

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**First Session — Nineteenth Legislature**

**Friday, March 9, 1979**

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.  
On the Orders of the Day

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier):** — Mr. Speaker, I think I might wish to call to the attention of the House the fact that we have with us a number of former members of the House.

**HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General):** — They're the delegates to the Liberal meeting on the weekend.

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — I don't know quite why they're sitting on that side of the House . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . They have as much affinity with this side as they have with that. But we certainly welcome them here and I know all members will want to extend a welcome to them.

**HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. R.L. COLLVER (Leader of the Opposition):** — Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I too, would like to join with the Premier in welcoming the former members of the legislature to this Assembly. I too, wonder why the former members are sitting on this side of the House. In times past, we had more affinity in watching them on the other side of the House.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**QUESTIONS**

**Steps Taken by Premier Following Budget Leak**

**MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle):** — I would like to direct a question to the Premier. The Premier has indicated — and I'm happy that he did — the seriousness of the leak and that he treats it seriously and that he took it as a serious matter. I'm wondering if the Premier would give to this Assembly, in some specific detail, the exact steps that he took when he determined that there was a leak and exactly at what point Mr. Hinds met with the Premier to give the facts set out in the letter that was discussed in yesterday's session.

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I would have to recall in my mind the sequence of events, but I'll do my best. I became aware of it at approximately 2:00 o'clock as I was coming in to this door, in the corridor behind this door. I was met with a copy of the Leader Post when this material was there; this would be on Wednesday. And I gather that the Minister of Finance became aware of it at approximately the same time and commenced an investigation forthwith. I can't recall everything that may have happened on the Wednesday but I will have met with the Minister of Finance, met with the Attorney General. Late on Wednesday, I had a meeting with Mr. Hinds, in which he recounted this series of circumstances, when it came clear from the comparison of the stories with the budget speech, with the estimates and with the press releases, that the origin of the story was, in fact, press releases and he indicated that his copy of the press

release had been out of his hands for a period of time and recounted those circumstances.

We ascertained the number of copies of the press release that were around — five, I believe is my recollection again. Sometime between Wednesday night and Thursday morning — and I don't know whether it was done late Wednesday night or early Thursday morning, the various copies of these were identified and the persons who had them produced their copies and Mr. Hinds reviewed it all, as did other people. It then, I think, became clear that the only place that it could have come from was that particular sequence that Mr. Hinds had previously identified. On that basis, he tendered to me, his conclusion and his letter and this is not to suggest that other inquiries did not continue after that and I am sure they are continuing, but on the basis of the information we spoke to the House, yesterday. That is roughly the series of events.

**MR. LANE:** — By way of supplementary. I am still — and you didn't explain why you were able to zero in on Mr. Hinds so rapidly after finding out. You were in the session, in the afternoon and participated in the Assembly. You know the natural leak, perhaps, is not the first direction to take, the Information Services Officer. Can you explain why you were able to zero in to Mr. Hinds so rapidly as opposed to a more broad-based investigation which would seem more natural?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — I think the two keys — first, we reached the conclusion that the source had been the press release because of the nature of the story. The story contained certain figures which were in the press release but not anywhere else — certain aggregations of figures. Among others, the story on the particular formulation of the provision for research — 'Research on agriculture and health will increase \$4 million.' Words to that effect. Now, obviously, someone can conjure that up, but it is not in the budget speech. It is not in the estimates. It was in the press release. It was in the press release in a particular formulation of words and comes out in a story in a particular formulation of words. There is other, sort of internal evidence of what is in the press release and what is not in the press release.

The point is, that Mr. Hinds already knew and we already knew that his copy had been out of his hands, because it had been picked up on the floor of the press room by one of the press officers, who was there at the time of my press conference. One must remember the sequence of events.

Mr. Smishek and Mr. Hinds were in there about 9:15. They left. My press conference was at 9:30 a.m. From the floor of the press conference room at about 10:00 a.m. there was picked up a copy of this press release . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . On the Wednesday, right. We know it was Mr. Hinds' copy because it's got a little routing slip on it. Now that is evidence that certainly it wasn't in his possession. The problem is, was it there totally innocently? Did it just happen to fall on the floor and nobody see it or not? All other copies are accounted for? We reached the perfectly valid conclusion that it was that copy that was the source of the story. And there was not much doubt that it was Mr. Hinds' copy.

**MR. LANE:** — So in fact you knew on the Wednesday the ramifications of, for example, prior advance notice of, say, the cigarette tax — that that information was in fact released. No? So you did not realize until you were told in the hallway immediately prior to the session on Wednesday about the release. Is that what you're saying?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — Yes, I did not know until Wednesday at all because I was not told that

a copy had been out of Mr. Hinds' hands for a brief time and had been retrieved by another member of the staff. Nobody felt that there was anything particularly upsetting about that. I'm sure they felt it was upsetting but they didn't know that anything was going to come of it until they knew it had been seen by somebody in the press.

**MR. LANE:** — New question. Are you then saying that the press reports that were out yesterday that either stated specifically or indicated that it was minister's notes that were in fact taken are totally inaccurate?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — It all depends on what your point of view is of minister's notes. A script was prepared headed, Notes for a Script for the Minister of Finance. Five copies of that were prepared for use in taping the tapes on Wednesday morning. One copy of that was in Mr. Smishek's hands; one copy was in the hands of Mr. Proctor; one copy was in the hands of Mr. Kinzel; one copy was in the hands of Mr. Hinds. These are the press officers. Mr. Kinzel is on Mr. Smishek's staff; Mr. Proctor is on my staff and is a cabinet press officer. It was Mr. Hinds' copy, I am advised. I don't think I've seen it. I'm advised that it has a little routing slip on it. It was Mr. Hinds' copy which will say, Notes for a Script for Mr. Smishek. That copy was out of his hands briefly, was retrieved from the floor of the press room about 10:00 a.m. when my press conference ended — 10:10 a.m. — thereabouts and will have been out of his hands from about 9:15 to 10:10 thereabouts, and in a sense it is Mr. Smishek's — in the sense that it says 'notes from Mr. Smishek' — but not his in the sense that it was his copy, it was Mr. Hinds' copy. Five copies of a script are prepared, a script to be delivered by Mr. Smishek — call it whose you like.

**MR. LANE:** — I think the Premier recognizes the seriousness of the difference. If they were, in fact, the minister's notes then I don't think the Finance Minister has any alternative but to resign if they were his notes. And the Premier agrees. Did the Premier, I suggest, somewhat suspect that this happened so rapidly that you were able to get someone out there who would take the blame so rapidly. It would be a normal thing for the Premier to investigate a situation like this, to check with the printer to see whether in fact the leak occurred from the printer. Did you in fact check with the printer in this case?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — I did not. Others, I think reached the conclusion that — and perhaps wrong, but we believe it to be the right conclusion — that the internal evidence so strongly suggested that the source was the press release, and not the budget speech since the formulation, the words and the particular grouping of figures is that in the press release and not in the speech; that that is in fact the source. And since we have had over the years no difficulty whatever with printers, and since we in due course had an explanation with respect to the press release — we reached the conclusion that that was, with a very high degree of probability, the source.

**MR. LANE:** — A final question. You have indicated:

1. That there are other inquiries, so it indicates that perhaps you are not satisfied with the situation to date.
2. You've indicated as well in previous statements that you don't believe that this warrants a change in procedures in Saskatchewan.

I'd like to advise the Premier that I believe this was printed in a totally new procedure, this particular budget, and was printed by five printing outlets as opposed to the

traditional government printers. The companies, for the Premiers edification, included our government printing office and . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, does the member have a question?

**MR. LANE:** — . . . five different companies, and I'm sure the Premier has it. Can the Premier tell us whether the government is continuing to investigate, and other inquiries include these five different printing companies to see whether the leak occurred there? And, would you also advise whether or not your other inquiries include an investigation into the advantage that would be obtained by large retail distributors, of prior advance notice of the cigarette tax?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether I understood the hon. member's question right or the preamble to the question. But, as I understood it, he suggested that I felt that no other investigations were necessary. If he said that, I didn't mean to convey that, and I think it is useful for us to make some further inquiries and we will.

Now, his question, I think, to rule out the other investigation?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — First, I want to try to convey to the members that we're not ruling out other investigations, if I may try to make that clear. We are trying to reach the most probable conclusion. This does not indicate that once you have reached in your own mind the most probable conclusion that you necessarily exclude all others, and we don't. So I am not now agreeing with the suggestion of the hon. member for Nipawin (Mr. Collver) that we are excluding other investigations. Leaving that aside, the basis of his question was what is in the press release which caused us to believe that it was the source of the story. I don't have them before me and can't give you the correct word-by-word comparisons but that there are a very large number of figures, and a very large number of items in the budget. The press release, naturally, being four pages in length, tripled spaced, only hit a number of the items — a number of the highlights. The story carried highlights only carried in the press release, and none of those which weren't in the press release, so that is a little bit of internal evidence in itself. It would be quite coincidental for anyone to take the budget speech and lift out just the exact number of highlights, no more and no less, as the provincial treasurer or the Minister of Finance would for his press release. It could happen but it would be a coincidence. Going beyond that, certain groupings of them appearing nowhere else but in the press release, not in the estimates, not in the budget speech, certain groupings, totallings of figures are there in the press release and are there in the news stories and are there in no other budget document, leading me to believe that in all probability the story was written on the basis of the press release. It is straining credulity a great deal to feel that anyone would have the budget speech and would lift just those items and would group them in just that way; that, I think, would be stretching probability a very long way.

**MR. COLLVER:** — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. If the Premier is today stating that further investigations are being conducted and are necessary because there is not (as I suspect he is) conclusive evidence — that the press release was in fact the source of the information of the leak. Furthermore, as I understand it, the Premier today is suggesting it may be that this press release was not in fact a press release but were notes for the ministers press conference. The Premier today has agreed that if they were the minister's notes then the minister should be required to resign.

My question to the Premier is this. Would you not, in order to prepare the way for Saskatchewan people to be more believing in your so-called investigation, be prepared

to ask for an independent investigation of this matter? If the independent investigation concludes that it is the notes of the Minister of Finance which were responsible for the budget leak that the Minister of Finance should resign?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, a number of answers to a number of questions. In my mind the evidence is conclusive; let's be clear on that. In my mind the evidence is conclusive as to where the source of the story came from. Obviously, members opposite are not fully satisfied, for whatever purposes. It suggests to me, therefore, that we ought to see whether there are some other inquiries that could be made to satisfy them. We are not in any way suggesting that our conclusions are subject to any reasonable question or doubt but understandably, since they come from us, members opposite may have a different view.

The document that was referred to as being 'notes' or whatever, is in fact, a little script for a news clip, as I attempted to say. 'TV and radio news clip, the Hon. Walter W. Smishek', and then it has, 'This budget does a number of things. First it completes the implementation ' It's a script and it runs for four pages. As I say, five copies of the script were prepared. It was a draft script. It was not the script that was used because, in fact, some changes to the script were made. It was in the course of taping the script that it was decided that some changes ought to be made. I don't think it is particularly relevant why the changes were thought to be made but at any rate some changes were thought to be made, were decided. In the course of working on the script I take it they became engrossed in the script — Mr. Smishek's copy of the script, and another copy was left in the room. It was Mr. Hinds' copy of the script, as I say, one of the five. Now, those are the circumstances.

**MR. COLLVER:** — Would the Premier agree that since there is a doubt, since it is not conclusive, that the Committee on Rules and Procedures in this legislature should meet, investigate the circumstances surrounding the budget leak (since it is far more important than any statement of 'filthy hospitals')? Would the Premier not agree that the committee should meet and investigate this situation and report back to this legislature?

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — It is a little difficult with the hon. member. He just stood up and said, 'Since I agreed the facts were not conclusive.' I just finished telling him . . .

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Let's go back to strawberry shortcake.

