

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
First Session — Nineteenth Legislature

Tuesday, April 17, 1979.

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

On the Orders of the Day

QUESTIONS

MCIC-SMA Dispute

MR. E.A. BERNTSON (Souris-Cannington): — A question in the absence of the Minister of Health (Mr. Tchorzewski), to the Premier. We have tried over the last several weeks to make you understand that there can be no long-term solution to the current MCIC-SMA (Medical Care Insurance Commission — Saskatchewan Medical association) dispute until some semblance of harmony exists between these two bodies . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Can I repeat the question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Health? We have tried to make you understand over the last several weeks that there can be no long-term solution to the current MCIC-SMA dispute until some semblance of harmony exists between these two bodies, Dr. Fraser, the elected head of SMA this morning said that Dr. Penman, the appointed head of MCIC, was in fact part of the problem. Are you prepared today, in the interest of health care in Saskatchewan, to dismiss Dr. Penman?

HON. E.L. TCHORZEWSKI (Minister of Health): — Mr. Speaker, I am always interested in exploring and discussing with Dr. Fraser of the Saskatchewan Medical association, as I indicated to them at our meeting last week, any concerns that they may have about the operation of Medical Care Insurance Commission or health programs in general or distribution of fee schedules and other matters as well, and I'm prepared to do that and, indeed, will be doing that as I have done in the past. I am not prepared at this time to indicate to the member as to what may happen if anything at all will happen in the situation of the chairman of the Medical Care Insurance Commission.

MR. BERNTSON: — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I take that as no? Will you not agree that what in fact you are doing is protecting one of your highly paid political appointments to the detriment of health care in Saskatchewan for cheap political purposes?

MR. TCHORZEWSKI: — Mr. Speaker, no.

The Natowatum — Funding

MR. G. McLEOD (Meadow Lake): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan. Mr. Minister, I have here a copy of a newspaper, the Natowatum published in Beauval which lists among its board of directors a Mr. Tim Myers as a representative of your department. Will you inform this Assembly as to the extent that your department funds this newspaper?

HON. N.E. BYERS (Minister of Northern Saskatchewan): — Mr. Speaker, the department has been providing a good portion of the funds for the Natowatum and I hope the hon. members will correct me if I have not pronounced that correctly. The communication reports mainly on events and what is known as the west side communities. It is

published in Beauval. The Department of Northern Saskatchewan, and I hope the Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Collver) will recognize that there is not a daily newspaper here nor a weekly newspaper serving that portion of the province. The government has been providing financial assistance to this publication.

MR. McLEOD: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I would agree with you and the hon. member for Meadow Lake does know that there isn't a weekly or a daily newspaper there. I would draw the minister's attention with Mr. Speaker's indulgence to the February 28, '79 issue which contains an article entitled "RCMP Assassin Shoots Native Teenager". The article includes such inflammatory and irresponsible statements as:

Racists and Fascists RCMP, cowardly RCMP, fascist shooting and unbelievable arrogance of the enemy state.

Mr. Minister, do you condone the use of your government's funds for the publication of irresponsible and inflammatory articles such as the one I've just cited?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BYERS: — Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that events occur in our society that can be reported like that. I suggest they are no more inflammatory than many articles one would read in any weekly or any daily newspaper published in southern Saskatchewan.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Not like an article about the Conservative Party.

MR. McLEOD: — Further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan (Mr. Byers) if he would think that a statement such as 'the correct attitude to take is that the courts of the enemy have no jurisdiction over our people' would not be an inflammatory article and do you feel you would see something like that in the responsible press of this province?

MR. BYERS: — Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member that neither the government nor the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan nor officials in the department of Northern Saskatchewan have in any way attempted or ever attempted to apply censorship to the publishers of Natowatum.

DNS Member on Newspaper Board

MR. R. L. COLLVER (Leader of the Opposition): — Question to the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan. Why then does the member sitting on the Board of Directors of this publication, listed in the publication as a member responsible for DNS (Department of Northern Saskatchewan) interests, why does he take time from work to sit on the board of this newspaper? Is it not to protect the interests of all of the people and to not have this kind of inflammatory statement spread all over the northern part of Saskatchewan?

MR. BYERS: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know to what extent Mr. Tim Meyers, the director of the extension branch has offered assistance to the publishers of Natowatum. The Natowatum is a publication by a group of people in the west side communities of northern Saskatchewan. It is one of the early experiments in permitting local and particularly native and northern people to develop and exercise their skills in journalism in the production of a communication piece. It will not be perfect, but I think the government was justified in providing financial support to the native and northern people, to produce a communication which they control, without having censorship

imposed on what they print.

Licensing of Multiple-axle Trucks

MR. W.C. THATCHER (Thunder Creek): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister in charge of the Highway Traffic Board. Mr. Minister, I'm sure you are aware it's that time of year when the farm trucks are starting to move around the routes (at least in some portions of the province) and, while this is not exactly a brand new original question, Mr. Minister, I would like to ask you, in your wisdom in the light of a variety of circumstances in the farm community, if you have given any consideration to the licensing of multiple-axle trucks as a farm vehicle such as a tandem truck or, in an extreme circumstance, a semi-trailer?

HON. G. MacMURCHY (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — We have been giving consideration to such a proposal, Mr. Speaker, however no decision has been made. I think that when a decision is made, we'll make an appropriate announcement.

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Minister, I'm very pleased to see that you are considering it, but would the minister not agree that it is now time for positive action in this area, at least as far as tandem trucks are concerned? Would the minister agree that, in light of the fact that farmers are now having to pay considerable more for their fuel and haul their produce considerably longer, it is now realistic and would be a positive approach on the part of his government and his department to finally approve the licensing of a tandem truck as a farm-vehicle, since tandem trucks are now becoming more and more common on many of our farms?

MR. MacMURCHY: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member can be assured that all of the arguments he has put forward will be considered. Also considered will be the implications of cost to the government and the implications on road construction and road maintenance. I can assure the hon. member we will consider all of the arguments before arriving at a decision.

