughout Canada. Gone are the large families and the half-section farms.

Big is not always better, but it is the future and it is driven by the marketplace and the input costs. I believe the average age of a farmer will decrease because of the marketplace. Who but the very young will be adventurous and be willing to experiment with new crops and high-tech machinery.

What the future holds for rural Saskatchewan depends on us. If we want to see our communities survive and grow, we must be willing to make changes and to accept change. If we grow crops, then we must find a way to process it and encourage more . . . (inaudible) . . . and mavericks to open their doors so that we ship finished products to waiting markets. Let us be adventurous and show our pioneering spirit. Where there is a will, there is a way.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, farmers today face some very difficult and outside pressures. They can and must be addressed at the national level. Farm net income levels continue to decline in Canada while Europe and U.S. recognize the importance of agriculture.

Let us not forget that Europeans have been hungry and will continue to protect their farmers so that they never experience this threat again. The U.S. farmers protest our trucks crossing the border. Elections are in the near future and the senators respond with emergency aid.

(1530)

We farmers have been inventive. We have diversified and we have adopted new ideas into our daily living. However, we cannot compete with the subsidies that European and American farmers enjoy. They do need assistance on the national scene if they are to survive their period of low commodity prices and high input costs.

But we as farmers and producers have responded to the changing marketplace and the global influences. Our provincial government has worked to make NISA more responsive and to reduce crop insurance premiums and we will continue to do so.

But Saskatchewan, with its population of 1 million, cannot afford to compete with European and American subsidies. We need our federal government to be proactive, to show their commitment to Canadian farmers and to the West. When there is an opportunity at the World Trade Organization negotiations, let us hope they don't forget the reality of Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise here today and join in the debate on the difficulties facing farmers in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this NDP government is once again standing up here today claiming to speak for Saskatchewan people. This time it's farmers. But as always, I have to question their sincerity.

That Saskatchewan farmers are facing difficulty is not a matter with which anyone would take issue. Indications are that Saskatchewan farm income will drop dramatically compared with the five-year average as the minister has mentioned earlier.

Statistics also indicate that gross income for the first six months of this year is also down close to 9 per cent from the previous year. Last year was also one which witnessed the drops in the prices of the major grains.

Now gross income, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is by no means a measure of profitability in itself. So a drop in gross income, regardless of the number, is probably far more damaging than that number would ever suggest.

Most of these problems, Mr. Deputy Speaker, come from subsidizations introduced by our foreign competitors as we've heard this afternoon, mainly the United States and the European union.

Some of these problems though are also a product of the currency crisis which has overcome much of Asia and many other parts of the world which are either major consumers or suppliers of many farm products.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in recent weeks in the United States, Republican and Democratic representatives have been debating on how much aid to provide American farmers. The Republicans want 3.9 billion U.S., while the Democrats want 7.3 billion to help address the great glut of grains and livestock produced on American farms. In total, American farmers could receive as much as \$20 billion U.S. in subsidies and disaster assistance. This falls somewhat short of the damaging 26 billion U.S. dollars Congress provided to American farmers in 1986.

It's my understanding that after all of these subsidies are said and done, the Canadian farmers received somewhat more than a third of the financial support that their American and European counterparts received. Canada in effect, while a strong supporter of global free trade as a means of ridding the world of distorted trade subsidies which harm farm families, is becoming the last Boy Scout.

All our competitors are breaking the rules and we are suffering as a consequence. Clearly if they're going to continue to undertake such practices, governments must take actions to stop such distortions and find ways of helping farmers through these tough times.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only are subsidies a difficulty which we have to overcome, but so too is the economic crisis overcoming many areas of the world. While currency speculation, banking problems, and other factors have helped create the Asian flu, it's my hope that major economic powers including Canada will seek means of remedying these problems on a global scale so that we might have an economic recovery elsewhere in the world.

Healthy economies in Asia, although distant, are very important to the well-being of export-oriented economies like ours in Canada and Saskatchewan. A good example of how these problems hurt us can be seen in China's recent decision to purchase malting barley from the European union.

Regrettably, some of this feed, like a similar purchase from Australia, is destined to be used for malting because, like most Asian countries, China is not in a position to afford the barley as malting barley. This further depresses our malting barley

prices. And it's important that governments across the world do their best to straighten this world economy out.

Those things aside, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the real question we are facing here today is whether the NDP members opposite are the least bit sincere about helping our Saskatchewan farmers and our rural communities.

While they sometimes will pride themselves on supposedly speaking up for Saskatchewan people, the truth I think is more in their record, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In April of last year I received a letter from the Minister of Agriculture, and I believe it shows just how much those NDP members really care about Saskatchewan farmers. While they pride themselves with speaking up, I believe that this letter shows just how little they really do care, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In it the Minister of Agriculture says, and I quote:

I understand the concerns of your constituents. Farmers have long felt left to the mercy of grain companies, railroads, banks, and manufacturers of farm equipment and inputs.

While the Minister of Agriculture recognizes that farmers feel they're at the mercy of grain companies, banks, and input manufacturers, what is this government willing to do about it? Well at least they've spoke up about railways. They've done nothing about the other issues.

Even what they've done about the railways is undermined by the fact that they've done little, if anything, to help our ailing and crumbling Saskatchewan highway system. All they've done in that regard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is give the people of this province . . . And I would quote from another article here, "Romanow roads," which deserve to be called such because they're not fit to be called highways.

If the members opposite have done anything else on the issue of transportation, it's to create local transportation committees and attempt to force them to participate in choosing which parts of the road infrastructure should be abandoned as quality roads. Rather than try and get people to help you to choose how to downsize the road system, you should be getting rural people to help you to decide on how to improve it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government recognizes that farmers are at the mercy of banks, grain companies, and input manufacturers. But does it care enough about rural communities to speak up for them? The answer of course is no they don't care, and no, the NDP has no intentions of speaking up for people in rural Saskatchewan.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool announced its intention to shut down 235 elevators in some 170 Saskatchewan communities. This will cost many precious rural jobs, tax revenues, and numerous delivery points. In the past the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool has avoided selling these facilities to local producers, other grain companies, or organizations. It's just ripped them down, and in recent memory we've seen some good elevators destroyed even though local producers wanted the chance to help seek out another buyer.