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, two quick facts — in my mind they are conclusive. If the hon. member wants to put something on the order paper calling for reference to the Committee on Rules and Procedures, he is free to do so and we can debate it. From the second point, I have attempted to describe this document that was left there, a TV script. I can table it if you like but . . . Well, just one moment, Mr. Speaker, I'm on my feet and I'm getting a little bit frosted with these people who are busy asking questions one after another, from their seat. You are perfectly entitled to stand up and ask your question and each of you has had numerous opportunities so to do.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. BLAKENEY:** — Mr. Speaker, I am describing this document. I have said it is a TV script; it has been mischaracterized three or four times as notes for a press conference. I have said as clear as I can four or five times, it was a script for a radio and a TV news clip.

Mr. Speaker, I will advise the House that the radio and the TV news script was not going to be given by Mr. Hinds. He was not going to voice the clip. It was indeed the Minister of Finance and I know that admission was apparently being sought. Clearly, this is the nature of the document — a script prepared as a draft script to be considered by Mr. Smishek and his press officers to see whether it was an adequate script to describe the budget. That's what it was; it was Mr. Hinds' copy of that script. Those are the facts; they may be characterized as they like; they can be characterized as Mr. Smishek's notes or something. I am describing what in fact they are and I will repeat — a radio and TV news clip.

### **Collection of Cigarette Tax**

**MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern):** — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Finance. I understand that yesterday you did not agree . . . Let me ask the question, where does the Government of Saskatchewan collect the cigarette tax that was pre-leaked, from the wholesaler, from the retailer or from what source?

**MR. SMISHEK:** — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Revenue does the collecting of that tax, not the Minister of Finance.

**MR. KATZMAN:** — Mr. Speaker, supplementary question. The Minister of Revenue says you collect it at the wholesalers. Let me inform you that yesterday, prior to 2 p.m. . . . Anybody selling cigarettes today will be profiteering because the retail outlet does not pay the tax . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — The Minister of Industry and Commerce.

### **Foreign Investment Policy**

**HON. N. VICKAR (Minister of Industry and Commerce):** — On March 6, the member for Qu'Appelle asked a question and I was to bring a reply back to him. I might say that my department has not yet dealt with the acquisition of Queen City Credit Bureau, as it has not yet received a request from the Foreign Investment Review Agency to comment on the acquisition within government policy. FIRA is presently, however, conducting an investigation into the acquisition to determine whether the acquisition is reviewable. If the agencies decide that the transaction is reviewable, the province will have the opportunity to make its views known to FIRA on the acceptability of the acquisition. It is the responsibility of the Foreign Investment Review Agency to determine the reviewability of the transactions involving foreign investments since the Foreign Investment Review Act is federal legislation.

For your information, Mr. Speaker, Canadian businesses engaged in service businesses like credit bureaus are subject to the Foreign Investment Review Act. Under the act the only exception in the case of acquisitions is if the foreign investor who is acquiring the Canadian business is already carrying on a related business in Canada, and the gross assets and the gross revenues of the business to be acquired do not exceed \$250,000 to \$3 million respectively. FIRA officials have informed me, Mr. Speaker, that Equifax already owns Credit Bureau of Montreal which it bought prior to the passing of FIRA legislation in 1974. Equifax could have purchased Queen City through its subsidiary credit bureau of Montreal.

**MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle):** — In reply to the minister's statement . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, order, the member may ask a supplementary question.

**MR. LANE:** — The facts that you have given were not unknown. What you have said is that the policy guidelines . . . Would you not admit that the policy guidelines you yourself gave in November of 1976 on Saskatchewan's policy in dealing with foreign takeovers were to be indicative of a Saskatchewan position. You have indicated today that all you are doing is just doing whatever Ottawa says and that your policy in fact is totally inadequate to deal with Saskatchewan takeovers if FIRA doesn't act. And that is the admission you have made, would you not agree?

**MR. VICKAR:** — No, Mr. Speaker, I do not agree. We cannot act until such time as we have received the information from Ottawa.

## POINT OF ORDER

### Tabling of Documents — Budget Leak

**MR. R.L. COLLVER (Leader of the Opposition):** — Before the orders of the day I raise a point of order. During the question period the Premier offered to table the script for Mr. Smishek, the Minister of Finance, which he purports is the cause of the leak. I ask now that that document be tabled. He stated during his answer to a question that he would table this document if we liked. I want to inform the Premier and this Assembly that we like.

Mr. Speaker, further to the point of order, I notice also (and I gave the Premier notice) that this point of order would be raised and I notice the press called him out of the House just prior to the orders of the day, Mr. Speaker, and he is not here to table the document. I would assume that the Deputy Premier would be able to answer in his place, since he offered to table this document and we do like.

**HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General):** — Mr. Speaker, speaking to the point of order, if I might — I believe the rule of the House is that the responsibility falls on the individual member or members to table such document or documents that they want to table. I personally recall many occasions where members of the PC caucus in the course of remarks, said we'll be tabling some documents. We've been asking for them to table those documents. I recall, for example, the plan for the PC platform document, at the last session of the House which never was tabled. My point simply being, Mr. Speaker, the rule obviously is that individual members table when they table and I think it does not enhance the proceedings of the House to make peripheral comments about the Premier not being here to table the documents. I don't know what he's going to do with the documents, but it's up to him to do it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order, order. It's understood that tabling of documents does not take place during the question period. It's also understood that there are certain times members are compelled to table documents. There are times when it's up to their personal choice whether they want to table a document or not. I assume that the members will convey your request to the Premier and the matter will be dealt with. I don't think it's necessarily a point of order; it's a request to have the Premier table the documents.

**MR. COLLVER:** — I have a point of order. I believe this is one of the instances where the

Premier is compelled to table this document.

**MR. SPEAKER:** — I don't believe this is one of the instances where anyone is compelled to table the document.

## **MOTION**

### **Prairie Rail Action Committee**

**HON. G. MacMURCHY (Minister of Municipal Affairs)** moved, seconded by R.J. Gross (Morse):

That this Assembly, deploring the establishment of the Prairie Rail Action Committee, requests the Minister of Transport to cancel any further abandonment hearings of the Canadian Transport Commission and to transfer the lines in question to the permanent network, or to establish the Prairie Rail Authority as recommended by the Hall Commission.

He said: It is a very important motion indeed. In speaking to this motion, Mr. Speaker, let me begin this way. One of the things that we often forget is that history is not something that is written 50 years in the future by a certain professional or group of professionals known as history writers. John Archer doesn't write history, though he's a great historian. What history, historians do is record what has happened. When I think in terms of transportation in western Canada today, the last three years have been historical years indeed, historical years for the grain handling and for the transportation system.

The future is being shaped, Mr. Speaker, and the decisions shaping that future are being made right now and if we ignore them, we do so at the risk of jeopardizing the future of western agriculture. Now, Mr. Speaker, we're aware of all the stories of the western rail system, in particular the branch line system being built by the railways at a time when both were competing for territorial control and for future traffic. We're aware of all the talk that the system was being built for the horse and buggy days; it no longer meets the needs of a modern grain industry. We've heard the accusations of the high costs of maintaining these branch lines by the railways. The railways talk about the high cost. The federal government talks about it, Mr. Speaker. It is a great argument. And, true, there are certain lines which have fallen into disuse within the last decade and some say it is the farmers who are hauling their grain elsewhere, I say that more than likely the reason for the disuse is the conditions that the railways place those lines in in order to shut them down.

But more important, Mr. Speaker, there are also at work the forces of corporate greed. The rail system in Canada — even though one of the railway companies is supposed to be a Crown corporation — is not run as a public utility where service according to the country's needs is the first objective. The rail system in Canada, against all reason and against all historical evidence, is designed to be a competitive system, which it cannot be. And the federal moves are designed to increase competitiveness and corporate independence, rather than increase the use of the railways in the public interest — or, in other words to get the railways to work for us.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, let's be realistic. When the railways are looking at their branch-line system, they are looking at them with the view of maximizing their profits, not with the view of service, because they just don't think that way. And when the railways



applied in the early '70s to abandon 6,000 miles of prairie branch lines, everybody in western Canada looked at their proposal, looked at their application and said, you are crazy. The provincial government said it; the farm organizations said it; the man on the street said it. And for once, at least, Mr. Speaker, the federal government got the message and the federal government said, hold on. And to hold on, Mr. Speaker, was to establish the Grain Handling and Transportation Commission headed by the former Chief Justice Emmett Hall — established, Mr. Speaker, on April 18, 1975.

Mr. Speaker, one of the tasks of the commission was to review the 6,000 miles of prairie branch lines which the railways were requesting for abandonment and to make recommendations concerning the future of these lines.

Mr. Speaker, the Hall Commission on grain handling and transportation did its work. They did it in a very thorough and in a very detailed manner. They listened, they listened not only to the railways and to the elevator companies and the so-called experts in the grain industry, but they listened to the businessman and the farmers of rural Saskatchewan and rural Manitoba and rural Alberta.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — They listened, in the halls throughout the prairies, filled to the rafters with people. They listened in the regional meetings, they listened in the provincial meetings and they listened in the interprovincial hearings. They heard about the problems all the way from the farm gate to the loading dock. They heard about the problems and the frustrations of every group of people affected by the transportation system. Now two years after its establishment, Mr. Speaker, in May of 1977, the commission recommended that of the 6,000 miles it had reviewed some 1,800 miles be placed in the permanent network. some 1,900 miles be abandoned because, in most cases, they had fallen already into disuse. On 2,300 miles, however, the Hall Commission concluded that it was just not yet possible to make a decision on the long-term viability of those lines. Mr. Speaker, some of those 2,300 miles were adjacent to other lines that had been recommended for abandonment. Some needed repair, rehabilitation, in order to make a fair assessment of the traffic. And the only way to determine the proper future of these 2,300 miles of rail line, the Hall Commission said, was to bring them up to some kind of reasonable minimal operating standards, and to operate them with a view to determining their long-term viability.

The elevator companies would not want to invest, would want to invest, rather, would want to invest in some of these lines, perhaps not all of them. Perhaps some of these lines would show themselves to be viable when abandonment of the other lines had taken place. What was the real cost of improving, of upgrading, of rehabilitating these lines? Railway operations and railway figures were always a question in the minds of the Hall commissioners, and they, therefore, sensibly concluded that it was just not possible to make a good decision on these 2,300 miles without further experience to go on. More important, Mr. Speaker, these 2,300 miles would be operated by a group which Mr. Hall called the Prairie Rail Authority. They would be a body independent of the railways but would have managerial, as well as regulatory powers in the question of these 2,300 miles. They would contract with the railways to carry their traffic. They would contract where necessary or perhaps not contract with the railways to work on the lines. Perhaps they couldn't arrange that contract. They'd go elsewhere. But this authority, the Prairie Rail Authority would become the management body of these branch lines whose mandate would be to operate them on the short term to allow the long term pattern to develop and to emerge.

Two years ago when the Minister of Transport, the federal Minister of Transport, received the report he said, we can't have this prairie rail authority. Why that's what the western provinces want, they want public ownership of the road bed. The Premier has called for public ownership of the roadbed at the Western Economic Opportunities Conference (WEOC) in Calgary in 1973 and that's public ownership of the roadbed or at least a start of the public ownership of the roadbed. My goodness, Mr. Speaker, that might lead to this NDP and CCF, what they've been saying for years, the merger of the two railways under one management. That management operated in the public interest, or shortly put, the nationalization of the railways. And, my goodness, this recommendation of the Hall Commission, while it's small, it's a start and we can't do that. We can't respond to requests that have come from the western premiers. We don't do that in Ottawa particularly with respect to transportation. So what did the Minister of Transport do? He established a Prairie Rail Action Committee (PRAC). Well, people make fun of the name of this committee but it is not funny, Mr. Speaker, because the title makes a mockery of the Hall Commission recommendation, that's what it does. And in doing so made a mockery of Hall, who said the Prairie Rail Authority, one of his recommendations as a response to the western Premiers in Calgary, was the only one that made any sense. Mr. Hall's concept was rejected for PRAC which is nothing more than a deliberate attempt to mislead the public by having a similar name so that the very different concept recommended by Hall would be accepted.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the Prairie Rail Action Committee was very carefully chosen. Professor Fred Anderson of the University of Regina, a man who had been director of research for the McPherson Royal Commission. a commission established by a Conservative government at Ottawa. That commission gave birth to the competition and 'user pay' philosophy in transportation which is now enshrined in federal legislation brought in in the middle '60s. And that is the policy of the present federal Minister of Transportation,

Now the committee investigated, personally, they said. personally every line they were requested to review. The committee met with producers in every situation, they said, but I am not aware of any meetings, any public meetings that were held where everyone was asked to come or invited to come in order to present their views. The committee recommended, met its deadline of one year, on the faith of 2,300 miles of branch lines, and the committee recommended abandonment of 1,400 of those 2,300 miles of line.