Flooding in the Souris Valley

MR. R.A. LARTER (Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of the Environment. Over the past three months, I have warned the government, on about three or four different occasions, that we were facing the most severe flooding possible in the Souris Valley this year. Recently, government news releases have borne this out because they have warned of extreme flooding in the southeast. Could the minister tell me what contingency plans have you made for this flooding?

AN HON. MEMBER: — And what did you do to start the flood?

HON. G.R. BOWERMAN (Minister of the Environment): — Well, Mr. Speaker, all members of this Assembly know as well as the member who raises the point about what he expresses as his concern for flooding in the Souris River Valley and some of the other areas of the eastern side of the province. With respect to any contingency plan, that is, I don't know what the member expects, Mr. Speaker, whether he suggests that we should go out and build dams or dikes or diversions at this point in time to divert water into some other area. All I can indicate to the member that some long time ago, the Department of the Environment began is regular surveillance of conditions, soil conditions and has continually monitored that situation and continued to advise those who live within the flood prone areas of the province to take into account that there was

a condition developing which would result in some flooding and the weather conditions of late have only increased that possibility.

MR. LARTER: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, with the experience that we have had and this will be probably eight of the past 10 years right at Estevan and back towards the Mainprize Park at Midale, we will have had experience in eight out of 10 years of flooding. I would think this would be plenty of experience to lay down contingency plans. Have you issued orders from your department to all R.M.s (rural municipalities) to advise and to get the people ready that have been involved in flooding in the past? Have you sandbags in place that we know the flooding is going to take place? Have you sandbags in place in Estevan and Weyburn as you have had other years only a day or two later?

MR. BOWERMAN: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe the member knows that it's really not the duty of the Department of the Environment any more than it is the weather forecaster out at the Regina airport to prepare sandbags for people to use in case of a flooding emergency. The Department of the Environment has continued to forecast the possibility of flooding in the Souris Valley and in the eastern parts of the province particularly as a result of their monitoring of the snow conditions and weather conditions. It is the responsibility of the Department of the Environment to make ready plans for sandbagging or otherwise. The emergency EMO (Emergency Measures Organization) does have that responsibility and when that situation arises, I'm sure they'll be ready and prepared to take what measures are necessary.

Conflict of Interest — Government Printing Company

MR. G. MUIRHEAD (Arm River): — A question to the Premier. In view of the very exciting weekend I have had with several hundred requests from the people in my constituency and throughout the province, especially from owners and editors of small newspapers asking me to pursue the service printers conflict of interest, my question to the Premier is this. Would you consider appointing a committee preferably a group of learned individuals to look into the legality of the NDP government dealing directly with an NDP owned printing company?

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, The Legislative Assembly Act is there. If there is a conflict of interest it will be pursuant to the provisions of The Legislative Assembly Act, as I would view it. There may be other legal provisions but I am not aware of them. I am sure that members opposite have legal advice available to them. The member for Arm River (Mr. Muirhead) might have an opportunity to consult with the member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Lane), or the member for Kindersley (Mr. Andrew) and find out whether or not, in their judgment, there is any violation of the act. In our judgment there is no violation of The Legislative Assembly Act and accordingly, there seems no particular reason for appointing a group, learned or otherwise, to advise us, that in our judgment, there is no violation of The Legislative Assembly Act. As I understand it the member is not alleging that. I don't know what he is alleging but he apparently is not alleging that.

MR. MUIRHEAD: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. If the Premier doesn't want to answer that one and show us the legislation act, will he answer this one? According to the editorial in the Star Phoenix, what about the moral issue?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, the question that the member asks is, what about the moral issue, if I understand the question. The answer that I make to him is that we do not

April 17, 1979

believe that there is any issue that requires consideration by a royal commission or whatever he is suggesting. If there is a moral issue raised we are not agreeing that this requires any examination. This Chamber is perfectly able to deal with moral issues. I am not aware that any facts have failed to be disclosed. The facts are known and if the members opposite allege that there is something improper, I am sure they are able to voice that impropriety. I am sure at least some of them have information about moral issues and they will be able to state the issues and state them as clearly as any other committee which we could appoint.

Hitchcock Waters Users Association

MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister responsible for the Department of Northern Saskatchewan.

On April 10, I asked the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding) a question to establish that a meeting between him, the minister then responsible for the environment, the member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) and myself to establish that that meeting, in fact, took place. I then asked the Minister for DNS (Department of Northern Saskatchewan) why he denied, when meeting with a group of water users, why he denied that that meeting every took place, to which he answered that for some reason, in was not at the meeting. I point out that had I been advised of when and where the meeting, I would've been there. But the question I want answered is why did you deny to the Hitchcock Water Users Association that the meeting with the member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) and myself ever took place?

MR. BYERS: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) and Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson) I think should get their calendars in order. I think the meeting he refers to is one that the member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) asked the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding) and I to attend to meet the members of the Hitchcock Water Users Association back last fall. We agreed to that meeting. It was my understanding that both members from the constituencies of Souris-Cannington and Estevan would accompany their constituents to the meeting with the Minister of Agriculture and myself. I agreed to the meeting on the full understanding that both of them would be there. I agreed to the meeting on the understanding that they would be there and I was aghast, Mr. Speaker, when the delegation came in and the two members were not there in the company of their constituents who had a very pressing problem to put before the government.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Hear, hear! Right on!

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. I'll take a new question.

MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, a new question. The record will show, Mr. Speaker, that in fact . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order. I'll take a new question.

MR. BERNTSON: — New question Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order. New question.

MR. R.A. LARTER (Estevan): — A question to the Minister of DNS (Department of Northern Saskatchewan) (Mr. Byers). Would the minister admit whether he had a

meeting with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding) and the member for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson) and myself in his office in late August or the first part of September? Would you admit to having that meeting with us?

MR. BYERS: — We had a meeting with you, but that was not the meeting to which he was referring.

MR. LARTER: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order. New question.

MR. R. L. COLLVER (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, at a subsequent meeting with the Hitchcock Water Users Association, did you deny . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order. I'll take a new question.

MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister responsible for DNS (Department of Northern Saskatchewan). When you met with the Hitchcock Water Users Association, did you deny having met with the member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) and myself?

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order, order, order, order! I'll take a new question.