Without delivery points farmers will be forced to travel greater distances and potential short lines will have much less chance of succeeding. Without elevators to deliver to, there's little chance that a short line can attract the traffic that it needs to become a viable operation.

A couple of weeks ago I wrote to the president of the Pool and I asked him to address these problems, particularly the issue of destroying elevators without first giving locals an opportunity to purchase them, despite the great loss of rural jobs, the significant damage this will do to potential short-line operators, and the additional distance that these decisions will force farmers to have to haul for greater distances.

And I have a copy of that letter here that I wrote to — I guess for lack of a better description — ConAgra North, in the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. I'd like to see if any of the members opposite have raised any of these concerns with the Pool on behalf of Saskatchewan farmers. I think the answer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that they haven't because they don't care about Saskatchewan farmers. Once again they place large business ahead of the interests of average working people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture says that he and his NDP colleagues recognize that farmers feel that they are at the mercy of banks. Well recognizing is one thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but caring enough about the people to do something about it, now that's an entirely different story.

Earlier this year I asked the government in this House whether they intended to raise any of the concerns of Saskatchewan residents on the issue of mega-bank mergers to the federal officials and ministers that were studying that matter. In a written response from the Minister of Justice I soon learned that they'd done little, if anything, and they had no intentions of making any submissions to federal officials.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as an MLA that represents a rural constituency, I thought it was important to ensure that the views of my constituents were brought to the attention of federal officials. The motion before us today talks about the difficulties that farmers are facing. Unlike the members opposite I realize that access to credit, off-farm jobs, and a host of other issues that revolve around mega-bank mergers will have an impact on our farm population.

Mega-mergers threaten to give this province as many as 50 fewer branches, and increase service charges and reduce competition. These items will affect producers across the province by increasing costs and reducing their access to credit. They'll likely also result in the loss of precious rural jobs which are often necessary as off-farm sources of income, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Because I care about how these mega-mergers will affect my constituents, including producers, I made an effort to assess their concerns and opinions on this issue; and I made sure I brought them to the attention of both the federal Minister of Finance and to the Premier. I called on the federal minister to remember that an overwhelming majority of people who responded are worried about how mega-mergers will affect farmers, other small businesses, and their rural communities. Without access to reasonably priced credit and understanding,

the well-being of many farmers will be put in jeopardy.

I also urge the Premier to follow the lead of his B.C. counterpart who not only assessed the views of B.C. residents but commissioned studies on how this would affect the B.C. economy. Glen Clark made sure federal officials were aware of those concerns. In this province it's a different story, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Despite my urgings to follow the lead of his British Columbia counterpart the Premier has done nothing. Even though his Agriculture minister knows farmers are at the mercy of banks, the Premier is willing to let mega-banks with billion-plus profits merge to the detriment of Saskatchewan farmers and other people in this province, without saying, without saying a single word to represent the interests of average people.

Once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government is willing to put money and mega-profits ahead of the interests of average people, be they farmers or anyone else. Not only do we have to question how sincere they are about speaking up for Saskatchewan farmers but we should question, we certainly should question, whether they still have the ability to care.

(1545)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP members opposite today are trying to create the impression that they want to speak up for Saskatchewan farmers. The sincerity of their attempts is at best questionable, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And another example why can be seen in how they've handled the issue of rising farm input costs. The Minister of Agriculture, as I said before, recognizes that farmers feel they're at the mercy of farm input manufacturers. If he and his colleagues were sincerely concerned about farmers — like they try and let on — then they'd speak up on this issue as well.

Over the last couple of years, I've repeatedly brought this very issue to the attention of both the federal and provincial ministers of Agriculture. I wrote to a variety of input manufacturers and I expressed concerns on behalf of producers in the province and asked them to justify their actions on input costs.

I've yet to see what the Minister of Agriculture or any of his colleagues have done on this matter. Have you written one single input manufacturer and asked them to justify the burdensome costs they're charging for producers who are now being squeezed by international subsidies and low commodity prices? If you have, then show us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a good example of how little this government cares about farmers can be found in what they're doing with respect to grazing fees. In a recent letter dated October 6 from the Minister of Agriculture, the minister states and I quote:

That Saskatchewan has and continues to do everything under its control to control those inputs under our control.

Well despite this claim that they're trying to stand up for farmers, this NDP government has increased or will increase grazing fees to producers by 20 to 25 per cent.

I'd like the minister to explain how gouging farmers on a fee that is under his government's control, how that represents doing everything under your control to curb rising farm input costs.

Once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, like with cancelling GRIP contracts, health cuts, and letting our highways crumble, this government places money before people. Once again they show they just don't care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the government wishes to speak up for farmers and do so effectively, it has to show it cares. And the member from Estevan speaks up now; he's showing he's caring today for farmers just like he showed he cared for IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) workers yesterday. Yes, they saw.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this government wishes to speak up for farmers and do so effectively, it has to show it cares. If the members opposite really care about the plight of farmers in this province, they'd fight for farmers on all important issues affecting them, rather than picking a few which give them a chance to create, just create an impression that they care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the members want to be sincere about the motion before this House today, it's time they started speaking up on important issues affecting farmers, like elevator closures, the impact of mega-bank mergers, and rising farm input costs. It's time they remembered when they used to care and start placing farmers and average people ahead of money, profits, and big business.

So in the interests of allowing my colleagues across to show the opportunity that they do care, that they are prepared to do something, I'm ready to propose an amendment to the motion before us here today. I move the amendment as follows:

That the words "federal government" be deleted and replaced by "federal and provincial governments."

This is moved, seconded by the member from Melville. I so present. I so move.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Trew): — I find the amendment in order, and rule that debate on the amendment and the main motion shall be done concurrently.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll just speak briefly to the amendment, having listened to the Agriculture minister's motion and some of his comments subsequent to presenting the motion where he spoke about the need for us here in Saskatchewan, in order to increase our economic activity and to assist the agricultural community, we needed to add population. We needed to diversify. We needed to do something about prices. We all agree. That comes as no surprise.