Now, how does the committee arrive at these decisions? I've got the report here, Mr. Speaker; here it is here . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . five pounds — it would weigh an ordinary guy down. I'd give it to my colleague here, my seatmate, but he's got a pretty strong arm. It wouldn't bother him. Five pounds. His left is particularly strong. A heavy document, heavy document. It is laden with numbers and calculations and options and discourses and alternatives which would discourage all but the most diligent readers. It claims to have been put together with the best information available, to have taken all possible consequences into account, and claims to be totally free of value judgments, but no report can be free of value judgments. I doubt that this speech I'm making is free of value judgments. If decisions are to be made, judgments must also be made and judgments are, of necessity, made within a certain value framework.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what is the framework of value in this report? The most obvious bias is the preference for competition in arriving at its decisions about the future of a particular rail line or a particular village or a particular town. For some reason, Mr. Speaker, the report feels that Saskatchewan farmers must be protected from a

monopoly; and you know what the monopoly is, Mr. Speaker, protected from a monopoly of their own grain-handling companies.

Take the example of Holdfast. Holdfast has both a Wheat Pool elevator and a United Grain Growers elevator. But Holdfast must be abandoned and do you know why? So that Liberty, which has only a Pool elevator, will have enough grain to attract another elevator company and there's competition at Liberty. If you take away Holdfast, then you also ensure that the towns to the west — Aylesbury and Craik, which each now have three elevators — will continue to have their three elevators.

Or take Wishart. The hon. member for Kelvington-Wadena (Mr. Byers) knows about Wishart, a great town. Wishart has four elevator companies.

In the long term, Professor Anderson thinks there may be only enough grain for one elevator and, therefore, Wishart must go. Minton must be abandoned so there will be elevator competition at Gladmar. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, communities the size of Bengough and Willow Bunch and Lacadena and Leroy and St. Louis, left completely without rail service. So, Mr. Speaker, I believe the report is biased. But there is more.

The Anderson committee states that it uses the PHAER model, a computer program designed in the early '70s by the Canadian Transport Commission. I am sure it is some model. The difficulty with the model is that it assumes that all road allowances in Saskatchewan are developed into all-weather roads and that deliveries diverted from line will simply take the shortest distance to the other line.

Now anyone who lives in Saskatchewan knows the absurdity of assuming that all road allowances are developed into all-weather roads. We've got 13,000 miles of grid complete; we've got 18,000 miles of main farm access in the system about 12,000 miles complete. That's not an all-weather road on every road allowance. Their formula is that there shall be an all-weather road on every mile by two miles in the new survey and every mile by mile in the old survey. And that's not true and it is not going to be true.

My colleague says it's nonsense.

The grain doesn't go the shortest distance to the nearest line. Rules affect that decision. Community histories, family backgrounds determine that decision. Roads for hauling grain can't be your ordinary main farm access roads. For long distances they can't be the prairie trail. Long distance grain haul loads must be grids or super grids or the highway system. To assume anything else, as the committee did automatically, destroys the validity of the outcome.

But not only are these roads in this computer model every mile, or every mile by two miles in Saskatchewan. Everything in Saskatchewan is flat. I suppose the professor looked out of his office at the university and he saw flat land and it must be all that way. It must be all that way, Mr. Speaker. That is the only way one can explain the Anderson committee's recommendation to build a new 15 mile stretch of railway from Kelvington to Rose Valley instead of fixing up the 40 miles from Kelvington to Preeceville. They said it will be cheaper — cheaper, Mr. Speaker. Now I know that country and that's great country in that Rose Valley — Kelvington country for hunting ducks and catching muskrats, but to build a railway? Ask the people from Kelvington about the problems of that highway from Kelvington to Perigord? Ask the rural councillors about their grief on that grid road that connects those two communities together? The railway had a right of

way through that country for years; they've had one, but, they never attempted to build a railway and for a good reason. Now, we are going to build a railway says Anderson, because it is cheaper than adding ballasts and ties to the 40 miles of existing track to the East.

For the Anderson committee bases its estimates on future haul on the last five year average delivery on that line. For some cases, the 10 year average. The Premier talked about this in the throne speech debate. In receiving the report, did the federal Minister of Transport contact the federal Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board? Did He? If he did, the federal minister responsible for the Wheat Board would have reported to him that by 1985 the volume of export grain will increase by one-half from what they are now — instead of 20 million metric tons, 30 million metric. The Premier made a good point in his remarks in the throne speech — the minister of the Canadian Wheat Board should really get together with the Minister of Transport and tell him what is going on these days. That is so typical, Mr. Speaker, of the federal government at Ottawa.

I can understand, Mr. Speaker, considering the characters and considering the constituencies they represent in a broad sense, the Minister of Agriculture not knowing what the Minister of Transport is saying. I can understand the Minister of Trade and Commerce not knowing what the Minister of Transport is saying — they are all involved together in this thing. But when the Minister of the Canadian Wheat Board and the Minister of Transport don't know what each other is saying; then that is just too much.

It is time we had some New Democrats in Ottawa who always know what they are saying and know what each other are doing.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — Finally, Mr. Speaker, this report, which claims to be so factual, really uses very narrow economics to arrive at a definition as to what will be cheaper, as to what will cost less. Let me use the example of the Shamrock subdivision — the lines where the hearings were held last week at Hodgeville. Denison Reports says it will save an excess of \$12.6 million if they abandon the line — save \$12 million in costs to up-grade the line and an undefined amount in operating costs. But not only grain is hauled on that line, 140,000 tons of gravel were moved over that line to the Redi-Mix plants in Moose Jaw and Regina. And as urban growth continues, that haul is not going to decrease — it's going to increase. That means an equivalent of 22 trucks hauling 6,500 tons per week over municipal roads; that is 320 round trips a week. Anyone who has lived in rural Saskatchewan knows what a safety hazard that many gravel trucks are on a dusty municipal road and how they damage the road almost beyond repair. Remember that in looking at grain diversions the Anderson committee assumes that the grain will go to the nearest delivery point over the nearest road allowance, developed or not developed. When this is checked out in reality, grain delivery patterns will be much different than they have concluded them to be. Mr. Speaker, when the additional capital cost for highways are added, when there is additional grid road maintenance, increased farmer trucking costs increased gravel hauling costs (and by the way it costs four times as much to move by truck as it does by rail), then the total costs add up to nearly \$50 million. Yes. The railway, the federal government would save \$13 million in abandoning the Shamrock line but it will unload \$50 million in costs onto the backs of farmers in municipalities and local consumers who buy cement in the province.

Now Mr. Speaker, the whole atmosphere of this report is frightening. The atmosphere

of the report indicates that those who feel that these communities should have railways, that these communities should have delivery points, are out-of-date, are living back in the past, are finished. The president of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool called the report arrogant, an insult to farmers.

Mr. Speaker, let's consider the attitude of the federal Liberal government to the report. The report was made public January 16 of this year. On December 28, 1978, an order in council was passed by the federal cabinet placing the lines which were recommended by the Anderson committee for permanent status into the permanent network. That means that the federal government had accepted the recommendations of its committee and implemented them all in those three weeks before the report was made public, let alone before there was any time for comment, for suggestion, for discussion on the report. That's the Liberal position. They're in favor of the Prairie Rail Action Committee report.

Mr. Speaker, what about the Conservatives? I don't know who the transportation spokesman for the federal Conservative Party is in western Canada. I assume the self-styled Conservative spokesman for the West and for transportation is Mr. Mazankowski. Mr. Mazankowski says, 'We are going to lead the fight in rail line abandonment.' — February 1, 1979. He also says that the Conservatives do not intend to try to save all the lines, only those that the railways, the elevator companies and the communities consider to be needed for proper service. Now, how is he going to do that?

To say that he is on the side of the railways, to say that he is on the side of the CPR, will put his position into question when he tries to say at the same time that he is with the communities and with the elevator companies. He goes on to say that where there is significant opposition in communities involved, 'We will be in there leading the fight.' I want the members of the Assembly to remember that — 'Where there is significant opposition in the communities, we will be in there leading the fight.'

Let me give you some other examples, Mr. Speaker, of Conservative thinking. Right after the report was released, we contacted the governments of Manitoba and Alberta and we suggested that this required a meeting of the three prairie governments, to attempt to develop a strategy, a united strategy to deal with this report. More than three weeks went by. We heard from Alberta; they said they were not interested in a meeting. They don't care. What about Manitoba? We heard from them a week after Alberta and they said they wanted to meet. They were concerned, and rightly so. What is their position? Is it the Mazankowski position? I don't know, for it was hard to focus on their position. We had an impressive meeting, Mr. Speaker — three ministers, an MLA — all of whom felt they had some responsibility. Now, how can you organize a fight unless the fight is in the mind of one operation or one individual? How can you organize?

I came away not sure if the Manitoba position is the Mazankowski position or what it is. What did we say in Manitoba? We said, we stand with every community and every farmer and every municipality to keep these lines . . .

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — . . . to provide staff. to provide information, to provide encouragement, to give leadership, to take the initiative and this we are doing. The Hodgeville hearing last week, transportation agency under Dr. Gartner, presented a brief on behalf of the government. The MLA for Morse presented a brief. The member of Parliament for

Regina Lake Centre presented a brief. Where were the Conservatives who are going to lead the fight in rail line abandonment? I have the list, Mr. Speaker, of the people presenting the briefs to the Hodgeville hearing. There was not one elected or nominated PC member presenting a brief at the Hodgeville hearing.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — Where was Colin Thatcher?

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — It's true. I understand, the member for Swift Current of this Assembly presented a brief, presented it through the Member for Morse. Good thing the member for Morse was there to carry the message for the Conservative Party. Not only was Benjamin, the member of Parliament for Regina Lake Centre, and the member for Morse there, but the candidates for the federal constituency of Swift Current were there presenting a brief and the candidate for Moose Jaw. Our federal candidates were there presenting briefs. That's the NDP position! I've talked about the Liberal position and the Conservative position. Now, Mr. Speaker, what's the situation? The situation is agreement by the federal government to the PRAC report. When? December 28, '78. Announcement of hearings by the Canadian Transport Commission in Hodgeville, public release of the report, January 16, it went in that sequence, Mr. Speaker. Upon the release, the federal minister assured us that the abandonment recommendations would be referred to the Canadian Transport Commission so that communities would have one last chance to place their case before a decision was made on their line. But, Mr. Speaker, what the federal Minister of Transport didn't tell us was that the Canadian Transport Commission does not in fact have power to place these lines it is now supposed to review, into the permanent network or into the frozen network to the year 2000.