MR. COLLVER: — Would the minister responsible for DNS admit to this Assembly today that he misled . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! The member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher).

MR. THATCHER: — A question to the Minister of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. After this meeting which has taken place, why did you deny to the Hitchcock Water Users association, that it took place? In other words, why did you deliberately mislead them?

MR. BYERS: — Mr. Speaker, I have outlined the facts to this House as they existed. The hon. member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) asked if I would agree to a meeting that would be attended by his colleague for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson), to meet with the Minister of Agriculture and the Hitchcock Water Users Association. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding) and I agreed to the meeting. We agreed to that meeting. We agreed to the date and the time and the place and the meeting occurred in the morning. It finished at 12:05.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I'll take a new question.

MR. BERNTSON: — A question to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding). Would you agree that when the Minister of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan said to the Hitchcock Water Users Association, at the subsequent meeting, that he in fact was misleading them? New question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I will take a new question.

MR. COLLVER: — A question to the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Minister, would you not agree that having met with the member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) and the member for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson) . . .

April 17, 1979

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I will take a new question.

MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, a question to the minister responsible for the Department of Northern Saskatchewan. I wonder if you could indicate to this House just what you are hiding? Why don't you come clean?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BYERS: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister for the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, the former Minister of the Environment, is hiding nothing.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. BYERS: — What I am exposing is the fact that the member for Souris-Cannington is not prepared to come to Regina with delegations from his constituency to speak on their behalf.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order!

A Question to Mr. Speaker

MR. R.A. LARTER (Estevan): — I would like to ask the Speaker of this Assembly, is a minister not required to tell the truth to his constituents when they come into this building?

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I will take a new question.

Grazing Land Lease Charges

MR. H.J. SWAN (Rosetown-Elrose): — My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. In a recent news release you were outlining the increase in cow/calf operation as far as your grazing land lease charges. The lease charge has gone from \$1.08 to \$3.12, almost tripling in one year. I have read the whole release and I see the type of reasoning that you are using. But do you not think to triple the lease in one year is a bit unreasonable?

HON. E.E. KAEDING (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, the grazing rates are based on a formula which is set out in the grazing leases which farmers have. That formula takes into account the price of livestock at the stockyards for the six preceding months and is based on those prices. When the price of cattle went down in the period from 1974-75-76 and '77, those prices went down at a steady rate, until in 1977 the rate was 94 cents per cow month. In 1974 it had been \$2.11 per cow month when cattle prices were around 40 cents or 45 cents. Then when the prices went up again it went up again. In 1978, we did temper the increase because they were just coming out of a slump, as most of us recognized, and we didn't apply the full rate. It should have been \$1.35 in 1978. We did not apply the full increase because we felt that we had to have time to recoup. This year, prices of livestock are much higher than they were and on the basis of that formula, the price is now \$3.12.

I can assure the hon. member that when we set those prices we felt there was some discrepancy in the rate formula that was there and we revised the formula to bring it

down from the price of \$4, which it would have gone to under the formula, and set it at \$3.12. So we have established a new formula which will not permit it to go as high as it would have under the old formula.

So I think we have done what we can to cushion the effect of that formula to livestock producers.

MR. SWAN: — A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Take a livestock industry that has gone through four very difficult years and is just now coming into its first year when it can start to see a bit of profit. But you don't regain four years of losses in six months. I believe that it is an unreasonable thing to increase to the extent that you have in one year. I would like you to inform this House, if you are willing to take another look at that formula and bring it back into line.

MR. KAEDING: — Mr. Speaker, I think I outlined fairly clearly what we were doing; we were following the prices of livestock. When the price went down we accommodated that and we brought the prices down on grazing land. I think it is not unusual to expect that when the price goes back up, as it has now done . . . we did cushion it last year. We did recognize that last year was a year when they were coming out of the slump and we didn't want to apply it last year. If he would look at the price of grazing land, of private land, anywhere in his area or anywhere in the province, he will find out that they are not paying \$3.12 per cow month, but something in the area of \$8 to \$12 per cow month on private grazing land. If he were to take his own farm, graze cattle on his own farm, which is grazing land, he would find that his price would be something like \$20 per cow month and not \$3.12.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Patterson-Boyd Manufacturing

MR. P. ROUSSEAU (Regina South): — Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister in charge of SEDCO. Mr. Minister, my question concerns Patterson-Boyd Manufacturing Corporation and Mar-Kee Enterprises LTD., both being SEDCO clients, who are involved in the manufacturing and distribution, respectively, of the automotive wonder hoist, described optimistically in an article of January 30, 1979, in the Regina Leader Post. In the light of recent events and of the optimism shown in that article, would the minister advise the House of the plans SEDCO has to assist these companies in overcoming difficulties arising from marketing delays and financing inventories?

HON. N. VICKAR (Minister of Industry and Commerce): — Mr. Speaker, I am quite aware of the situation with Patterson-Boyd. I can assure the -hon. that SEDCO is working very closely with the people concerned in order to alleviate their problems. Hopefully we'll have some solution for them in the not too distant future.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Provincial Testing Program

HON. E.B. SHILLINGTON (Minister of Education): — Mr. Speaker, during estimates I was asked when the results of the provincial testing program would be available. I now have them and will ask the Clerk to table them and distribute a copy of the report to every member. The report, Mr. Speaker, is relatively complex and technical. We have provided a summary of the report as well, which I will be tabling and ask that a copy be

April 17, 1979

distributed to each member.

I realize that most members of the House probably have some passing familiarity with the provincial testing program but let me, just for a moment, refresh our memories. The study carried out last October by Dr. Bikkar Randhawa of the University of Saskatchewan's Bureau of Field Services, involved a testing of a random sample of 4,918 students in Grades 4, 7 and 10. The tests were used and designed to measure achievement of basic skills as well as the mental abilities of the students involved. It was our hope that we could compare these results with similar tests administered in 1958 and compare the scores against today's national averages to find out where Saskatchewan students stand.

I may say, just in passing, that we allowed other schools to opt in on the program on a voluntary basis. About three times as many as the anticipated number of participants took part in it. This was a pleasant response to the program and I think displayed a genuine interest on the part of the school boards and boards of education but it did delay our report for some period of time.