The member from the opposition spoke about the downturn in the agricultural economy. We all know that. We're all aware of that. We need to come up with some solutions. It's very easy to stand up in this House and point fingers and criticize and slam people when they're not here to defend themselves and not hear any solutions or suggestions as to how we resolve these

problems.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to get back to this business of adding population to this province. In a recent Public Accounts Committee meeting, the deputy minister of Economic Development pointed out, in response to a question, the five or six major industries in this great province of ours. After some thought, brief thought, he came up with number one — agriculture. No question about it. Yet how much attention does the NDP government pay to agriculture. You don't hear anything about supporting agriculture in this province.

I went on to enquire about what sort of plans did the NDP government have for creating some assistance or some help for our agricultural economy. Well, there was nothing in policy . . . that was a matter of policy and that was yet to be decided by the agriculture department, Agriculture and Food.

But what distresses me is when we talk about adding population, and you hear of people that do in fact come to Saskatchewan and do attempt to start up a farming operation and bring with them their equipment and their families and make an effort to settle in, and then they get faced with additional bills from the NDP government for provincial sales tax on the equipment that they bring with them. Is that encouragement for people to come to our province to start a business? That's discouragement. These are people that now say had we known that we would have to pay provincial sales tax on our vehicles after bringing them in here then we would not have come to this province.

Now how do you add population to a province when the oppressive rules and regulations and tax laws are such that they do not welcome people of this province? That's what bothers me.

I call on the Minister of Agriculture and the members opposite and all members of this House to support our amendment, because it's not one level of government alone that needs to be involved in addressing a issue as serious as what the agricultural situation is in this province. And anybody from rural Saskatchewan realizes and appreciates that. All they're looking for is people to work together to resolve that problem; to help resolve that problem, not nitpick and point fingers and holler at one another about not doing this or that. You resolve more problems by working together than you do butting heads.

So I urge all members of this House to support the amendment that was proposed by my colleague, the member from Thunder Creek, in order that we bring all members of this House and all members of both levels of government working together to help our ailing agricultural economy in this province. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, some people have said they're pleased to engage in this debate today. I'm not very happy. I wish this circumstance did not exist in Saskatchewan where we have to talk about the difficulty that some of our most determined and committed citizens and entrepreneurs are engaging in. It's important that we talk about it, but it's certainly anything but a pleasure.

I'm a bit disappointed by the amendment moved by the

members opposite. Surely there's a recognition that Saskatchewan people are doing much to assist the circumstance for farmers here. We're spending four and a half times the amount that any other government is spending in Canada. We are now asking for the federal government to become a partner with us in this.

I think it's a bit of a travesty that members opposite in the Liberal Party would suggest that the federal government does not have significant responsibilities in the areas of international trade. We understand that Saskatchewan's voice is often important in making changes in the federal position. But this is clearly a matter of federal jurisdiction and federal responsibility.

The previous speaker, the member from Thunder Creek, was speaking about the things Saskatchewan should be doing. It sounded like the federal government was helpless unless Saskatchewan's holding their hand and carrying them along the way. Surely it isn't a provincial responsibility that the federal government cut \$6 billion out of the health care system which we've backfilled every penny. Surely not.

Surely no one in Canada — no Liberal, no Conservative, no New Democrat — believes that. Even the federal minister acknowledges they need to start restoring money. Whether it's employment insurance, surely, surely nobody would propose that the federal government should keep taking the money of workers and of the small businesses of Canada, and use them as a federal tax, as a federal tax write-down.

Surely, surely, surely nobody would accept the fact that in Saskatchewan, where farmers more than anybody are dependent on the road system, that the federal government who spends not a penny on the road system ever, except by a few special programs here and there, that they should somehow . . . that we should also somehow rescue them from their cuts to the transportation system here.

They're allowing the railroads to abandon. They're allowing the rules to be so soft that a short line rail company wants to set up — the rail lines can fragment and frustrate the negotiations. We're supposed to help the federal government. We certainly trying to help the farmers but we can't help the federal government. That's their job.

We can't help the fact that the federal government cut out the support for transportation for our grains. What is one of the single biggest shocks to every farmer every time they take a load to the elevator? They get the cheque and what? A third of it disappears in freight. With today's prices a half of it often disappears in freight. It is a travesty what has happened . . . what the federal government allowed to happen to the transportation costs for farmers. We cannot help the federal government to stop making mistakes. We can remind them what they should do but we cannot do their work for them.

(1600)

The Bank Act . . . The member from Thunder Creek says we should be doing the Bank Act; the Bank Act is a federal Act. We have amended provincial legislation to make credit unions fair players in the economy. We are not the participants that

have to try and make the Bank Act work for farmers. Your colleagues in Ottawa have that responsibility.

And one more issue. On international trade, your colleagues — on the question of the MAI (multilateral agreement on investment) — your colleagues in Ottawa initiated the negotiation of that without telling anybody in Canada. Your colleagues offended virtually every Canadian, every individual citizen, every small business who feels there's a huge risk. And it was the voice of Saskatchewan that took a strong message to Ottawa that resulted in the ending of those MAI talks today.

Today, finally the voice of Saskatchewan was heard in Ottawa and in France and the MAI negotiations have now ended, but we can't help the federal government. Now I didn't enter this discussion in order to engage in a partisan debate but I could not let those comments of the member opposite stand without being challenged. We as a government are very, very committed to making Saskatchewan work for farmers and all the rest of our community. But we cannot do the work of the federal government for them. And we will continue to point out your shortcomings, but we will not try and do your work for you, we cannot.

Now I want to say about the farming situation in Saskatchewan. The reason that it makes me a bit . . . a lot sad about the present circumstance, as I said earlier, is that we have the hardest working sector of our economy, the longest standing, the base of our economy since Saskatchewan joined Confederation, feeling some real income stress. I want to also begin by saying I don't want to cause further negative feelings about agriculture in Saskatchewan. The cash crunch in agriculture in Saskatchewan is enough to create some pretty negative feelings.

I want to say that this is a very, very solid industry in Saskatchewan. It's a very solid industry that's experiencing a current cash shortage. It's a very solid industry since the day it was begun when 900,000 immigrants came to Saskatchewan to take advantage of this new place of hope and opportunity in order to raise their families in an agricultural lifestyle.