The Canadian Transport Commission, under the Railway Act, by which it is governed can investigate any lines which the railways apply to abandon and can order that the line be retained for 5 years or they can authorize abandonment. They simply do not have the authority to order the retention of a line beyond five years. Indeed under the Railway Act, if a line is ordered retained by the CTC (Canadian Transport Commission), it must again be reviewed in five years. What was the reason for all of this PRAC (Prairie Rail Action Committee)? The reason evaporates with this exercise. Lang said when he set up the Prairie Rail Action Committee that we have to end the uncertainty; we must know now what the future will be. That's why he set it up, so he says, Mr. Speaker, no elevator company is going to invest millions of dollars to construct a new facility on a line that is only assured for five years. Nobody's going to invest rehabilitation dollars if they are only assured for five years. Who is going to maintain them if they are only going to be there for five years? What this policy, this policy of the federal government is doing, is only building a stronger case for abandonment! We have asked the federal Minister of Transport how he intends to handle this problem. He has yet to reply.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we are pleased with the way the Canadian Transport Commission handled the hearings in Hodgeville. They were open, they were above board. All those who wished to state their views were welcome to state them. But, Mr. Speaker, it is a betrayal of western people; it is a betrayal of prairie communities if farmers are going to be put through this process one more time and still be told that they are not assured a decision in the end. Maybe I am wrong, but for what I know, it would appear the Canadian Transport Commission does not have the legal right to order the retention of the lines it concludes should be retained until the year 2000. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, there is only one thing that can happen and that is, that the federal Minister of Transport cancel those hearings in order not to waste further time of our western people.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MacMURCHY:** — Cancel those hearings we say and look at the two choices left open. We can't choose Anderson, the information is unreliable, the values on which the judgments are based are out of keeping and out of thinking with western people. There are only two choices therefore. Either place all the lines under the permanent network until the year 2000 — and he can't tell me that he can't do that — because, Mr. Speaker, this PRAC report recommended abandonment of the Lewvan line. I ask all members, where is the Lewvan line? Where is it? It's not going to go before CTC (Canadian Transport Commission) hearings, Mr. Speaker, it's in the permanent network to the year 2,000. Or, Mr. Speaker, you can go to the Hall Commission recommendation of establishing a management body to operate these lines on the basis of Hall's recommendations, a choice, which in my opinion, makes obvious sense. Mr. Speaker, there are only two choices. We would accept either. I think western people would accept either one. We'd end the bantering by federal politicians with the lives of prairie farmers. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move, seconded by my colleague the member for Morse (Mr. Gross) this motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. R.J. GROSS (Morse):** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to second the motion by our Minister of Municipal Affairs. There is no doubt about the member who just took his seat, that he understands the Saskatchewan farmers. He understands the way in which they make their living. He understands those things government can do and have to do to make sure that the farmers in our province maintain a decent standard of living. So it pleases me, Mr. Speaker, to second this motion. I might add it is always a tough act to follow the Minister of Transportation (Mr. MacMurchy).

What doesn't please me, Mr. Speaker, is that this legislature and the farmers of Saskatchewan are, again, in the position of having to fight for lives to foist off — for the umpteenth time — the albatross that has been swung around our necks by a western federal cabinet minister who has turned into a traitor. What pleases me even less, Mr. Speaker, are the prospects that our debate and our resolution here will in anyway be listened to or acted upon by Ottawa. Only the thought of a minority parliament in Ottawa, after an overdue election, with enough New Democrats to hold the balance of power will be the only encouragement and prospect that Ottawa will listen.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the course of my remarks, on this motion, will demonstrate that that is true.

When I review the history of the development of our prairie rail and country grain-handling system, I am amazed that railway spokesmen and their political bed mates have the unmitigated gall to carry any brief to the federal authorities asking for more welfare and reneging on commitments that they have made to our western Canadian producers. I intend to say a word or two more about the history because it is an important part that we understand the background to the whole rail problem. When I review, more particularly, the last 20 years of actions by successive Conservative and Liberal governments in Ottawa, I am even more amazed.

I say we have been conned, conned into taking into the fact . . . what convinces me is that the railways are in cahoots with the big money boys, the eastern grits and Tories and a few western traitors that have been thrown in for camouflage — none other than Otto

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Lang. I am convinced that these people have determined the course we are to follow for the next 20 years. Their strategy, since they have started to chip away at our prairie rail system and drive our farmers up against the wall with poor service, has been to bury them with paper — with study after study, with report after report, with review after review and inquiry and commission after commission. And finally, Mr. Speaker, hearings after hearings.

All that remains for Mr. Lang, Mr. Speaker, in 1979 is now to set fire to all the paper and garbage and to fire our farmers for the last time in regard to our rail problems. Never one to disappoint the prairie producers, he has succeeded again with his recent related attack on the crow rate and the report from his prairie hacks on the PRAC recommendations.

As I said, I think this has been a deliberate strategy to completely frustrate prairie governments and prairie producers and I will outline further my reasons why that case is true.

Mr. Speaker, using PRAC abandonment proposals in my constituency, as a case in point, I want to demonstrate to this Assembly why farmers are frustrated, why they are fed up with being studied and commissioned to death in the matter of grain handling and transportation, mostly by our federal Tory leader who has recommended some of these proposals and who I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, wouldn't recognize a prairie wheat field if he were standing in it. This case study will no doubt be repeated and duplicated by other members of this House.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I want to comment briefly on the position taken by members opposite on other occasions in respect of this issue. Quite frankly I am not surprised by their position, given the attitude that I find out in the country. I suspect they dare not take any other position. I would like to particularly make note of the member for Kindersley (Mr. Andrew) for his remarks which I found to be genuine and sensible. But I do say more than that is needed. I say to my friends opposite, get out to those retention committee meetings; get out to the CTC hearings and make those speeches which you talk about in this House. Try making those speeches, I suggest to the member of parliament for Swift Current or even to Joe Clark and see if he agrees with them. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the members won't be as sceptical as I am about the attitude from the other side when it is stacked up against the position of Tories federally. This is the place where Tories have had the power to do something about improving our grain handling and prairie branch line facilities and have done nothing.

This information, I hope, will relate to you and will demonstrate how the talk is all one way on the opposite side of the House and the action has been the opposite.

I want to turn now (as I mentioned briefly) to comment on the history and the development of our prairie rail and country grain handling system.

Mr. Speaker, railways are a tremendously important part of this province. They have been a very important part indeed in the development of this country. The Canadian Pacific Railway crossed our province in 1882 and 1883 and later in the 1880s small railway companies set up operations and built some stretches of track in this province. Among these were the Qu'Appelle Rail System, Long Lake, Saskatoon Railway System and the Manitoba and Northwestern Companies. They later leased their tracks to the CPR. Often the small railroad companies were in the business of colonization. That meant they were given huge grants of land in exchange for building rail lines and



bringing settlers to populate the prairies. The promoters and owners of the CPR and most of the small railway companies were often (and in most cases) prominent Tories who were cashing in on the fact that there were Conservative governments in Ottawa and during the time that money was flowing freely from the Treasury of Ottawa to rail companies. In the first decade of that century the Canadian National Railway and the Canadian Grand Trunk Pacific entered Saskatchewan, building lines generally in the north half of this province. They, too, operated with vast support of public money. One history book examines the operation of some of the early railways and notes that for 885 miles of railway the federal government gave them prime Saskatchewan land to the amount of 15 million acres. In addition to the land, they gave them millions and millions of dollars from the public treasury which came at the expense of our poor Canadian taxpayers. Federal Liberal governments in the late 1800s couldn't do enough for their railway company friends and the PRAC report I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, is the first example, of late, where the old line parties can't do enough on behalf of the railway companies. The last Conservative government we had in Ottawa was all set to do a real hatchet job on the prairie transportation system before it was thrown out of office in 1963 and of course, Mr. Speaker, I'm referring the MacPherson Royal Commission on Transportation — something I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite should read and make it available to themselves before they start crying big crocodile tears over the recommendations of the PRAC report.

Mr. Speaker, the MacPherson Royal Commission was set up by a Tory government in Ottawa. The commission itself was populated by prominent Tories. Mr. MacPherson . . . we'll go through them . . . Mr. MacPherson, M.A. MacPherson, who chaired the commission was a cabinet minister in the Anderson government in the 1930s. Mr. MacPherson later ran for the federal leadership, get this, the federal leadership of the conservative party on two different occasions and yet members opposite keep reminding us that they had nothing to do with the problems of rail line abandonment. Another prominent member of the commission was Herb Anscomb, who had been a Conservative MLA in British Columbia for 20 years and a former provincial finance minister in the last B.C. Tory government; yet there are no Tories on this commission. Another commissioner was Howard Mann, a recent political appointee to the Vice-Chairmanship of the National Harbours Board in Ottawa. Tories, Mr. Speaker, say that there were no Conservatives on that commission. Yet, Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that the commission was all Tory.

In short, Mr. Speaker, there were more eminent Tories on the MacPherson Royal Commission in 1961 than there were in the Gerda Munsinger's phone book. And what did this Conservative Royal Commission recommend in a three part, three volume report to the Conservative federal government at that time? Major recommendations that would see:

1. The national transportation policy based on — and I underline — competition, with a minimum of government regulation and intervention.
2. A thorough de-regulation of railway freight rates; the user pay concept was recommended in a wide variety of cases.
3. The abandonment of uneconomic branch lines; they recommended (of which the CPR and the CNR had about 4,300 miles apiece, a total of 8,600 miles) that these 8,600 miles of branch lines be abandoned over the course of the next 15 years. They would've abandoned 8,600 miles four or five years ago, Mr. Speaker, if the MacPherson Royal

Commission would've had its way.

4. They called on provincial governments to scrap all regulations on trucking except safety and performance and this would allow for a much greater use of trucks, trucks for the grain haul — four key recommendations made by the MacPherson Commission, Mr. Speaker, that mitigated against our prairie farmer.

The Leader Post on April 11, 1961 had this to say about the recommendations of the MacPherson Royal Commission and what the situation would be if the recommendations were implemented:

The railways would be chiefly mainline freight shippers charging rates that reflect their inherent cost advantages without the heavy weight of past obligations inhibiting their competitive ability.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that was a newspaper account and it sounds as if the statutory Crows Nest Pass rates were in trouble. The fact is that there is nowhere in the Royal Commission report any strong endorsement of the idea of maintaining the statutory rates — to the contrary, to the abolition of the crow rates.

Mr. Speaker, I also suggest that the report had this to say on the subject of freight rates and I quote:

In the long run a system can be developed that should enable people concerned with the system to pay the total cost.

That, Mr. Speaker, is 'user pay'.

On the subject of rail line abandonment, they said who should decide and what should be done in the area of rail line abandonment and I would like to quote it:

Management of the rail facilities is the responsibility of the rail companies and that be it privately or publicly owned. Within the framework of government regulation management they must be free to manage, rail companies must be free to manage what rail lines they want to abandon. The responsibility must be theirs to initiate the removal of unprofitable segments of their business.

Mr. Speaker, as you might be aware and as you might imagine, the railways were extremely pleased with the recommendations of the MacPherson Royal Commission. The CPR president, N.R. Crump and CNR chairman, Donald Gordon, were the biggest fans of the report and referred to it as outstanding. Mr. Gordon noted that the recommendations were in harmony with submissions that they presented to the railway commission. He went on to say in this Leader Post story of February 1, 1962:

The reduction in regulations and in the burden of unprofitable services and branch lines recommended by the Royal Commission will greatly facilitate the effective use of the resources and will improve railway earnings. No thought about farmers, just improved railway earnings.

Well now, Mr. Speaker, that is just fine. The MacPherson Commission recommended that 8,600 miles of branch lines should be ripped up by 1975. Prairie communities should be left high and dry and without rail service. Farmers should be faced with hauls

of 50 miles or more to deliver grain and statutory crow rates were threatened and farmers should be asked to pay the difference. The Conservatives on the MacPherson Royal Commission really earned their keep during the time they spent writing the recommendations and the Conservative federal government of the day were happy. They had managed to please the presidents of the railway companies and allow the railway companies to go along with a free hand in the rail business. Let's not forget, Mr. Speaker, that the Conservative Party had its own version of the PRAC (Prairie Rail Action Committee) report; that is the provincial Conservatives had their own version, with one important difference — that the Royal Commission on Transportation recommended 8,600 miles of prairie branch line. The PRAC was much more lenient, in that it only recommended 1,400 miles of branch line.