The report has now been submitted and I am pleased to table it this afternoon in the Assembly. We've noted with some pride, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan schools continue to stress basic skills in spite of pressures to relax those standards. Dr. Randhawa's study appears to bear out the wisdom of that decision to stick with the basics for it concludes, Mr. Speaker, that the intellectual abilities of Saskatchewan students have improved significantly since 1958 and that our students are scoring significantly higher than the national average on these tests, the basic skills.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

AN HON. MEMBER: — Good teachers.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Allow me, Mr. Speaker, just to detail the specific finds of Dr. Randhawa's study. Saskatchewan students in grades 4, 7 and 10 scored significantly higher than the national average on the basic skills tests.

AN HON. MEMBER: — They're all NDP.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — The 1978 Saskatchewan students in grades 4 and 7 were substantially better in general mental abilities than their counterparts in 1958. And the province's 1978 grade 4 and grade 7 students scored higher than their 1958 counterparts in the most basic skill areas. Let me note in closing, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan's educational system is very much of a partnership with teachers and boards of education and the Government of Saskatchewan sharing responsibilities. Needless to say, all partners in the educational field will find the tests exciting, encouraging and I'm sure they'll share our pride in them. These results should help to dispel the myth that the standards in our schools and the performance of our students have deteriorated over the past years. The report confirms what we've already suspected. The Government of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan teachers, and Saskatchewan trustees are providing first-rate educational service to our province's young people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. G. TAYLOR (Indian Head-Wolseley): — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak regarding this

fall testing program of the 1958-78 comparisons. I'd like to thank the minister who was kind enough to send me a copy at the opening of question period. I haven't had that much time to look through it but I will be studying it in more detail. I will have more comments to make on it tomorrow and in succeeding days, and also as the feedback from the educational community starts to come in and this report is digested.

There are a couple of things though, Mr. Minister, I question in just perusing it today on page 8, quoting Dr. Randhawa the tester, it says: 'It would not be possible to make any concrete comparisons between 1958 and 1978 achievement levels.' I believe that was because the tests were not comparable enough. I wonder with the amount of money that was put into this testing program, could the researcher not have come closer or selected tests that would have given us predictable and comparable results? That was one of the things that I, as a high school principal, thought was coming out of this program. I was hoping it would be close enough that we would be able to have some solid ground on which educational decisions would be made. I'm very happy to see that the intellectual average of the students is improving. Being an educator, I would like to take all the credit for that but I'm not quite sure that the school system can take all the credit because the type of world that we are living in, in 1978 is much different from the world of 1958. I think we have to take television and many other things into consideration here. So, as much as I would like to stand here and pat ourselves on the back and say, hurrah, we're doing a great job. I think we should look at that in a questionable framework. There is one thing that I would point out though, in quickly perusing this, I see one aspect that is, I think of extreme importance and that is that the language usage patterns in each of the grades is low. It's low, not above the national average. We all know that in Saskatchewan we have undergone a revision in the English program right through and I think this year will be compulsory at the Grade 12 level. You have heard me allude to this previously in this legislature and I ask you, Mr. Minister, if maybe we should be taking a little closer look at English as a result of this test and reassessing and re-evaluating the English programs that we have in the schools today.

My last question on this would be, I would be interested in knowing in what direction this will be causing the Saskatchewan educators and the Department of Education to look at curriculum change. I will be looking at it further, as I say, and will have more suggestions in the next few days.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

POINT OF ORDER ON THE QUESTION PERIOD

MR. SPEAKER: — Before the orders of the day I wish to raise a point of order with regard to the question period today. There are two rules that are pertinent with regard to the question period. One of them is that questions should be asked only in respect of matters of sufficient urgency and importance as to require an answer. The second rule of many that apply to this question period, is that a member shall not multiply, with slight variation, a similar question on the same point.

I want to say something about that with regard to today's question period.

There were a number of questions raised by the member for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson), Estevan (Mr. Larter), Nipawin (Mr. Collver), Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher), regarding the Hitchcock Water Users Association.

April 17, 1979

In the beginning I judged the question to be lacking urgency, therefore, when it became apparent after a question and a supplementary that there was no urgency, at least to me on the surface of the matter, I was prepared to rule similar questions out of order. The question kept reoccurring, multiplied with slight variation, which is against the rules of the question period.

I raise this at this time because I think it was pursued in a matter which was not as serious as a question should be pursued in the question period. I think it tends to make a farce out of the question period and I would ask all members to take that into consideration. It brings no credit to this Chamber, that we conduct the question period in that manner, and it brings less credit to the people who partake in that kind of questioning.

So I raise this point of order and hope the members will heed to it.

MR. COLLVER: — Mr. Speaker, I think it is relatively unusual for Mr. Speaker to raise the point of order so, perhaps, I could, just briefly, discuss the point of order that Mr. Speaker has raised.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! It is not unusual for a Speaker to raise a point of order. That is the purpose of the Speaker. If someone else raises a point of order the Speaker, naturally acknowledges the person and hears what the point of order is. Now, if the member has a new point of order and does not wish to debate the point of order that I put forward, I will let him proceed.

MR. COLLVER: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, and I am not going to debate the point of order that you just raised. The fact remains, however, if a minister doesn't answer a question that is posed to him then, surely, it is the responsibility of the opposition to continue asking the question. If the answer is given, and I can certainly understand what Mr. Speaker is saying, but if an answer is given to a question and then that subject matter is pursued, for emphasis as it were, then surely Mr. Speaker is right. But if the answer is not given and the members are attempting to ask the same question or to ask the minister a question for which there is no answer given, surely that is the responsibility of the member in the opposition benches to continue to pursue that line of questioning.

The questioning during question period, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I am going to cut the member off on his point of order.

The member knows and all members know that there are many ways in which a question can be dealt with once it is phrased in the House. It can be totally ignored. It can be answered. It can be referred to Crown corporations and it could be answered with an answer which is inconsistent with the question. That has nothing to do with me, in making my judgments. I have to make judgments based on the rules that are put before me, such as urgency and such as not consistently and persistently repeating a question which has been, in my judgment ruled out because it lacks urgency. I think a quick scan of the record, when it comes out tomorrow, the members will see that the point of order that I have raised is legitimate at this time and applies to what has happened in the Chamber today.