We are still the most agricultural province in all of Canada but it is a sad state when those families do all the things they do — and I want to say in a moment the many things they do to help themselves — and they continue to suffer the kind of income stress they presently suffer.

The farmers of Saskatchewan have done everything within their power, going back historically to the formation of the Canadian Wheat Board, in order to secure the best market price that they can secure.

Now some people want to challenge that. But I want to say to the members opposite and to every Saskatchewan person, that there is no challenging the basic logic that farmers working together through a single agency in a marketplace gets them the best price. No challenging that basic conclusion.

Now the fact that the Wheat Board is now in the middle of elections, this is an evolution. We now are going to have farmer-elected representatives running that board. And I think all of us have said we want the Canadian Wheat Board to continue to respond to new and current challenges and

circumstances. And I have full confidence that they will.

And I want to say that the Wheat Board is one of the many things that farmers have done in their own interests and they will now, with elected members to that board, as long as we are very careful to elect members who believe in the Wheat Board. Let's be very careful in choosing who we elect so that that Wheat Board will continue to serve farmers as it has in the past, delivering hundreds of millions of dollars of extra money into farmers' pockets no matter what the market conditions. That's the first thing farmers have done to help themselves.

Farmers have adapted to every new circumstance, to every new opportunity in the marketplace, and Saskatchewan farmers more than any, Saskatchewan farmers have diversified into the list of products that others have mentioned, but if I just run my mind through the crops I see and the facilities I see in my constituency when I drive by, whether it's borage or chickpeas or canola in an area that never grew it, or herbs and spices or fish farming now and an expansion of potato farming and bison and elk and emus, and the list goes on and on and on. But these are new products.

The minister spoke earlier about the degree to which farmers here have shifted away from a traditional wheat economy to an economy that takes advantage of every opportunity they see. Our farmers have the bragging rights to being the most responsive of farmers to changing world conditions of any in the world. And they leave American farmers in the dust a hundred miles back.

American farmers, as you know, challenged Saskatchewan farmers only a few weeks ago on the grounds that somehow we were excessively subsidized. I can tell you, Saskatchewan farmers had their subsidies reduced when the federal government removed the subsidy for transportation. And the other major competitors, the European Union and the American side of our partnership here, they transferred their subsidies into longer-standing subsidies that are still there.

And it's not unusual for Americans to be getting a dollar and a dollar and a half Canadian worth of subsidies on their grain. And it's not unusual for Europeans to get a hundred and two hundred dollars an acre in subsidy for the land on which they grow crops. These are the issues that we want to address in our motion today, the unfair challenges to our farmers who've done everything in their own power to succeed and are faced with these sort of circumstances.

We want the federal government to take the responsibility — not have their provincial cousins pretend they don't have any — we want the federal government to take that responsibility and examine that question, and if there is unfairness to address it. And if they cannot address the unfairness, then make sure our farmers are treated fairly in this marketplace that they have worked so effectively in.

But farmers haven't just expanded their variety of crops and their contributions to community in that sense, our farmers have also begun to do value added on the farm.

One of the great joys of the job of being a MLA is to listen to the new challenges farmers face, and only a few months ago

one of the farmers in the southern part of my constituency had the problem of trying to get ocean containers from his farm to the ocean liner over highways that didn't allow primary weights. Those are nice kinds of challenges. You see farmers on-site processing product right on the farm for the international market, and then we have to adjust our policies. And we work very hard to make sure these policies are . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . every policy on earth needs continual review.

So we've seen farmers increase the diversification in processing on their own facilities and the wide variety of products that they've made in that regard, whether it's with llamas and wool or say fish or oat flour or anything that comes to mind in the marketplace, the farmers are doing their part.

But beyond that, beyond that, farmers have also, farm families have also taken the opportunity, and many lament the fact that this has been necessary, but they take the opportunity to earn off-farm income. And so farmers have sought, when the farm income is inadequate, to go off the farm and seeking these other opportunities for income off the farm when diversification on the farm isn't enough.

It is a credit to our farmers that they have done everything within their own power. And in doing that they not only help our communities and the national economy, they also help our environment. Our farmers have adjusted their farming practices and we've seen a huge increase in no-till farming, in minimum-till farming. And I have to give credit to the member from Kindersley who was one of the early participants in this.

But the change in farming practice in Saskatchewan is one of the single biggest contributors to the reduction of greenhouse gases in Canada. The single project that can reduce in one fell swoop the greenhouse gases in Canada the most is leaving the organic matter in the soil and not tilling it in and having it break down.

Now this is a practice that is still being tried in a number of areas in our province. And with the squeezed economies of higher transportation costs, we're finding that it does work very well; but in some areas it cannot work because there isn't enough cash around to put the input costs into those kinds of operations. So we're seeing farmers test the limits of those sorts of new changes.

But in every way they can, they are beginning to try to address their own needs. But when you're faced with the challenges that others have raised here with respect to prices in the international economy, when you look at the costs that have been introduced because of the abandonment of the railroads, because of the tax costs associated with higher road costs now because trucks are going over them, these are real, real challenges for our farmers.

And I want to say that we need our farmers to be fully confident that we are aware of these circumstances; but more importantly that the federal government is aware of these circumstances and that they will not abandon them to circumstances they cannot control.

Because, if there is anything important to Saskatchewan now, as it was 80 years ago, it is the root in the agricultural community. It is the heart of the co-operative nature of Saskatchewan. It is

the source from which many of our gifts of Canada have come — the most notable of which is our health care system where farmers working together recognized that a co-operative approach to providing health care was important — whether it's the co-operative nature of our communities, these things together have created the best place on earth in which to live.

These are rooted in the original farm communities which have now evolved to being larger communities and even to our cities. This is a value system that comes from the very earliest of times in Saskatchewan. And we should honour and respect that that has given a great gift to this country; and we should honour and respect that that tradition needs to continue. And we need to assure our farmers that we're behind them as they're facing this circumstance.

I, therefore, will put my strong support behind the motion that the Minister of Agriculture has moved and invite all of the others to join me in supporting the farmers who've done so much for our province. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to make a few brief remarks here today, especially after hearing some of the members opposite speak on this motion. And I'm going to encourage them to support the amendment because not only is it fair to do so, but it's, I think, an obligation on their part to do it.