Mr. Speaker, we heard the speeches in this House about how Liberals and Tories feel about the task force. We hear stories where Liberals tell us that two-thirds of our farming population are inefficient. Well, Tories don't agree with them. They say 80 per cent are inefficient. Now we have a transportation report which says that the MacPherson Royal Commission, the very first report that laid the groundwork for rail line abandonment, the Tories said 8,600 miles must go, the Liberals with the PRAC report say only 1,400 miles should go. I ask you. Mr. Speaker, that you consider that madness. When a Conservative tells you that the record of the present federal Liberal government, in the area of agriculture, is a disgrace and a disaster, he is quite right. But he should be reminded of the record of his own party, which is every bit as disgraceful and disastrous. If a Tory condemns the Snaveley report for proposing the abolition of the Crows Nest pass freight rate agreement, I ask you. Mr. Speaker, that that same Tory should be reminded of the MacPherson Report of 1961 that went farther. If a Tory criticized the taskforce report on agriculture for scheduling two-thirds of the demise of the family farms, I ask him to remind himself of the MacPherson Commission, which would have had more drastic results in that area. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in light of the Tory record, I don't know how a Conservative can, in all honesty, bring himself to be at all critical of the PRAC report. The PRAC report is even mild in comparison to the MacPherson Royal Commission report. The PRAC report, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, is tragic news for our farmers, but I say it is part of a long range plan plotted by successive Conservative and Liberal federal governments.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. GROSS:** — I ask, Mr. Speaker, how can the PRAC report be worse than our Conservative federal leader, Joe Clark, calling for the fact that private grain trade should be permitted to sell grain in the international market, in competition with the Canadian Wheat Board? How is the PRAC report worse than the Alberta Conservative government calling for special treatment for companies building inland grain terminals? How can the PRAC report be worse than local Conservatives supporting orderly marketing while Conservatives at Ottawa refuse to support motions calling for more orderly marketing and the strengthening of the Canadian Wheat Board . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . and how is the PRAC report worse than the MLA for Moosomin (Mr. Birkbeck) calling for the family farm, saying that the family farm is outmoded and out of date and a historic candidate friend in Saskatoon-Nutana who believes that 80 per cent of the boys are inefficient and should go.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that with either of the old line parties in power, agriculture is in deep trouble. The western grain economy in particular stands to lose a great deal if either Liberals or Tories take charge again. PRAC is wrong. It is an attack by a federal Liberal government on the social fabric of rural Saskatchewan but also is recommended

by the Conservative Party at the same time. Both parties are bad in this area and are records that nobody would want to hold up for envy for Western Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you how bad this report is in my area, in my constituency. Mr. Speaker, The MacPherson Royal Commission, appointed by the Conservative government and loaded with Conservative hacks, set a target, set a goal for railway companies and their hacks to carve up 8,600 miles of track. Only, I suggest, political pressure brought about by minority parliaments from 1961 prevented federal Conservative and Liberal governments from carrying out that hatchet job; but these sort of people aren't easily deterred, Mr. Speaker. Otto Lang saw that when we got the Snavelly Commission, and based on his recommendations, that there were purposes behind it. There were broader purposes than that determining the costs of moving grain. There is no doubt the purpose included a further undermining of the concept of orderly marketing, a further undermining of the crow rates and yes, Mr. Speaker, a further undermining of a prairie branch line system.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. GROSS:** — We also got the Hall Commission Report and in many ways this exercise backfires on Mr. Lang. Although we on this side of the House have said that Hall's work in his recommendations were fair, it should be remembered that the Hall Report did recommend some abandonment of 2,165 miles of track and some abandonments that we do not agree with. In this report, the Hall Commission looks at more than 6,200 miles of railway branch lines and singled out about 2,300 miles of the 6,200 which they recommended to be put into limbo.

Members will recall the recommendations were for the establishment of the Prairie Rail Authority that would oversee the operation of these lines and provide a continuing assessment over the next period of years. Instead of following that recommendation by our Minister of Transport and by prairie pools and prairie government — Mr. Lang did not follow that — instead he seized on the opportunity to get on with the hatchet jobs. He instructed the prairie branch line program to continue at full bone ahead. He appointed, instead of a Prairie Rail Authority, a Prairie Rail Action Committee which is responsible to the Minister of Transport himself, Otto Lang. In his opinion, there is no one else. I want members to note this. Who did the minister name to the head of wrecking crew, the Prairie Rail Action Committee? He recommended an economist of some repute in the grain handling and transportation system. Mr. Speaker, he recommended Fred Anderson. The head of the PRAC got his experience and expertise as a secretary and director of research, the head honcho, if you like, of the McPherson Royal Commission. That was the man who is to be in charge of the PRAC report. The terms of reference given to him and given to PRAC were to advise the minister of the lines that were to be added to the basic network; lines that were to be abandoned, priority for upgrading the prairie branch lines systems, also and the final, to recommend on the prairie rail authority.

It is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that the federal minister was advised to set up a prairie rail authority by the Hall Commission. He got recommendations to do that from this government, as well as how that authority ought to operate and how it should be structured. He got advice from this government and from the prairie pools, but that wasn't good enough for Mr. Lang. He advised in regard to PRAC that they should go ahead without this advice, go ahead with their wrecking job.

Mr. Speaker, the PRAC report exceeded its authority when it turned out its report. They weren't asked to comment on rates and they did. They weren't asked to look at lines recommended for inclusion in the permanent network by Hall, and they did that, Mr. Speaker, I suggest they were in a stampede to re-enact the old MacPherson report, a report which called for the abandonment of 8,600 miles. Not only did they exceed their terms of reference but the work can only be regarded as shoddy. For instance, they supplied just misinformed information in many cases. In addition to mistaken assumptions which blew the PRAC report sky-high, Mr. Speaker, their calculations of the economic costs of abandonments to communities are a disgrace and an insult. I will deal with them when I touch on the case directly in my constituency. Many of the retention committee people and the municipal councils have worked hard in their work to show to PRAC, or show to someone, that these recommendations should not be followed for abandonment. PRAC wasn't happy with what the people in this province said should be done with the branch lines. Mr. Lang wasn't happy; he wasn't satisfied with the PRAC report and he went further. The federal Liberal PRAC report only moves, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, along the course set out by our former Conservative MacPherson Commission nearly 20 years ago.

In July of this past year Mr. Lang proceeded on further than PRAC and he found some more experts who were going to help him plan his demolition. He hired a consulting firm of Toronto, IDI, to study the inland grain gathering system and the operations of export ports and the existing efforts to co-ordinate grain movement. He went further, he also hired another consulting firm, Booz Allen of Hamilton, Incorporated, to investigate the rail car allocation system. A newspaper report of these new acquisitions to wit to this arsenal that he has already committed tells us that he will probably go further yet. Our country branch line elevator system has a problem, Mr. Speaker. I suggest to you that we have not seen the end of what Mr. Lang is up to. We have not seen the end to wrecking crews which are going to be assembled and put into the arsenal to destroy our country elevator and our country grain handling system. I predict that we are going to hear more and that there will be more experts who will come out of the woodwork as time progresses. I suggest it is not going to happen but in the next few months because we have a federal election going on — a federal election where the Conservatives and the Liberals will try and weasel on the whole issue of transportation and grain handling. I suggest to you they weaselled last election, the federal Liberal government weaselled, and said that they would not abandon branch lines. In fact, I have here a clipping, an advertisement of the Liberal party of Canada where Otto Lang in the last federal election said: 'I will make three guarantees to Saskatchewan that are important not just to farmers but to all of us, because we depend on farm prosperity for our own prosperity. He said, ( 1 ) not one elevator point will close as long as there is a demand for that elevator — quite a change in beliefs, (2) the stabilization program will protect you from falling prices and rising costs, (3) the Canadian Wheat Board will continue to be the very corner stone of the prairie grain marketing system.

What prompted those comments in 1974 was that he had pressure being put onto him by this NDP government, which was running in that election, to guarantee our country branch line system before the election was called. He couldn't take the heat so he put out that release. He repeated himself on many occasions during that election in 1974. On June 8 in the Winnipeg Free Press he said again there would be no branch line abandonment. He said it again on June 11 as he was approaching closer to the election date. And finally, when he was thinking that the people of Saskatchewan and of Canada weren't buying his stories, he had the Prime Minister join the fray. And on June 15 the Prime Minister reiterated what Mr. Lang had been saying.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn to my riding of Morse because I have a tremendous amount of mileage that is slated to be abandoned because of the PRAC recommendations. We even have, Mr. Speaker, in addition to the PRAC recommendations, mileage that will be abandoned because of Hall. I suggest to you that in most of those cases the lines that are going to be abandoned by Hall should not be abandoned. In terms of PRAC, Mr. Speaker, I have the following lines that I would like to cite that are going to be abandoned.

The Hak to Archive line, which includes such towns as Courval, Coderre, Shamrock, Kelstern, Hallonquist and McMahan, is being planned for abandonment. That track, Mr. Speaker, is a total of 104 miles. Highway mileage in that area is an equivalent of 156 miles. That would be directly affected if abandonment were to take place.

We have another track and branch line, the Wickett to Verlo line, which includes towns like Hazlet, Verlo and Roseray, with a total track mileage of 24.5 and with highway mileage directly in that area to be affected of 9 miles, and another 53 miles of grid roads that would be affected in getting the grain in that area to highways.

Mr. Speaker, I've prepared a little chart that I think demonstrates very well the problems that would be affected in that area if rail line abandonment is to occur. I've looked at many things. I've looked at the capital costs for provincial road mileage in that area if branch lines were to go, because the grain that would be hauled normally would have to come under a provincial road system. I compared such things as first-class pavement, pavement A, 7430-type pavement and what the cost would be of it. I compared pavement D, the middle-of-the-road pavement, second-class pavement, and what would be the cost if we were to replace the present highway system with that kind of pavement.

I looked at the mileage that there was for rail lines that were going to be affected in the area. We looked at the rail costs, the cost submitted by the rail companies for upgrading, if upgrading were to take place as opposed to building roads. And we looked at the cost of building rail on a per mile basis.

We find some interesting things. In the Archive-Hak situation, 156 miles of highway would be affected. It would affect Highways 363, 58, and 379. The cost to re-build, put into shape, and get up to standard 156 miles of pavement in that area would cost \$340,640 per mile. The total cost for a first-class paved surface in that area, to match the rail abandonment for that area, would be \$53,374,000. A second-class pavement would cost us \$28 million, at \$179,200 per mile.

There are 104 miles of rail lines in that area, Mr. Speaker, and the cost submitted by the rail companies (which we proved in the CTC hearing were highly exaggerated) were \$6.8 million, a rail cost of \$65,000 per mile.

We have other lines that are going to be abandoned, Mr. Speaker. In the Wickett to Verlo situation 24.5 miles of rail line are to go; 53 miles of road are going to be affected. The cost of fixing the road to bring it up to standard in that area would be \$18,053,000 — that is for a first-class surface. For a second-class surface it would be \$9.4 million. The cost to fix up the railroad in that area wouldn't be \$9 million or \$18 million; it would only be \$1.3 million.

In the case of Simmie, 24 miles of provincial highway system would be affected: cost for first-class pavement — \$8.1 million; cost for second-class pavement — \$4.3

million; rail lines that would be affected in that area, 25.2 miles; cost of bringing the rail up to standard — \$2.5 million. That's \$8 million versus \$2.5 million.

These are interesting figures. But what is more interesting, Mr. Speaker, is the total cost. For that one constituency where rail line abandonment is being planned, the total road mileage of our provincial highway system affected is 189 miles. The total cost to bring it up to first-class standards, to match the grain haul, would be 764 million; to bring it up to second-class standards, \$33 million. We have 153.7 miles of railway that would be affected. The cost to bring the railway up to standard is only \$10.8 million. That's \$64 million versus \$10 million for railroads — for first-class roads and first-class rail. It's \$33 million for second-class roads and \$10.8 million for first-class rail.

Mr. Speaker, that is only capital costs. We can go on. We can talk about maintenance of the provincial road system for that area. The cost to maintain a mile of first-class pavement in this province last year was \$2,546 per mile. With 189 miles in a riding it would cost us \$481,000 per year to maintain that system. The cost of maintaining a second class system of pavement at \$2,640 per mile will be exactly \$500,000 per year. The railways have submitted costs, Mr. Speaker, of what it would cost to maintain a proper rail system in that area. Not only do they have figures on the cost to maintain the proper rail in that area. included in their costs are the costs of operating the train as well, not only maintaining the track but putting the diesel fuel and whatever else is required in the train and the cost of maintaining the crews, etc. Their total cost for that area, to maintain all the branch lines that would go, would be \$686,000. That's \$686,000 versus \$500,000 to maintain a road system. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, which is better, which is the smarter idea?