I might say, further to the point of order that I raised before, that it's not proper to question the Speaker, because the Speaker doesn't answer questions. If the member

has a point of order it's quite all right but I think it's bad practice for a member to start off a point of order by saying, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask you a question, because he can't ask the Speaker a question.

MR. LARTER: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very concerned with this. When a minister deliberately tells an untruth to my constituents, that reflects . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. I don't believe we're discussing the rule now. We're discussing the issue. This is the time, before orders of the day, to discuss the rule, if there has been an abridgement of the rule, and that's exactly what I was doing. I'm not discussing the issue. That's something else altogether, which I will not get involved in at this time. So I can't discuss the issue.

MR. COLLVER: — A point of order, Mr. Speaker. Does the Chair recognize, as an urgent matter, whether or not a minister of the Crown deliberately lies outside this Assembly? Is that an urgent matter or not?

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. I think if a minister of the Crown, as the member says (and I quote him) lies outside of this Chamber there are remedies which members can use to deal with that.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Is that not urgent?

MR. SPEAKER: — Order . . . which that member can use to deal with what he feels is an improper practice outside the Chamber. If that happens within the Chamber, well there's a remedy in the Chamber. I don't intend to make a ruling on the basis of a hypothetical situation which the member for Nipawin (Mr. Collver) puts to me, which begins with 'if'.

MR. COLLVER: — No, it doesn't, Mr. Speaker. My question to you is, is that an urgent matter? Now you've asked to discuss rules. Is it an urgent matter as to whether or not a minister of the Crown deliberately lies to constituents outside this Assembly?

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. I think that's something we'll have to deal with when it arises. In this particular case it's a question of argument or debate, whether somebody has told a truth or an untruth outside the Chamber, and it's something which, fortunately, I don't have to deal with in the Chamber. I only have to deal with situations, generally speaking, which arise in the Chamber.

MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern): — A point of order, Mr. Speaker. In your explanation of the three alternatives to the minister, you suggested that when he answered a question in the House, he could answer something totally irrelevant to the question and that was proper and we had no right to come back and renew the question again. Is that what you were indicating by your three choices the minister has?

MR. SPEAKER: — Well, I think that if the member gets hold of Beauchesne's, Fourth Edition, chapter 5, and reads the question period in there, and further proceeds (as I hoped the member would've done by this point) to, for example, page 9 of the Interim Report on the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures, March 12, 1976, and acquaint himself with the question period. I think it's a bit late in the session for me to be acquainting members with that and besides, I don't think this is the proper time for me to be acquainting a member with the rules of the question period. Only when the rules are abused, am I supposed to rise or is some member supposed to rise? This is not a get

educated session for members with regard to questions and answers.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 15 — Misappropriation of funds by Canadian Wheat Board

MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern) moved, seconded by Mr. L.W. Birkbeck (Moosomin):

That this Assembly condemns the Government of Canada and more specifically the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, for misappropriating funds in excess of \$80 million, and for purchasing hopper cars with producers' funds without consultation.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this resolution was put on the order paper some time ago and being the way of the House has taken a rather lengthy time to come up. The concern of the producers that are requested to give funds for the purchase of wheat cars that are being purchased by the wheat board with the authorization of the member of government from the federal government which represents them on the wheat board and has the responsibility is the concern that I'm rising to speak about. Eighty million dollars plus of producers money is being spent against the will of the producers to purchase grain cars. But what issue is really behind the fine line of the whole thing? The fine issue is that the crow rate is being subsidized now by the producers of grain. To cut all the chaff and everything else away, that's really what it means. The CNR (Canadian National Railway) and let me indicate here that I understand that the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway) will soon be getting an additional group of boxcars, approximately 2,000, also being paid for in the same method (by the producers funds). The producers have not had a vote in favor of this. In fact, when pool delegates were asked if they were in favor of the Canadian Wheat Board purchasing these grain cars to be used by the grain companies, they said no. We will not endorse the action of the federal Minister of Transport who is responsible for the wheat board. We do not agree that he has the authority to take our funds and purchase grain cars.

Second, the Palliser's Association, which suggested that they would take the wheat board to court because they don't have that authority, has since gone to court and In understand has lost the injunction to stop them from buying the cars.

It is interesting to note that the wheat board does have the authorization to spend the money of the producers on bona fide needs and operations of the wheat board, but it does not, in my opinion and in the opinion of the people in the legal profession have the right to spend the money on purchasing rolling stock for the railroads.

It is interesting to note in discussions during the elections, both in 1975 and 1978, that the crow rate must stay. It came about from all parties. We all agree in this House, and even the party that isn't here any more agrees that the crow rate must stay. The crow rate was a special part of an agreement that brought Saskatchewan into Canada. It is one of the benefits and protections that our farmers of this province and western Canada have.

The crow rate, being suggested by none other than the Premier of Saskatchewan, needs revamping. He is quoted as saying that now is not the time. In would ask the Premier, when is the time? To me, the time is never. That was a condition that we were given, as western farmers, when we came into joining Canada. It was part of the Magna Charta, for lack of a better word — one of the things that gave us a special right, a special privilege. In don't think that anybody has the right to tamper with it, be it indirectly or

directly. That is basically what the federal Minister of Transport is doing. He is getting into his user-pay policy again. He is suggesting because the western farmers are the sole beneficiaries and because his popularity politically for this upcoming election is strictly within one portion of eastern Canada, he should sacrifice the western farmers. In say to him that he is totally wrong. He is totally wrong in his concept and what he is attempting to do.

It is interesting to note that during the whole issue of the grain cars, United Grain Growers and other groups were asked if they were in favor and they indicated no. The Government of Alberta has suggested that it is wrong. The Government of Manitoba has suggested that it is wrong for the producers' funds to be used to purchase the hopper cars.