Now I've listened to the Minister of Agriculture making some points, I guess about the Crow benefit and oh, I guess they're still supporting the Crow. And I sat back thinking, you know that's most interesting coming from the minister who really has hung his hat on hog production here in this province. And you know, I know he would like to also have finishing for cattle, but really hanging his hat on hogs. And how's that going to happen? It's because you're having a feed grain that doesn't have a subsidy put on to it, and so that we can afford to have those kinds of finishing operations here in this province.

And I would have to ask him to explain to the people, I guess of Heartland, and the people in places like Wood Mountain, where I was at only a few days ago, where they have a 12,000 pig operation, multiplier barn, just about finished. What would he say to them, if in fact we were still putting that heavy subsidy on grain, setting it out — what's going to happen to that hog production there, or the one that's being proposed in Ponteix, or one the one that's being proposed in Shaunavon or several around the province?

Now I think what we want to talk about here is the role of this provincial government. Now firstly, they've cut hundreds of millions of dollars from the agriculture budget since they've been in power and I think it's . . . What is it somewhere around 6, 700 million bucks that they have cut out of that budget? That doesn't show to the people out there, to rural Saskatchewan, or to the farmers that in fact they're sincere when they say that they want to stick up for farmers.

(1615)

They have cut hundreds of millions of dollars from, of course

like I say, the agriculture budget but also our highway budget and our highway system, and look what we've got today for highways. Now it wasn't too many years ago we heard the Premier travelling the province making the comment that you know, these highways are Grant Devine's golf courses — 18 holes to the mile.

Take a drive around rural Saskatchewan today and take a look at what there is. It really makes those 18-hole-to-the-mile golf courses look pretty good. You know, today we have highways that they're saying that — they don't want to gravel highways just yet. They're half gravelled now. The potholes are touching and seriously that is getting to be a real problem because for those people that are going to be wanting to be transporting their product, whether it be hogs or cattle or grain, well how are they going to do it on these kind of highways?

And you look in the south-west, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what they're doing. They have said nothing when the branch lines are going to be ripped out and they, at the same time, are not doing anything about the highways. It's one thing to call on the federal government to share in the national highway program of No. 1 and No. 16, but what about the highways?

Oh I encourage the Minister of Highways and Transportation to take a drive down in the south-west, all throughout the Wood River constituency. It is a real shame and I know the member from Thunder Creek is bringing in a Bill I guess now and in the next session as well, calling on some of these highways which have become so poor in condition to be now called Romanow Roads. Well that should be . . . you know, you shouldn't be able to look to yourself in the mirror and say that you have done a service to this province the way you have let it go downhill.

So when we talk about this amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say if the NDP vote against our amendment of including the provincial government with the federal government into having a responsibility to agriculture and rural folks of this province, then they are completely abdicating any and all responsibility for agriculture. They are completely washing their hands of it.

Under the Constitution of Canada there are only two subject matters that require both federal and provincial concurrent responsibility — immigration and agriculture. They know that and that is why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the provincial government in their own emergency motion — they should have had themselves included under the Constitution of Canada, Mr. Speaker, and they're trying to let on they didn't even know it was there.

And you can't pretend it's not up to you because you have this obligation. In fact that's why the feds contribute to crop insurance and the Agri-Food Innovation Fund. So we'll be watching very closely how you vote, and we want you to live up to your responsibility.

You know, you're paying . . . You're forcing farmers to pay record-high taxes, and yet you sit back and you do nothing — nothing at all — about the record-high input costs that farmers are forced with. And a lot of it is directly the result of your provincial policies, your taxation policies.

Well you say that agriculture in this province is king. You sit

back, you do nothing. You sit, you cry, and you whine, and you take no responsibility. I ask you to take a little bit of action, get a proper, long-term safety net program in place. You're not doing that. You talk the talk but really you're not walking the walk because the programs that you have in place are not adequate, and it's really starting to show today.

Take a little bit of leadership in this transportation stuff. Don't just let the railroads be yanked out — fight for them. And if you see that it's not going to work in all locations, make sure that they have a highway system or some sort of system to get their product to market. Take a little action yourself. And please take a drive into the south-west and you'll see exactly what I'm talking about. You have let this thing go far too long.

So I support — strongly support — the motion as amended.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I too would like to add my comments to support the motion and the amendment to the motion. I do believe that the provincial government has some say in what happens to farmers, not so much in what way farmers should act or should conduct their business, but certainly in the way that they can put forward policy that would alleviate some of the burden that farmers are looking at today.

I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the problems associated with agriculture and with farming, the problems worldwide as far as our financial crisis are so complex, that it seems almost unresolvable. And so I believe that short-term assistance or subsidies to farmers are necessary in order to cushion the shock that farmers are undergoing right now, and by no means do I believe that long-term subsidies are the answer. They distort market prices and certainly aren't a true picture of what's happening in the world.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the provincial government and some of the members across were mentioning that they believe that it was not in their hands; it's in the Canadian government's hands to assist farmers and to take care of this crisis that farmers are in.

What I would like to suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that farmers are self-determining and they wish to self-determine their business and their future. And in adding to that, I would just like to challenge the provincial government and encourage them to take this time historically to put forward to the federal government and to everyone in this country that possibly this should be the time when farmers should have the freedom for dual marketing. In that way they can determine just how they end up with the profit they need in their pockets.

It is up to them. If it doesn't pan out, it is nobody's problem but their own. If it does pan out, they will feel very good about their own self-determination, and government will not have to take any flack for it.

So at this time I'd also like to ask the provincial government to reconsider what has happened due to reassessment. Last year in this House, or rather last May or June, I did bring up to the Minister of Agriculture that in a sense this government is contributing to the demise of farmers through the high property taxes that they are now responsible for for education.

The financial burden that farmers are undergoing now due to falling grain prices, due to the transportation issue, due to so many things, input costs and so on, are in fact pulling them down to a point of no return. The provincial government does have a mandate to try in every way they can to alleviate this horrible burden that farmers are undergoing. One way of doing that is to certainly look at the whole reassessment issue and hopefully alleviating some of that burden that farmers are looking at right now.