The figures I have used compare our provincial highway system to our rail system in that area. It has no relationship nor shows any cost for the provincial grid road system in that area. I think that it would be safe to say that the cost to provide and maintain a municipal road system would rise up into the hundreds of millions of dollars for that area because of the tremendous number of extra plants that would be required to be maintained.

I note with interest the PRAC recommendations on page 10 of the report. Using the exaggerated figures of the rail companies they claim it would cost \$210 million to rebuild all the PRAC lines that are under consideration in the PRAC report. It goes on to tell us that it would cost \$236 million to pay the rail companies to maintain and operate that system of rail lines. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is a deal, in fact, it's a steal. How much would it cost to build and maintain our total provincial highway system where PRAC is affecting the branch lines and what would it cost us to maintain and build our grid and main farm access system? Using the figures that I have submitted here and projecting the average costs of being six times that to maintain road over rail, I suggest to you, the cost to build and maintain and set up only a provincial highway system for the areas affected by PRAC would be over \$1.3 billion and that has not taken into consideration the cost of maintaining that highway system.

The cost to maintain the grid road and main farm access system in addition to the provincial highway system, to match the PRAC lines, would probably exceed \$2 billion. Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that this is an important government economic problem for our province. It is one that we cannot afford to make or to have happen. Mr. Speaker, it is important to remember that a first-class highway system has a life expectancy of some 15 years and a second-class highway system is somewhat less than that. It is important to note that 85 pound steel on the other hand, has a life

expectancy of over 50 years and with the branch line traffic, that it would probably be receiving, would probably be 100 years of life expectancy. The time that the steel would stay, the time that we could build into a system where steel would be in existence, we would probably have to rebuild our road system five, six, seven or eight times. Mr. Speaker, those are cold, hard facts that cannot be ignored. They are the reasons why we do not support the PRAC report. There is no way that we will support the PRAC report.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is well to say that but what has the member for Morse, myself, what have I done on this issue? This is interesting because I'll tell you that since October 18 the major battle in the constituency of Morse has been fighting rail line abandonment, fighting for the people in Stewart Valley and fighting for the people in Main Centre, and fighting for the people in Hodgeville and Simmie and Hazlet, and fighting for the people in Coderre and Courval, Coderre and Courval being the towns that belonged to the member for Thunder Creek who is noticeably absent. But, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that we have been fighting this battle single-handedly. We have been fighting this battle with only the support of the provincial government, the prairie pools and the National Farmers' Union.

I don't see any of my Tory friends out there, Mr. Speaker. I don't see any of my Tory friends out there fighting rail line abandonment. I don't see any of my Tory friends out there at rail line retention committee meetings or wherever. The only place I see my Tory friends, Mr. Speaker, is in the camp of the Palliser Wheat Growers, attending meetings and conventions and secret meetings on crow rate abandonment. That's the place where I see my Tory members. They are far too busy maintaining that kind of operation, rather than fighting to protect the communities that are going to be involved by abandonment.

Mr. Speaker, the member of parliament for my area, my dear old friend, Mr. Frank Hamilton, who I suggest should be up to his armpits in this battle, is noticeably absent. Mr. Speaker, he should be attending those retention meetings with me. I would like to see him there. We had a meeting in Herbert the other day with Otto Lang. I met the member for Swift Current after the meeting with Otto Lang. I met him in Rush Lake. He wasn't in Herbert, he was in Rush Lake. He said he had sort of thought about going but couldn't make it because he was too busy. Now I ask you. Mr. Speaker, what is more important, doing something else and being too busy, or attending very important rail line abandonment meetings?

The federal member for Swift Current-Maple Creek the Tory caucus agriculture critic, was not able to attend the Canadian Transport Commission hearings in Hodgeville. He was noticeably absent. He was too busy, Mr. Speaker, the member for Swift Current isn't too busy to write press clippings. I have a press clipping here from the Swift Current Sun. January 18. The member for Swift Current-Maple Creek is full of good ideas. He was commenting on the PRAC report when it was tabled earlier this year, and after he had read it, (it took him until January 18 to read it), but after he had read it he made the following observations: He says the PRAC report goes too fast, too far. He doesn't dismiss it out of hand. He just says that if he were doing it he wouldn't be going as fast nor would he be going as far. The decisions made by the Prairie Rail Action Committee on the future of rail lines in the southwest were taken too fast and went too far, Frank Hamilton, MP for Swift Current said. In Vancouver, while attending the Palliser Wheat Growers' annual convention, the member states as fact. To study the movement of grain cars through the terminal yards there, Hamilton said, the government acted too fast on the PRAC report. He said he felt the report smacked of fait accompli and said that the government is racing to get the job done before the next



federal election.

Again he reiterated the changes recommended go too far and too fast; those are the only words of wisdom can come from the member for Swift Current, the Tory MP. He was busy attending a Palliser convention in Vancouver at the time, and I note with interest some of the Palliser observations about the PRAC Report. The Palliser organization said that the PRAC Report was reasonable, that it was rational and that it did a good job in terms of recommending the lines that were inefficient and that were no good . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Hamilton didn't say what the Pallisers said; all he said was that it was going too fast and too far. He didn't disagree nor did he agree, a position often held by Tories opposite.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Hear, hear!

**MR. GROSS:** — Now you know, Mr. Speaker, the member for Swift Current, I've talked about his absence in terms of fighting for rail line abandonment and rail line rationalization and on and on. But another member that belongs to this House, Mr. Speaker, the member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher), cowboy Colin, the provincial Tory answer to Superman. Mr. Thatcher was not down at those CTC (Canadian Transport Commission) hearings, and I suggest that the member for Thunder Creek should have been down at those hearings. Communities in his riding, in the riding of Thunder Creek are very gravely affected by the recommendations of PRAC. Communities like Coderre, and Courval, and Shamrock are being drastically affected. They are having their lifeline cut off. Dave Hanley, the candidate for Thunder Creek, or for the Moose Jaw federal riding was the only person from that area with a political inference that was there.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. GROSS:** — But the answer given to us every time we turn around is that Mr. Thatcher could not attend because he was too busy. Too busy to attend a hearing where the fate of his communities are at stake.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, in our area I would be remiss if I did not point out to members of this House another member of the Conservative party who was absent from CTC hearings and retention meetings, and that is the member for Swift Current (Mr. Ham). Now, Mr. Speaker, the member for Swift Current is not quite as lazy as his counterparts — not quite as lazy. He wrote a brief to the Canadian Transport Commission for which I give him a great deal of credit. He took the time to write a mammoth two page brief, a mammoth brief that was filled with ridiculous contradictions. But he was also too busy, Mr. Speaker, he was too busy to present himself and suggest to the Canadian Transport Commission that it is on the wrong track, or that PRAC is on the wrong track and that something else should be done. He, too, was far too busy, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Ham in his brief, claims that the abandonment would affect his riding in Swift Current, and I suggest he's right — it would affect it. It would have serious consequences in the city of Swift Current. But I point out to the member for Swift Current (Mr. Ham) that perhaps in the future he do a little more research into the problem. He tells us that a good number of train crews would be affected if rail line abandonment on Archive-Hak line would take place, that train crews in Swift Current would no longer be needed. I suggest to the member for Swift Current that he do his research and do it a little more effectively because train crews on that line — on the Archive-Hak line — are not based in Swift Current, they are based in Moose Jaw. Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of research we've been used to in this House — reading the newspaper the night before and coming to the

House and asking questions. Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the member for Swift Current that he use the services that are available to him as a member and use the capable research of Jack Harrington, one of their hacks. Maybe he can help them. He's a railroader; he should understand where the train crews are based, whether it is Moose Jaw or Regina or whatever.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Transport Commission got a good laugh out of that brief. I suggest the people of Saskatchewan are going to get another laugh from the Tory Party when they find out its stand on the PRAC report. When the people of Saskatchewan realize that the PRAC report is part and parcel of the original Tory plan federally and provincially (the MacPherson Royal Commission on Transportation recommended 8,600 miles abandonment, while the Liberals only recommended 1,400 miles of abandonment) I think that the Tory Party of this province and the Tory Party of Canada will have to reckon with that fact some day. It is needless to say, Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the PRAC report in no way or manner and that I will be supporting this motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. SPEAKER:** — The Minister of Northern Saskatchewan requests permission to make an introduction before the member for Kindersley.

### **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**HON. N.E. BYERS (Minister of Northern Saskatchewan):** — Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to introduce to you and through you to the members of this legislature members of the Northlands Program Review Committee who are seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are Mr. Lawrence Yew of the Northern Municipal Council, Mr. Phil Chenard the member of the municipal council from Stony Rapids, Mr. Charlie Fosseneuve from Cumberland House, Mr. Syd Banting the mayor of Creighton, Mr. Louis Bear from Sandy Bay. The Northlands Program Review Committee was established last year to make recommendations on programs of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan which would receive cost sharing under the Canada-Saskatchewan Northlands Agreement. During the past three months this committee has held approximately five meetings in which they have reviewed a majority of DNS programs.

Mr. Speaker, they are meeting here today in Regina and this afternoon a very historic event will take place. This afternoon the Northlands management group will approve the first Northlands budget which has been reviewed, discussed and recommended by the people of northern Saskatchewan.

I ask the members of the House to join with me in welcoming these members of the Northlands Program Review Committee and express thanks to them as representatives of northern people for all that they have contributed to the development of northern Saskatchewan.

**MR. R. ANDREW (Kindersley):** — First of all, I would wish to congratulate the Minister of Municipal Affairs for his very able presentation. By and large what he said, I certainly agree with. He obviously made a few references to our party federally and I think that is probably to be expected in view of the forthcoming election — in view of the traditionally voting habits of some of the members of the NDP when it comes to federal elections. That, as I say, was a fine debate. However, I will say, and I propose in my stay in this House to try to be a fair person, the debate, the calibre of the debate soon

deteriorated grossly.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. ANDREW:** — If we are to follow the logic of the member for Morse (Mr. Gross) with regard to: 1. That somehow this MacPherson Report is a doctrine of the Progressive Conservative Party. One of the reasons for that is because this MacPherson was a candidate for the Progressive Conservatives or he was a member of something. If we're to apply that type of logic, and I don't suggest that's the type of logic you should apply, I suggest another man in the field of transportation who has distinguished himself was also an active member of the Progressive Conservative Party — prior to being appointed to the bench and prior to being appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada — and of course I am talking about Mr. Justice Emmett Hall. Does that mean that is our report as well?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. ANDREW:** — Does it necessarily follow that that is our Conservative report?

2. The member for Morse seems to want to think that because we were in power in 1963 and that somehow now 21 years later we didn't do something back in the Diefenbaker years. I suggest that probably more was done for the rural farmer of Saskatchewan when John Diefenbaker was Prime Minister than at any time in the history of this country.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. ANDREW:** — I say to the hon. member that during the parliament of 1972-74, I suggest that the hon. member's party had far more to do with what the policy of the federal government was than the Progressive Conservative Party did. I ask you what did you do in 1972 and 1974?

You go on further to say that this problem is simply the abandonment of railways. I suggest that the problem goes on further. The province of Alberta is contributing nothing to this total problem — bunk! Premier Lougheed has indicated — check your stuff — \$100 million loan available to upgrade Prince Rupert, \$100 million with one caveat, one caveat on it, provided that the Alberta Wheat Pool is involved in developing that port.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. ANDREW:** — The member for Morse goes on further to talk about the member for Swift Current-Maple Creek at Vancouver at a Palliser convention. I'll tell you where the hon. member was at the time he was referring to. He was meeting with the grain handlers' union at the Vancouver port to try to determine whether we could resolve so there would be no more labor tie-ups so the western grain can be delivered to market.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. ANDREW:** — . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . So as I indicated, I will try to be fair in this House and I do support . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It's very clear our party supports the Hall Commission report 100 per cent, 100 per cent.