It is interesting to note within this assembly (and In may be incorrect in my memory, but if In remember correctly) one member of cabinet suggested that he was in favor of the purchase of the cars, another member of the cabinet suggested that he was not. So In, to this point, do not know where the Government of Saskatchewan really stands on this issue. In know the member across the way says he usually sit. In think if the member would sit more often and keep is . . . closed more often, the House would get a lot more business done.

Mr. Speaker, In suggest that if you look at the grain workers concerned, they make a point. Wednesday, February 21, 1979, Regina Leader Post:

The union leaders say that 475 grain workers working around the clock at the three southern shore elevators could unload up to 700 cars a day, but they are only being supplied with between 200 and 500 cars.

Does that suggest that the bottleneck is the railway, or does that suggest that there is a shortage of cars? Well, let us do a little research on it.

It is interesting to note that in the town of Waldheim, within my constituency, on Tuesday the grain cars are brought by the CNR, placed on the siding for the elevator to load and by Wednesday they are all loaded and ready. But when are they picked up? They sit there until the next Tuesday, at the earliest and, therefore, the rolling stock is not being used efficiently. As the former minister of DNS say, they are not rolling.

MR. BOWERMAN: — The department . . . (inaudible) . . .

MR. KATZMAN: — It's too bad you made a mess of it and they had to move you out of DNS, too, isn't it?

AN HON. MEMBER: — . . . (inaudible) . . . falling part too.

MR. KATZMAN: — Yes, In admit you will make a mess of the environment, Mr. Minister, as you said. You have already proved it with your handling of the PCB spill and In am glad the minister admits that he is going to make a . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order. In hope the member is going to relate this to the resolution which is under discussion.

MR. KATZMAN: — Mr. Speaker, if In didn't get so much assistance which In cannot resist

coming back at, In would stay totally on the topic.

The Western Producer, Thursday, January 11, suggests that the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture's head says . . . (and it is Mr. Clarence Hookenson who refers once again to the crow rate as being the Magna Carta for the western farmer). In think In put my resolution very simply. It mashes down to one fact — that the Mr. Speaker, of Transport, who is responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, has no authority under the Wheat Board Act, to purchase rolling stock on behalf of the CNR, (which he is doing in this case) and In suggest on behalf of the CPR, (which he intended to do at a later date.) In think that this Assembly should condemn the minister's actions very strongly by unanimous support of this motion. In suggest to the government members that the best way to handle this motion is to not adjourn this motion today but put up a speaker or two and let's vote on it unanimously supporting this motion. Let's not play games with it. Let's get this House on the record one way or another. Are we opposed to Otto, the federal minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, or are we not. And therefore, In move that this Assembly condemn the Government of Canada and more specifically, the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board for misappropriating funds in excess of \$80 million for the purchase of hopper cars with producers' funds without consent. The motion is seconded by the member for Moosomin (Mr. Birkbeck).

MR. L.W. BIRKBECK (Moosomin): — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members of the Assembly, it's my hope that maybe for the first time this session and hopefully before this session concludes, we can adjourn after having had the government and the opposition agree at least on one thing. I think surely condemnation of the PRAC (Prairie Rail Action Committee) report and its contents is an opportunity that this Assembly has to vote together unanimously opposed to Otto Lang, opposed to the federal government policies with respect to grain handling and rail transportation. I know that the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood (Mr. MacMurchy), the minister responsible for transportation, is going in the right direction in that regard in most instances. I think in those cases he has the support of the opposition. When we propose from this side of the House motions that are more or less in line with the thinking of the government and their ministers responsible for those positions, in particular rail line transportation, Mr. Speaker. I believe that it's an opportunity for the government to do themselves a lot of credit, do this province a lot of credit, do this Assembly a lot of credit by accepting at least one worthy motion. The member for Rosthern (Mr. Katzman) raises it as a very serious concern. I know that all members of this House, in particular this House, Mr. Speaker, which is representative of so many farm oriented members, should support the opposition, support the member for Rosthern as I am today on this motion. The motion very simply reads that we as an Assembly condemn the Government of Canada and more particularly the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Otto Lang, for misappropriating funds in excess of \$80 million and for purchasing hopper cars without producers funds without consultation, Mr. Speaker, and members of this government, all too often the federal minister responsible for transportation has done things without the consultation of the people he supposedly is acting on behalf of. And, Mr. Speaker, all too often it has cost us many millions of dollars. Mr. Speaker, again I ask when are we as an assembly of this province of Saskatchewan, going to stand together and put up a brick wall that Mr. Otto Lang cannot skate around. Mr. Speaker, surely the government cannot differ with me on that proposal.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the initial purchasing of hopper cars and remind this government and this Assembly what our party position was at that time. I will also, Mr.

Speaker, bring to the attention of the members of the Assembly what the position of the minister responsible for transportation for the province of Saskatchewan was at that time, and will attempt to show a very close parallel, if I may phrase it that way, Mr. Speaker. My news release, Mr. Speaker, of November 28, 1978.

Today Larry Birkbeck, MLA for the Moosomin constituency and Progressive Conservative critic, expressed concern over the recent announcement by the Canadian Wheat Board and its decision to tender for 500 to 2,000 grain cars which will have an indirect effect on the Crow's Nest rates.

I don't want members of this Assembly to miss that point that it will in fact have an indirect effect on the Crow's Nest rate, which all members of this Assembly agree must be maintained although, Mr. Chairman, some recent statements by the Premier would lead one to believe, and not necessarily one of the opposition members but any member of this Assembly, that this government was prepared at some time in the future and our concern is just when to adjust the Crow's Nest rates. I know the minister responsible for transportation, the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood (Mr. MacMurchy) surely could not agree with the Premier's suggestion that we must alter the Crow's Nest rate, because I remember all too well that minister's statements that the Crow's Nest rates must stay. He should have followed it up with, and Otto must go. Those are the things we agree on, Mr. Speaker. All too often I suppose we speak in the House of things that we disagree on. I'm attempting today to talk about something that we do agree on and should stand together on. Further, the Crow's Nest rate was an agreement made between the CPR and the federal government whereby in exchange for approximately \$3.5 million, and 3.75 million acres of land with mineral and lumber rights, the rail line would transport western grain and flour to the Lakehead and the Pacific for a set rate. The purpose of the Crow's Nest rates was to allow the farmer to move his grain economically to ports for export.