One more comment on the debate that surrounds the responsibility for highways and roads. Of course it would nice if the federal government would put more money into highways. But the fact remains that regardless of why and how the highways have deteriorated, it is provincial jurisdiction; it is provincial responsibility.

The province does have gas taxes and they do have licence fees as well as other means to come up with revenue for the highway system. It is their responsibility and there is no getting out of it. We are asking the provincial government to come up with certainly a way to look at their revenues in the next budget to assist the highway system and in fact to assist farmers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am somewhat concerned about what this agriculture crisis is going to do to the people in this province. In the '70s and early '80s we had numbers of suicides. We had farm families that were being displaced practically and having to go into the urban communities. We had chaos and we had trouble.

What concerns me also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the sort of negligence that we have, or the sort of not recognizing that if our farm and rural communities go down the drain and no longer exist, that our urban communities will also suffer and end up being in the same turmoil as rural communities are. Many urban people are now finding it a major struggle to make a living, but it is going to get even worse.

So I ask the provincial government to take on their responsibility along with the federal government and to do what they can in the short term to face and alleviate this crisis. But I ask them also to free up the regulatory burden, to free up the red tape, and to allow our farmers to make their own decisions on how to market their products so that they can be self-determining, and in effect I believe this will end up having a better result for all the people of the province. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to support the motion that has been put forward today by our Minister of Agriculture which urgently calls on the federal government to address the issue of recent American and European grain subsidies and the resulting low commodity prices immediately, work with our trading partners to reduce subsidies, and in the event no immediate progress is made to bridge that cash shortfall appropriately in order to protect our Canadian producers.

Our federal government has abdicated their role, their responsibility, to agriculture and to grain transportation, and many of my other colleagues have already eloquently spoken on

these issues.

And I think when we look at what the provincial responsibility is, we have been there. We've been there in agriculture on a per capita basis as we have provided 4.7 times the provincial average of any other province to agriculture and support; 4.1 times as much as the federal government per capita; 2.2 times as much as Alberta, the next highest province; and 2.4 times as much as Manitoba. So clearly Saskatchewan government, Saskatchewan taxpayers, contribute more than any other taxpayers in Canada to helping make our agricultural sector grow.

And it is a sector, as other colleagues have said, that it is a strong industry in our province. It's one that's done a lot of work on diversity, value added. We have innovative and creative farmers, and they're seeking opportunities as best that they possibly can.

So I do not believe at all that our provincial government has abdicated their role. But the federal government's responsibility, looking across at what other countries are doing not only in transportation and in other aspects, have abdicated their responsibility.

As we have seen on talking about high input costs, where we have jurisdiction in crop insurance rates, we've been able to reduce those rates.

In transportation we have done more than just talk about the transportation needs. We've actually put in a budget in which there is increased dollars to go into transportation but also addressing, with all of the western provinces, the impact of what is happening from the federal level policies on grain transportation in this province and right across western Canada.

Our premiers across Canada and western Canada called for a halt to rail line abandonment at least during the review of the grain transportation system. We all called for abandonment as Transportation ministers because it seems to be that if you're reviewing a system and you truly want to review that system, that you don't let it be dismantled during the review.

Every premier, every Transportation minister, called on the federal government to do that, and they have not heard us and they have not halted abandonment. This is one aspect again at the federal level of not listening.

(1630)

Recently when we had the federal Minister of Transportation here in Saskatchewan, he said that we were exaggerating a crisis in Saskatchewan — exaggerating it — that really the rail lines are dealing very effectively with producers.

Well I'd like them to go out to the communities that are facing this abandonment where producers that I want to congratulate are trying to do everything they possibly can, putting together, looking at the options of running their own short lines as possibilities. The provincial government is trying to help them in those initiatives and we put some dollars towards those initiatives.

But we need a federal government that listens, as they also know. The changes to the Canada Transportation Act — federal officials have even said this, which is almost unbelievable — they said it was the railway's turn to have favour. Well they did get that favour and it's not working in the best interests of our producers or the people here of Saskatchewan, or right across western Canada.

When we look at the impact of what the commodity prices are doing and we look at what the increased freight costs are, the \$300 million difference in annual freight costs and increased grain handling charges, is the impact of what we have seen of \$300 million has a huge dollar value back to our producers in this province.

Freight rates now of a third to a half of what the grain receipt is. When we're into Montana, the producers there are saying their freight rate costs are two-thirds, where they're captive to one rail line system. And we have said over and over and over, even as western provinces we've been able to come to a consensus in coming to some of the solutions that need to be put into place, which is at the federal level. There needs to be . . . we need to ensure that the freight cap stays in place until you know that there's actual competition in the system, which we know there isn't.

In order for short lines and producers to have other choices, we need to have provisions of common access or at least access to either main line carrier.

In our submission to Justice Estey, in spite of the political differences across the western provinces, we again saw the absolute need of the federal government to recognize the importance of transportation and this chance to review a system that can put dollars back to producers. There is no use in getting an efficient system that does not maximize returns to the producers.

One of the pieces that we also said again was the extremely important role that the Canadian Wheat Board needs to play and will continue to play in not only sourcing the grain, finding the customers, but also still in transportation using all of the kinds of tools that can be there for an autonomous elected Wheat Board.

We also, when we did that submission, looked at what the road impact is of federal government policy, on literally of the dollars that it takes to improve the road system when you're transferring grain from rail to road and where the federal government still says that they have no obligation for dollars to go into that.

They took out the Crow benefit. Their policies are impacting our producers in our province. And they say . . . our friends here, the provincial Liberals, say the federal government has no responsibility in this. Not part of their jurisdiction. Well of course it's their jurisdiction. And every government across western Canada has said that.

We need to have dollars put back into the transportation system in this country, into grain transportation. We need to have policies that allow producers to have choices in their system. We need to have a system that is not dismantled at any cost. We

need to have our producers and our taxpayers protected. And the federal actions have been unconscionable in this as they say that we're exaggerating what is happening in the impact of their policies.

As I said earlier, as never before we need a federal government that recognizes the importance of agriculture, the importance of transportation to western Canada — to actually all of Canada. We are facing unbelievable pressures in all of the other countries in which billions of dollars are going into their infrastructure systems at a federal level. Billions of dollars are going in in subsidies, and we have a federal government that seems to be turning a blind eye and a blind ear to the concerns of western Canada, to the concerns of our producers here in Saskatchewan.