**March 9, 1979**

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. ANDREW:** — We support the Hall Commission all the way and we oppose PRAC.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. ANDREW:** — To the members opposite, there's our policy in black and white — federal policy.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — We support them.

**AN. HON. MEMBER:** — We'll deliver it too.

**MR. ANDREW:** — . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . All right, let's have Coleville. I'll tell you about Coleville. When the PRAC Report came out three days later, I met with the Sask Wheat Pool local committee in the Coleville area to discuss this problem . . . (inaudible interjections) . . . Just a minute, just a minute. There was a meeting in Coleville on Wednesday night. You were there granted . . .

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — You don't have anything to do in this House.

**MR. ANDREW:** — All you have to do is make one speech and sit up there and bang your hand on the desk. We had to prepare and I had to be in the House that morning. There was a storm out and I couldn't go and you ask the guys out there whether they were there. You weren't in the House. You weren't in the House that day. That's right . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** — Order! Order! I wonder if the members could observe the usual rules of debate and direct their comments through the Speaker. That way we will be able to strip off the personal invective that may become involved and I would also implore only those who are on their feet to be speaking.

**MR. ANDREW:** — I'll tell you what the position is on the Coleville line. The member for Morse (Mr. Gross) talks about wanting to retain all the lines. I met with the Wheat Pool committee at Coleville. There are virtually two lines involved. No. 1 is the line from Biggar to Dodsland and I talked to the Wheat Pool and they said we don't want that line, we want it to go. If the Wheat Pool committee want it to go and the farmers don't care about it, let it go. But the line from Dodsland to Coleville to Dewar Lake — we support that line. There is 97,000 bushel per mile haulage on that line. You talk about Coleville and we want to maintain the town and I know the people in Coleville. You go and ask them. Sure we can talk about PRAC and as I said the other day, there's more to do than simply talk about losing the rail line. Where are the Sask Power employees going from Coleville? They are going into Kindersley; they are moving into Kindersley . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Do I want them in Kindersley? They should stay in Coleville and maintain

that community.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to propose an amendment, seconded by Mr. Lane (Qu'Appelle):

That the motion be amended by adding thereto the following words:

And that this matter be referred to a the Select Standing Committee on Agriculture so that witnesses such as Mr. Justice Emmett Hall could be called.

Debate continues concurrently on the motion and the amendment.

**MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle):** — Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments to make . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . O.K., now that the business of the House has been settled can I proceed.

I just wanted to make a couple of comments, Mr. Speaker, on this obviously vitally important matter. The position of the Conservative Party has been unequivocally stated. But we had some comments which seemed to cast some innuendos about the sincerity with which members approached the particular matter — and a matter of responsibility. I would just like to give an indication of the responsibility of the government opposite when it dealt with the PRAC report. That deals with the comments of the minister responsible for the government's handling of transportation, who moved the motion. Let me tell you when they talk about responsibility, about one of the most irresponsible statements and actions that I have ever heard. The PRAC report was tabled, released to the public. The next morning that minister went on one of the hot-line programs here in Regina, criticized the PRAC report, said he opposed it, that the government was unalterably opposed. Someone had the nerve to phone in and say, well, has the minister read it. You know what his answer was? No. No. And what type of responsible position is that? We're dealing with one of the most vital issues to come before the people of Saskatchewan and the minister responsible for transport, without even having read the report, says no, I haven't read it but we're against it anyway. That's the height of irresponsibility and you know it. And I say it's time, Mr. Speaker, that we started treating this problem in a responsible manner with concern for long term solutions to the transportation problems in western Canada and particularly in Saskatchewan. We should quit this constant, total opposition, without having done the research and without a having read the report. At least the Conservative Party took its position after having responsibly read the report. This was a knee-jerk reaction by the minister responsible for transport. I don't think that that type of activity does the members opposite proud. And I don't think that it gives any benefit to the farmers of Saskatchewan if from now on every time someone does a study or takes an action, this government decides what the short-term political advantage is and says, no, we're against it because that's where the votes lie, without a responsible assessment. If you had said, we will discuss that report after we've had an opportunity to read it, and then said we oppose it, as the Conservative Party did, then you could stand up here and say that you acted responsibly and that you were acting in what you believed to be the best interests of the farmers But when you get on the very next morning and say that this government is unalterably opposed to the PRAC report, and like I say, someone phones up and says, did you read it? No, I haven't read the report; just about with pride he says no I haven't read the report, I say you're doing your government a disservice, your party a disservice, and the people of Saskatchewan a disservice.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. LANE:** — I hear comments from the Minister of Social Services (Mr. Rolfes) and that would be the response I would expect from the Minister of Social Services. I was disappointed, though, that a minister who has an important position in the cabinet would take that type of action. Mr. Speaker, I didn't want to wake the Minister of Social Services on this debate, which doesn't affect his riding. Unfortunately I did, and I probably have to apologize to the House for that.

But to go back to the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Kramer), responsible for the transportation policy, I don't think you did yourself or the government or the people of Saskatchewan a service by taking this knee-jerk reaction to the particular report.

Mr. Speaker, I have one of the rail lines that's become a bit of a political issue and that's the Lewvan line . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Now, let me tell you about that particular one and on this we have, I think, some House agreement. In my opinion, and I think it stands up, the PRAC report did an unbelievably poor job of research and assessment of that particular line. Anybody who's driven down that highway — you know it's impossible to build a road in that area, the Regina gumbo, they've tried for years — it's become known as the Burma road. It can't take the heavy trucks because they sink in the gumbo. It's in the heart of one of the greatest grain-producing areas, in the Riceton — Gray — Lewvan road area. They can't get the trucking in. Even if one was to accept the PRAC suggestions, which of course we do not, to suggest there would be alternate modes of transportation through that area indicates a serious lack of research and a fundamental error in judgment of those responsible for the PRAC report.

The other thing of course, we've all seen the results of an area where the Liberals thought they had some strength. The Liberal MP in that area, one Mr. Goodale, indicated as well how they treat the PRAC report and rail line problems of Saskatchewan, by deciding it would be good politics to waive the PRAC report in that particular area. I suggest to all members of this House that have lines affected by the PRAC report that if you are not taking Goodale's position and taking it before every authority you can, you are doing your people a disservice, because Goodale has, obviously, indicated that the federal government's position is going to be what is politically palatable.

Now, fortunately, for the people of the Lewvan line, they benefit, but other areas of this province, seemingly, haven't had the same benefit. Having talked to people throughout that line, they are obviously pleased that their line is being kept, but they also have the feeling that everybody else in the problem should be taking the actions done by Goodale as I say, to every authority and everybody that would listen. Because Goodale has proved that the PRAC report means nothing. It was a waste of time. It is a stall on the part of the federal government and I don't think it is anything less than that.

I think that the amendment proposed by the Conservative opposition this morning, would give an opportunity for all members of this Assembly and for the people of Saskatchewan to hear, again, the advice of Mr. Justice Emmett Hall. I don't think it can be said often enough. I don't think that the people of Saskatchewan can hear often enough Mr. Justice Hall's recommendations and his views on this very vital matter. I would hope that the government show a little responsibility and support the amendment. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that further activities as shown by the Minister for Transport don't augur well for coming to grips with some long-term solutions for the transportation problems of this province.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**HON. E. TCHORZEWSKI (Minister of Health):** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this resolution because I consider it to be a very important one and it may very well be that this will be one of the more important resolutions that this Assembly considers in the next few weeks. If this Assembly can influence the federal government to get out of its dug-in position of negligence, we will have saved the province and its farmers and its citizens great costs.

Mr. Speaker, we will have saved the dream of the people who built this province, a dream of rural life of high quality with the maximum number of farmers and rural communities as an option to complete big urbanization.

I am confident that we will also have stemmed the systematic and deliberate implementation of, not only the kinds of things we recently have seen, but the deliberate implementation of the report of the federal task force in agriculture of the late 1960s. I don't consider PRAC as an isolated operation. It is part of a wider and a broader scheme by private grain companies and by the railways and other interested groups to do just what the Task Force on Agriculture said it should do. The elimination of two-thirds of our farmers it said should happen. It said that there should be inland terminals built. It said there should be feed grains on the open market. It said the same kinds of things as the Conservative candidate who ran against the hon. member for Nutana (Mr. Robbins) said in some of the remarks that he made after studies he had made.

Mr. Speaker, all through that the federal government denied those recommendations of that Task Force in the same way as the Conservative members over there say that the former federal Conservative government denied the recommendations of the MacPherson committee. But while they denied them step by step and systematically, those recommendations have proven to be actually happening. And PRAC is just the icing on the whole thing.

Mr. Speaker, this whole saga of study after study and delay after delay by the federal government, whether it is Conservative or Liberal, on needed action to come to grips with the mess in which our transportation system finds itself, is just another of many examples which shows that government does have an important role to play in our society. It is an example of why the philosophical approach by the Conservative members opposite is archaic and leads to chaos and an economy which flounders about without any direction at all. The Conservative Party spokesmen constantly talk about how people want less government involvement, how farmers are mad at government, how they if elected will see to it that governments stay out of everything. Conservatives want to get elected in order that they could create a situation of non-government.

Mr. Speaker, it has been just that kind of lack of government leadership and lack of government initiative that has allowed our railway system and grain delivery system to deteriorate to the extent that it has.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — I haven't had a chance to study this document that I see on my desk that comes out of the research office of the official opposition. I have looked at it

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just in a glancing kind of way.

**MR. ROMANOW:** — In Ottawa.

**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — It's in Ottawa, but that's O.K. As I said, Mr. Attorney General, I haven't had time to study it yet but I have had time to listen to the member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane) who just spoke and I have had time to consider the amendment that the Conservative members opposite are proposing to this resolution.

It is an amendment, Mr. Speaker, to establish another committee. It is an amendment to establish an agriculture committee that is going to do all kinds of things, that is going to take a great deal of time. Well, Mr. Speaker, we have had all kinds of studies — we have had the MacPherson report; we've had the Hall Commission report; we've had the Snively study and report; and now we've got PRAC (Prairie Rail Action Committee). How many more studies do we need? It's not studies that we need, Mr. Speaker. We need action.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — It's not studies that the farmers at Meacham and the farmers at Leroy and the farmers at Holdfast need and want. They want something to happen and they want it to happen now.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — They indeed are interested in the things that Hall had to say just as we on this side of the House are interested in the things that Hall had to say. And so they should be because it was a good report. Very extensively researched. And it had excellent recommendations.

Now the member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane) before he sat down, what does he say? He says farmers want to hear the Hall Report over and over and over and over again. What kind of a solution does that kind of proposal bring about? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right. That's right, he says that we need a rational approach. What does he mean by a rational approach? I'll tell you what he means, Mr. Speaker. He means that we need to delay some more, or at least they would like to delay some more, so that the railway companies and the private grain companies could continue to do what they have been doing for many, many years.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — And that is, Mr. Speaker, neglect the system to such an extent till it begins to deteriorate to such an extent that it finally obliterates itself. That's what the Conservative members opposite are trying to do with this resolution.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — And if any of them have said . . . and no doubt after me some of them will say, some of them will say that they agree with the recommendations of the Hall Report and they disagree with PRAC. Well, if they really meant what they say, they would immediately vote for this resolution moved by the Minister of Transport.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!