When the Canadian Wheat Board made the decision to buy these grain cars, they were pledging the producers' money, obtained through deductions of the grain payment cheques, without any consultation with the producers. I believe, and when I say I believe, I say the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan believes, that the indirect effect of such a purchase would be to raise the Crow's Nest rates via the back door. The government cannot raise the crow rates directly so they are making the farmer buy grain cars for the railway instead.

Mr. Birkbeck also objected to the purchase of grain cars because he felt very strongly that once again the industrial East would be subsidized by the prairie West.

So on top of the railroad tariff rates, which forced the prairie West to subsidize the industrial East, the federal government now intends to take \$100 million prairie dollars to further subsidize the industry of the East. Not one new job will be created on the prairies.

If that \$100 million went into the pockets of prairie farmers, where it belongs, the provincial tax slice of that money would almost pay for the upgrading of roads over which farmers must now drive their trucks greater distances to elevators because of the rail line abandonment.

I believe the net effect of the proposed Canadian Wheat Board purchase of grain cars would be tantamount to an increase in the crow rate via the back

door and to provide eastern jobs at western expense.

Furthermore, the Hall Report suggested that the biggest challenge is to make the rail transportation system, as it is at present, more efficient. Mr. Justice Hall pointed out that the average grain car sits idle 50 per cent of the time. Immediate actions should be taken to eliminate the bottlenecks, therefore, doubling the present carrying capacity with no additional cars, Birkbeck concluded.

Those were the observations, Mr. Speaker, that I drew at the time of the initial announcement of purchase of hopper cars by the Canadian Wheat Board. Those were our observations, Mr. Speaker. Surely observations, Mr. Speaker, which this government would find it easy to concur with. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the point that I am attempting to make now, that we have common ground. To be forced to divide now and to create a political football of this issue would be to the detriment of Saskatchewan farmers, Mr. Speaker.

Now, in about the same time, Mr. Speaker, if I could read into the record of this Assembly, the comments made by Mr. MacMurchy, responsible for the transportation agency.

Gordon MacMurchy, Minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Transportation Agency, expressed disappointment at the Canadian Wheat Board announcement yesterday that it intends to purchase 500 hopper cars.

Mr. Speaker, those were the very words that I used in my news release of approximately the same date. Expressed disappointment, Mr. Speaker! Common ground, Mr. Speaker, between government and opposition. Mr. MacMurchy goes on to say that cars had been purchased without any consultation with the producers whose money they are spending and the move, I think, is a move in the wrong direction, Mr. MacMurchy said.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the very same words that I have spoken in my news release, 'Spending of dollars without consultation.' Again, common ground between government and opposition. 'The grain-handling and transportation system is in such a mess that everyone is getting rattled'. That is correct. I spoke of the bottlenecks, he speaks more or less of the same thing. It's in a mess.

But the solution does not lie in the Canadian Wheat Board. The solution does not lie in negative statements. United Grain Growers, President Runciman, by Manitoba Pool's president . . . (inaudible) . . . or even positive statements by Saskatchewan Wheat Pool's president, Ted Turner, on behalf of producers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again more statements by the minister responsible for transportation, totally in line with the position taken by the opposition, or, if he likes, ours are totally in line with his. I don't care which way, Mr. Speaker, you put it but they are of the same nature.

Transportation is a federal policy. It has got to be a federal policy because Canada needs a national transportation system. The problems cannot be solved by the pools or the Canadian Wheat Board. Mr. MacMurchy said, the federal government has got to deal with the problems. He said, the federal government is the only body with jurisdiction over the entire system and

there is no point in any of the rest developing stop-gap measures to cover federal inaction. We need to get down to basics and not delude ourselves that piecemeal solutions will do the job. If producers had been asked they might have told the Canadian Wheat Board that, he said. The Saskatchewan Government has attempted persistently over the past months to bring the federal government to grips with the problems of the transportation system. We have indicated that we are prepared to co-operate. We have laid money on the table.

Mr. Speaker, I am quoting a statement made by the minister responsible for transportation. We have, Mr. Speaker, a situation where this NDP government, according to the minister responsible for transportation, has been attempting to influence the federal government. Mr. Speaker, the record does clearly show that they have been ineffective at influencing the federal government in anything. And Mr. Speaker, I might add that they are dealing with but one man, Otto Lang. What we are offering is our support for this NDP government to mount its offensive and its opposition to Otto Lang. If this government finds in its wisdom that it cannot support this motion by the member for Rosthern, join with the opposition or allow the opposition to join with them, again I care not which way you put it, it results in the same thing, the Saskatchewan Assembly opposing Otto Lang, opposing Pierre Trudeau, and the deplorable transportation policies.

The minister responsible for transportation also went on to say that:

The crow rate guarantee plan is the only system-wide solution to be offered so far. It not only get the grain moving and protects the producer of raw grain but it also protects the producer of processed agricultural goods and encourages the development of secondary industry in Saskatchewan. We have been trying since fall to obtain a meeting with the federal government to discuss the crow rate guarantee plan but the federal Minister of Transport continues to postpone a meeting, Mr. MacMurchy said.

Mr. Speaker, this government cannot even get a meeting with the federal minister responsible for transportation, cannot even achieve a meeting to discuss this vital issue! Mr. Speaker, possibly if we joined forces here in this Assembly and made enough noise, we would get a meeting with that minister.