When I look at the member opposite that suggests that one of the solutions should be is to change the name of a highway to a road, it seems to me again it sounds like Liberal policy. Don't give us any dollars, don't talk about a system that will actually be in place in which what we are doing and working on; they say, just change the name. Somehow that's one of their Liberal solutions.

I think from now on, as never before, this provincial government has stood up for the producers in this province. But also we're seeing a united voice coming across western Canada to our federal government that transportation, producers, agriculture need to be protected in our province of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all know that this is not a good fall in our province. When we are told that net farm income could be cut in half, we know that that has a ripple effect to every man, woman, and child, every community, every business in this province.

And it is certainly turning up first of all in our farm implement dealerships. That is the first place that the downturn in the farm economy, besides of course the farmers themselves, is in our implement dealers. But it is going to ripple through our villages, our towns, our cities. Nobody can come unscathed when farm income is drastically cut as is happening now.

The government proposes a motion calling on the federal government to intervene as it's happening in other countries, to provide subsidies. This is what happened in the 1980s.

We, here in the Liberal opposition, acknowledge that it is absolutely imperative that Ottawa stand with the producers of this province and this country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — However I must note that under the Constitution of Canada there are only two things, two areas of jurisdiction which are given both to the federal and the provincial governments. Everything else is divided up. Foreign affairs is given to Ottawa, education is given to the provinces, monetary policy is given to the federal government, while highways are given to the provinces.

Only two things are given to both levels of government, and one of them is agriculture. I think that shows how the fathers of Confederation, how serious they took agriculture, when they said that both levels of government had to be concerned with agriculture.

So obviously the federal government and the provincial government both have to address the present crisis we are in. And that is something which dates back to the founding of our nation. The fathers of Confederation said that agriculture is something that is of such great importance, it is so foundational to our nation, that both levels of government must be concerned with the future of our farmers and of our producers.

In that respect not much has changed since 1867. Our country has seen enormous changes in many areas, but agriculture remains foundational to this province as it has been since the moment of our creation in 1905.

We know that our farmers have done a magnificent job in recent years in adapting to changes in transportation and marketing. We know that they are doing enormous things in the areas of crop diversification, value added. And we know that things are being produced in this province that only a few years ago would have been unthinkable, or even thought of as absurd, and yet we are now producing them here in Saskatchewan.

So our farmers are rising to the challenge as much as they possibly can. But when they are faced with the problem of competing with the treasuries of the European community or the federal government of the United States, that's asking an awful lot from our Saskatchewan producers and they can't do it unless their senior governments stand behind them.

We think that the federal government must do much more on behalf of our primary producers. But this cannot absolve the provincial government which last year cut the Agriculture and Food budget by \$122 million and total agriculture spending by over \$32 million. This is not a good example of commitment to agriculture and to our farmers. This is the commitment shown in the government's own public accounts for 1997-1998, the commitment they showed and in their own records, Ag and Food department spending dropped by \$122 million.

That's very sad, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's even more sad today when members opposite say, yes, we believe in agriculture, in fact we believe in agriculture so much that we think that Ottawa should spend more money but we should spend less.

Well, we all know that Grant Devine made his share of mistakes as premier of this province, but we also know that he showed an enormous commitment to the farmers of Saskatchewan. And at the same time as he was asking for Ottawa to come to the aid of our hard-pressed farmers, he was showing an example himself as premier of Saskatchewan. If charity begins at home, by the same token giving assistance and coming to the aid of those who need it, we have to give an example ourselves before we can ask that others will.

So nothing in the amendment moved by my colleague from Thunder Creek deludes from the responsibility that the federal government must demonstrate to saving agriculture in this

country. We are passionately committed to that.

We only say that if we really think there's a crisis out there, and if we really believe in saving prairie agriculture, then we will say it's a challenge for both levels of government, which is what the Constitution of Canada says. And if we say well, yes there's a crisis, but one level of government has no responsibility and can wash its hands. That sounds to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, like hypocrisy. That doesn't sound to me like we're taking the farm crisis very seriously.

If we are taking the farm crisis seriously we will ask both levels of government to do their very level best. Well I know it's been mentioned from time to time but I'm not a farmer. True, I was raised on a farm. But the one thing I know is that in this province the future of each and every one of us, no matter how close or distant we may be tied to the farm, the future of each and every one of us depends on the health and strength of our primary industry which is farming.

If we want to save our villages, if we want strong cities, if we want a strong provincial economy, it has to start with the farm economy. We take the farm crisis seriously. I have been spending a lot of time this fall talking to producers and farmers and farm implement dealers in my constituency. I know what they're up against. They tell me that they are disappointed that the provincial government raised Crown leases this year. Was this the year, I ask, to raise Crown lease on pastures by 25 per cent? Does that show, in this year of all years, does that show a commitment by the provincial government to save western agriculture? Or does that show an indifference to the crisis that our farmers are facing?

So while I appreciate very much the spirit and the wording of this resolution brought by government members, it is my position and the position of my colleagues that it is not weakened but in fact strengthened when we say loudly and clearly that the farm crisis must be addressed by both levels of government and not just one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1645)

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've watched and listened with great interest to the debate this afternoon about agriculture and the concerns surrounding agriculture, and listened to the member from Rosetown-Biggar, and the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy blaming the federal government for everything — no responsibility whatsoever for anything that happens in Saskatchewan. The Minister of Agriculture the same way. It's everybody else's fault.

And then they ... Probably what I thought was the most incredible thing though was the member from Melville getting up and saying, if you haven't got any solutions you shouldn't have the right to stand up and speak about the issue, and then sits down.

Doesn't say a word about one single solitary solution at all, not a single solitary solution, not one intelligent thought at all, and then sits down after scolding everybody in the place and saying that they have no right to speak unless they have some solutions

to the concerns of the farmers here in Saskatchewan.

Is that all? Is that all? I'll give you a few solutions in a moment. Is that all you have to offer? That is to scold everybody in the place and say you only have a right to speak if you have a solution?

Some of the things that we talk about in agriculture . . . I'll give you some of the things that we've talked about in agriculture that were solutions.