**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — And why don't they? I would like to ask the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Collver), if he's going to speak today or any of this members, to stand up this morning or this afternoon and say that they are ready to vote on this resolution.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — Let our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding) indicate the kinds of things that he can indicate because he's going to speak on behalf of Saskatchewan farmers. But don't introduce a resolution or an amendment. Don't introduce an amendment that does nothing else but play into the hands of the Minister of Transport in Ottawa.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — Don't introduce an amendment to this resolution that plays into the hands of the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway). Just stall some more so that they can go on their merry way. Mr. Speaker, it's a bad amendment and puts a lie to the position that those members take on the PRAC Report.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — Mr. Speaker, agriculture and grain in particular, which have been our greatest industries since the prairies were settled, continues to offer great possibilities for growth and development. The communities which service this industry have been an important part of the growth and development in the past and they can be just as important in the future. Together the agricultural industry in our rural communities has developed what has been referred to as the Saskatchewan Option. It is a good way of life and this provincial government has encouraged it and helped it to develop. I believe that the country elevator system, with some improvements and updating should remain the primary collection system for prairie grain. The principle of equal rates for equal distance shaped the growth of the present grain collection system. The pattern of small communities scattered more or less uniformly over large areas has built a unique social structure which has made a contribution far out of proportion to its size to Canadian development. The lack of the Federal Government's commitment to making the railways live up to their obligations, and now the PRAC report threaten the very existence of these communities and this social structure. The centres which would be affected by the recommended abandonments handle millions of bushels of grain each year. The capital investments in the elevators are already there and they have been maintained and in many cases upgraded in recent years. The problem is that the railways have let their capital, both equipment and rail lines, go into a state of disrepair and obsolescence, so that meeting the requirements for moving grain in 1985 will be impossible unless something drastic is done, something immediate is done and not delayed any further. The railways have been compensated and compensated well to carry prairie grain. The real problem is that they have neglected the western grain handling system because they, like so many others, have for the last 40 to 50 years continually underestimated the future for prairie grains and because they grabbed what they could get and invested in everything else except hauling of grain, invested in such things as airlines, hotels and steamships.

Mr. Speaker, PRAC instead of dealing with the problem was mandated to get the railways off the hook. That's what its recommendations would do, get them off the

hook. They would start the destruction of many rural communities and put on the backs of farmers and many rural taxpayers the costs of lost community tax revenues, longer truck hauls and increased wear and tear on roads. Mr. Speaker, the branch line system to support the elevators in our communities must remain in place. Maintenance throughout the years would have averted much more costly repair work now. The greatest long-term social and economic benefit can be derived from a branch line elevator system for grain collection. This is a point which the authors of PRAC refuse to consider. They recommended abandonment of 1,416 miles of branch line — 60 per cent of the lines it studied, including some lines even the railways wanted to keep. Of the 1,416 miles PRAC suggested be abandoned, the prairie wheat pools recommended that 1,155 miles be maintained in the basic network. And of the 27 sections of the line that PRAC (Prairie Rail Action Committee) wants to abandon in Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool recommended that 24 be maintained in the basic network.

Cargill is happy, Mr. Member from Redberry, Cargill is overjoyed, and so are their friends on the opposite side of the House. If these lines are abandoned, Mr. Speaker, the grain producer members of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool will lose the existing investment they have in hundreds of elevators in lines they want to maintain.

Pool will have to scrap millions of dollars slated for planned construction of elevator facilities for lines PRAC wants to abandon. By embracing the PRAC report, Mr. Speaker, the federal government has broken a promise. It has broken a promise made to farmers during the 1974 election when the Prime Minister promised not to abandon rail service on branch lines as long as elevator companies considered that continued rail service was warranted. But PRAC has gone beyond its terms of reference by making rail abandonment recommendations in order to increase competition between elevator companies. Competition between elevator companies is none of PRAC's business, and it has no place in its report and it must be ignored. Its dealing with abandonment on this basis cannot be interpreted anything less than an effort to support the multinational grain companies at the expense of co-operative efforts by farmers to pull their resources and market their grain.

PRAC is saying if farmers in any area want to market their grain co-operatively through the Pool, they should not be allowed to do it because there must be competition. The private grain companies don't care to provide the service, farmers should not be allowed to do it on their own; that is what PRAC is saying because of its assumptions. If the federal government accepts PRAC it accepts this principle. It will reject the right of farmers to form a co-op.

The next question, Mr. Speaker, is this. The next question is, how long will it take before the federal government applies the same principle to the Canadian Wheat Board and, therefore, set the stage for its very destruction? In deciding the future of marginal lines, PRAC favored abandonment of most of the elevators which are pool elevators, and retention if there were competition, or where PRAC deemed it suitable to introduce competition. This is a direct attack on the farmer-owned elevator system which serves many delivery points abandoned by private enterprise, or which private enterprise will not serve.

Four lines in west central Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, where the Pool wants to spend \$2.5 million on new and improved elevators are abandoned by PRAC because, quote: 'only 3 points of the 17 points in the 4 lines are competitive.' PRAC has no business, Mr. Speaker, trying to prevent Saskatchewan Pool from building elevators just because there is little competition.

Mr. Speaker, I said in the throne debate that I believe — as I know others believe — that PRAC first of all drew its conclusions and having done that, it then put together the figures and the arguments to support those conclusions. I pointed out that the line in my constituency which is recommended for abandonment — and there are many such examples — but I said that in reply to inquiries by the communities of Meacham, PRAC justified its recommendation to abandon that line by saying that the last five-year average receipts at Meacham was only 469,000 bushels. But they failed to mention the Peterson point which is also on that line. They failed to consider the fact that the railway had refused maintenance on the line and in fact, would not provide a train to deliver or pick up cars for months at a time, in an attempt to force local farmers to haul to other centres. In spite of this deliberate attempt at sabotage at Meacham, Meacham and Peterson handled receipts for 960,000 bushels in 1977-78.

Mr. Speaker, the Hall Commission report was a good report. It appears that it was so good that the federal government had to find a way to subvert it and so the Minister of Transport established PRAC. Ed Broadbent has summed it all up very well in his comment:

It is now going to use the CTC (Canadian Transport Commission) as a smoke screen hoping that farmers will not see PRAC for what it is and that is wholesale abandonment of the government's commitment to western Canada.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. TCHORZEWSKI:** — In closing remarks and in support of the resolution moved by the minister responsible for transport, I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that it is of some interest to consider the position of the Conservative Party on this issue, as has been mentioned. Where is Joe Clark? What have federal Conservatives MPs and candidates had to say? Not one word, Mr. Speaker. Silence. And their silence is nothing less than support for the federal government and for PRAC. The amendment that they just introduced over there further reinforces that kind of support for PRAC because of the delay that it proposes.

No one, Mr. Speaker, has spoken with greater force than our NDP MPs Les Benjamin and Lorne Nystrom and their fellow candidates. Mr. Speaker, they know this province, they understand this development and they appreciate the importance of the country elevator system and rural communities. Saskatchewan people will speak out on this issue in the next federal election because it's important to them. They will remember who spoke out on their behalf and the result will be that it will not only be Benjamin and Nystrom as MPs, it will also be MPs such as Bill Knight, Vic Althouse and others who will support the position of this government.

Mr. Speaker, I will oppose the amendment and I will support the resolution as moved by the minister responsible for transport.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. R.L. COLVER (Leader of the Opposition):** — Mr. Speaker, I am not going to drone on and on today about political kinds of machinations which we have been hearing from the other side. What I would like to say to the members opposite is this.

Here is an opportunity for this legislature to stand united, for the first time, against a federal government that is uncaring and unreasonable in its approach to western Canadian farmers. And what have we heard in the Minister of Transportation's remarks, the seconder's remarks and the member for Humboldt's (Mr. Tchorzewski) remarks? Absolute hypocrisy and an attempt to twist words. Let me give you an example of the nice twisting of words. Instead of uniting together in this legislature and saying as a group to Ottawa and saying as a legislature to Ottawa, Saskatchewan will not stand for the kind of nonsense that is included in PRAC, the members opposite attempt to play politics with it.

Let me just give you an example with reference to the amendment. Does the amendment, that our member for Kindersley (Mr. Andrew) proposed, kill the motion? No, it does not. Does the amendment stop the motion from going forward? No, it does not. What it says to the motion is, not to create another study committee because the committee for the legislature already exists. What it says is, let's stop the abandonment now, as the motion says . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . certainly does not say to lay it. Perhaps I had better read, for the benefits of the members opposite and for the members of the press corps so that they will understand, too, what the amended motion says. Here is the amended motion:

That this Assembly deploring the establishment of the Prairie Rail Action Committee, requests the Minister of Transport to cancel any further abandonment hearings of the Canadian Transport Commission and to transfer the lines in question to the permanent network, or to establish the Prairie Rail Authority as recommended by the Hall Commission, and ('and' not or, not substituting, 'and') and that this matter be referred to The Select Standing Committee on Agriculture so that witnesses, such as Mr. Justice Emmett Hall, could be called.

Now, the reason for that amendment is to give Mr. Justice Emmett Hall a forum, a means by which he can re-emphasize the recommendations he made. At the same time that the Legislative Assembly calls for the cessation of this wholesale abandonment by PRAC, or the establishment of the prairie rail authority, we want at the same time to implement and to influence the federal government and to convince them not to proceed with PRAC and at the same time to have The Select Standing Committee on Agriculture, in this Legislative Assembly, call witnesses such as Mr. Justice Emmett Hall, to add the weight of his influence to this whole argument. That is not a stall, Mr. Speaker, that is not a stall. That is an additional means by which this legislature can influence the Government of Canada.

You know it is an interesting point, Mr. Speaker, the way the member for Humboldt (Mr. Tchorzewski) just spoke . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, I hate to interrupt these people but if they would just wait. Hanging in my office since 1975, Mr. Speaker, is a picture of Ceasar with three knives in the front and three knives in the back. I have never known which ones were driven from the front or which ones were driven from the back.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. COLLVER:** — That's a fact. I want you to notice for the benefit of the members opposite that that picture has been hanging there since 1975 and not later than when other members might have joined the party, so I have no concern at all about other members who may have joined the party.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that the member for Humboldt made reference to the fact and I believe I have got him correct and I hope he corrects me if I'm wrong: on the one hand he said the Government of Canada since the 1960s with the issuance of the MacPherson report . . . the Government of Canada has been attempting to change the whole field of agriculture in western Canada and to reduce the number of farmers by two-thirds. Am I correct in that, Mr. Minister?

**AN HON. MEMBER:** — That was the task force . . .

**MR. COLLVER:** — But you said the Government of Canada has been implementing that. If I am correct in my assumption, I am sure the member will rise and correct me, he said that the Government of Canada — through all of these stalls and delays, through these committees at the same time that it was studying the report, studying the situation — was implementing that original recommendation of the task force and was proceeding to reduce the number of farmers in western Canada. That's what the member said. Then he tried to twist it into politics and he said, you know the Conservatives don't want so much government; that's a bad thing. It's the government that's got to take action to ring about more farmers in western Canada and the maintenance of the family farm. Mr. Speaker, of all the nonsense. First of all the member suggests that it's the government that is reducing the number of farms and he is right. The task force that said Saskatchewan would be half-a-million people by the year 2000 we reject, the members opposite reject but the Government of Canada has proceeded on the basis of that task force study at any rate. We can see that happening time after time like when a complete study put forward by Mr. Justice Hall that everyone supports, that everyone in Saskatchewan and in western Canada wants to see implemented, is ignored and Otto Lang introduces PRAC. Otto Lang introduces exactly the reverse and tries to continue the implementation of the task force study. It is that very governmental action, for the benefit of the member for Humboldt, that we oppose. It is the very governmental action to ignore the wishes of western Canadian farmers, the very arrogance of the federal government in going against the Hall Commission and introducing PRAC that we oppose and it is the hypocrisy of the member for Humboldt and others in this Assembly who try to make politics on the backs of the small Saskatchewan farmer.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. COLLVER:** — I say to the members of this legislature that we have an opportunity here. We have an opportunity to stand united against Ottawa in this legislature and I know that all members are aware that a vote on this issue today was not possible because it was openly discussed between the Attorney General and myself back and forth in this very House that everybody heard . . . openly discussed, so to suggest that because the members are not going to vote today is ridiculous; the government has already decided not to. That is just trying again to play politics. What do you want ? Do you not want to stop PRAC from going forward; because if you do, why don't the NDP and the Progressive Conservatives unite on this issue? We are united.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. COLLVER:** — You want it to stop. Let's unite on it and let's send a message to Ottawa in no uncertain terms that 100 per cent of the members of the Saskatchewan legislature are diametrically opposed to Otto Lang's attempts to destroy the western Canadian farmer.

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**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. COLLVER:**—Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal more to say on this issue and I beg leave to adjourn debate.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:55.