Earlier this summer we called for earlier withdrawals from NISA. And what happened? The federal government agreed to it and launched a program of early withdrawal. Part of a solution for the farmers' cash flow difficulties.

Earlier this summer we called for a . . . earlier this summer we called for some changes in the cash advance program to get farmers more money earlier in the season. And what happened? The federal government responded. Part of a solution to the cash crunch here in Saskatchewan.

Earlier this summer, earlier this summer, just a few weeks ago in fact, we called on the federal government to move towards awarding initial price . . . raising their initial prices sooner so that the farmers would have more money. A solution once again for trying to help with the cash flow difficulties of farmers.

Those are three solutions that we've advanced in the last few weeks. And the member gets up and says, you don't have a right to speak in this Legislative Assembly unless you have some solutions. There are three right there that we've talked about in the last few weeks.

Where's your solutions? Where's your solutions, Mr. Member? Where's your solutions, Mr. Member from Melville? None whatsoever. None whatsoever.

Those are three that we think are important.

We think the provincial government has a role to play in this. We think that the provincial government definitely has a role to play. Highways, transportation, highways, transportation, highways, transportation . . . Where's your solutions though? You say you have solutions. You present nothing to the Assembly in terms of solutions, Mr. Speaker. Speaks about responsibility, speaks about responsibility, but doesn't take any himself.

In the interest of time here . . . We've got a lot of things that we wanted to discuss about agriculture and we'll be doing them over the course of the next several weeks, Mr. Speaker, but in the interest of time and wanting to ensure that we get on the record of voting this very, very important issue that should be sent to the federal government as soon as possible, I will take my place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. It is my duty to warn the Assembly that the hon. member from Watrous is about to exercise his right to close the debate and afterwards all members will be precluded from speaking on this question.

Therefore if any member wishes to speak let that member do so now.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to close the debate. Just to make one point, and that point is that we will not be supporting the amendment. And I just want to clarify that statement.

Well the member for Wood River boos, but he knows that this resolution calls on the federal government to address the recent American/European subsidies. International trade, Mr. Deputy Speaker, international trade is a responsibility, an owned responsibility for negotiation at the federal level. So while we can provide support like this motion, if you add the words provincial government in there it would indicate that we, along with the U.S. . . . or the federal government, would be obligated to talk to Europe and the U.S. in terms of international trade. None of the provinces can do that. So that I just wanted to explain that's why we won't be accepting that amendment.

However, we do accept our responsibility as outlined by many members that spoke on this side of the House, with the support that we give to agriculture being greater than other province on a per capita basis, and the fact that we're 60/40 partners in NISA, 60/40 partners in crop insurance.

Mr. Speaker, that's the tradition. And that's why I think this motion should go forward as it was submitted. Thank you very much.

The division bells rang.

Amendment negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 13

Krawetz	Bjornerud	Toth
Boyd	Draude	Gantefer
Heppner	Osika	Hillson
McPherson	Aldridge	Haverstock
Julé		

Nays — 22

Calvert	Wiens	MacKinnon
Shillington	Johnson	Whitmore
Upshall	Kowalsky	Van Mulligen
Teichrob	Bradley	Koenker
Trew	Nilson	Cline
Hamilton	Stanger	Jess
Wall	Kasperski	Ward
Murray		

Motion agreed to.

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

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — By leave of the Assembly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to move a motion to send the transcripts and the motion we just passed to the federal government.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move, seconded by the member for Kindersley:

That the Legislative Assembly requests the Speaker to send copies and transcripts of the Rule 46 debate motion regarding low commodity prices and grain subsidies to the Prime Minister of Canada, the federal Minister of Agriculture, and the federal Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

MOTIONS

Leaves of Absence

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — By leave of the Assembly, to propose two routine motions, and the opposition has one as well. The first is:

That leave of absence be granted to the member for Carrot River Valley and Saskatchewan Rivers from Monday, October 19, 1998 to Friday, October 23, 1998 inclusive, to attend the CPA Canadian Regional Council in Washington, D.C. on behalf of the Assembly.

Leave granted.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — I propose the said motion.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — By leave of the Assembly:

That leave of absence be granted to the member from Moose Jaw North from Monday, October 19, 1998 to Friday, October 23, 1998 inclusive to attend the 44th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Wellington, New Zealand on behalf of this Assembly.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — By leave of the Assembly, to stop the clock to allow the Third Party to propose a routine motion.

Leave granted.

Substitution of Members on Committees

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motions I have to propose are changes in committee members.

That the name of Mr. Jack Hillson be substituted for the name of Mr. Ron Osika on a list of members composing the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

And by leave, Mr. Speaker, I'll continue with the balance:

That the name of Mr. Glen McPherson be substituted for

the name of Mr. Jack Hillson on a list of members composing the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations;

That the name of Mr. Ron Osika be added to a list of members composing the Standing Committee on Environment;

That the name of Mr. Ron Osika be added to a list of members composing the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills;

and:

That the name of Mr. Jack Hillson be added to a list of members composing the standing Committee on Regulations.

I so move, seconded by the member from North Battleford.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. The member from Melville has requested leave to move a number of motions and you've heard all them. Is leave granted to move them all?

We'll have to vote on them individually though.

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the name of Mr. Jack Hillson be added to a list of members composing the standing Committee on Regulations.

Moved by myself and seconded by the member from North Battleford.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Osika: — I move:

That the name of Mr. Ron Osika be added to a list of members composing the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Seconded by the member from North Battleford.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Osika: — I move:

That the name of Mr. Glen McPherson be substituted for the name of Mr. Jack Hillson on a list of members composing the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Moved by myself, seconded by the member from North Battleford.

Motion agreed to.

(1700)

Mr. Osika: —I move:

That the name of Mr. Jack Hillson be substituted for the name of Mr. Ron Osika on a list of members composing the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Seconded by the member from North Battleford.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That the name of Mr. Ron Osika be added to a list of members composing the Standing Committee on Environment.

Seconded by the member from North Battleford.

The Deputy Speaker: — The seconder has to be present to second the motion and the hon. member from North Battleford is not present.

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the name of Mr. Ron Osika be added to a list of members composing the Standing Committee on Environment.

Seconded by the member from Thunder Creek.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

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