Now the minister goes on to say that we invite provincial organizations to join in talking at the only level where authority to solve the real problem lies. I might suggest that he should have invited the opposition to join with him because we would have. Now, that was the position taken by our minister responsible for transportation on November 24, 1978. Interesting, then, to note, Mr. Speaker, the position that he takes on February 8, 1979, 'Province Responds to Hopper Car Purchase.' Because we were not able to nip it in the bud at the time that it was conceived, if you like, we are yet to face an ever mounting problem — more hopper cars, more money, variations of the wheat board's responsibilities, adjustments to the crow rate planned, all kinds of trade offs. Mr. Speaker, where is it leading us? The statement by our minister responsible for transportation reads:

Gordon MacMurchy, the minister in charge of Saskatchewan transportation policy today released the province's response to the Canadian Wheat Board's proposal for the purchase of hopper cars. In a letter to federal Transport Minister Otto Lang dated February 7, 1979, Mr. MacMurchy said

April 17, 1979

(I don't know if he received the letter but at least we sent it, or rather the minister sent it): 'This is to confirm Saskatchewan's willingness to participate in a transportation and grain handling task force on the following basis:'

Now, we have progressed to a task force. We couldn't stop them. Now we're going to have a task force to discuss it and see what kind of a trade off is going to take place. That's what I'm led to believe by this.

The task force would be made up of the federal minister of transport, the four western ministers of transport and a work committee of officials to be designed. What is really brought into focus by the Canadian Wheat Board's proposal is a provincial involvement in the grain handling and transportation system. Transportation policy in Canada is a federal matter. We are prepared to co-operate in a federal policy and we're prepared to co-operate at the policy making level.

Unlike his former new release where he stated that they were prepared to lay money on the line or on the table, he says they're prepared to co-operate in a federal policy and prepared to co-operate at the policy making level. Now, if we can't get a meeting with the federal minister responsible for transportation, then surely, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to have much influence on that minister when we attempt to provide him with our version, if you like, of a policy which would be satisfactory to Saskatchewan. Surely not. But that is the only intent that I read here in the minister's news release. 'Be prepared to co-operate.' Well I don't know whether that means bend and give in to Otto Lang or not. I hope not because I personally, Mr. Speaker, and I know that this opposition would stand with this government in not bending at all to Otto Lang and his deplorable policies.

The wheat board's proposal, Mr. MacMurphy say, is not without its merits. It's not without its merits. Now it would seem that the government's position is starting to soften, mellow a little if you like. I don't like that attitude.

Our provincial Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Kramer), I see as being a very tough and responsible minister, Mr. Speaker. I don't see him as a man who would bend to anyone, let alone Otto Lang!

Now, Mr. Speaker, time will tell. He goes on to say, no one can deny that hopper cars will be needed and we are happy to participate in a task force that will consider it. The task force must also be able to consider other options for provincial involvement. He suggests that no one can deny that hopper cars will be needed. Yet, keeping in mind that the government, all parties, as a matter of fact, in Saskatchewan agreed with the Hall Report which indicated clearly that if the turn around time were improved there would not likely be a need for more hopper cars on the system, at least not immediately. Not if our minister, Mr. MacMurphy, is referring to the long-range requirements, yes, I'm sure that with expanded markets and improved rail transportation, when we've got the grain moving and the bottlenecks of the lake head cleared out, then we might need some more cars.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a change in the position of this government. I'm not quite too sure why, but I know that I don't appreciate that seeming change in direction. Further, it says that, in particular, the task force must consider the plan based on two years of study by a royal commission appointed by your government, which goes a long way towards solving the problem of grain handling for the Minister of Highways and

Transportation.

In short, the Saskatchewan government is happy to participate in a task force, but only one which includes responsible policy makers or one which considers the Saskatchewan crow rate guarantee plan in addition to the wheat board's proposal.

Now there are two points here, Mr. Speaker, which should be pointed out. Those are, namely number one where he says, in short, that the Saskatchewan government is happy to participate in a task force.

When we suggested that the question of the PRAC (Prairie Rail Action Committee) Report be referred to the already standing agricultural committee, Mr. Speaker, which would not have delayed anything, since the House is in session anyway and that committee could sit while the House is in session, this government denied us the opportunity to send the PRAC Report to the standing committee on agriculture. They said that would be a delaying action. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a delaying action. A task force — surely that's a delaying action.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there has got to be inconsistencies in these matters. I have pointed these out. Finally, it says that the crow rate guarantee plan must be maintained. Our minister responsible for transportation is saying that whatever comes out of the task force the crow rate must stay! While he is saying that the Premier is saying, well it might go and we could think about it, I would like to know what the hon. member for Last Mountain-Touchwood (Mr. MacMurchy) has to say to this Premier when he is making those kinds of statements publicly?

Finally, the Canadian Wheat Board today proposed a five member task force to develop a proposal for the purchase of 10,000 hopper cars — 5,000 by the federal government 5,000 by the provinces — according to their proportionate production figures.

Mr. Speaker, I suppose, even though we were denied the opportunity to debate the PRAC report and to look at it in depth in the Standing Committee on Agriculture, if it's this government's position, if they feel the only position they can take is to comply with a task force to study whether or not we should be buying hopper cars, then I suppose we could support that.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood also referred to irresponsible statements by a number of grain-handling companies and the responsible statements by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. Mr. Speaker, I concur they were responsible statements by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. I would only refer to a news item of the Leader Post, 'Pool members are opposed to Wheat Board grain car fleet.' And that's it. They haven't changed their opinion. They are opposed to the purchase of hopper cars, Mr. Speaker, by the Canadian Wheat Board. Those are the responsible statements by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, statements, Mr. Speaker, with which we can concur.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is but one member on that side of the House who should reply at all to this motion by the member for Rosthern (Mr. Katzman) and the subsequent statements by myself, seconding the motion. Mr. Speaker, that member is the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood; that member knows something about transportation. Mr. Speaker, I would think that if any member could accept proposals and suggestions from this side of the House, that member could accept our suggestions and proposals.

April 17, 1979

And possibly, although it would be difficult, urge his members to support him in allowing us to support the government. We have attempted that many times. So very simply I support this motion by the member for Rosthern, a very responsible motion, one with which the government agrees. I look forward, as I said when I started out on my remarks, to seeing this government for once before this session adjourns, on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, on behalf of the farmers of this province, Mr. Speaker, to stand united with the opposition in the House and agree on this motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. P.P. MOSTOWAY (Saskatoon Centre): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few remarks on this resolution. I may as well say right now that at the conclusion of my remarks I will certainly be moving an amendment.

It is not my purpose in talking this afternoon to condemn the federal Liberal Party for its disastrous policies, nor am I going to condemn the federal Tory Party for its lack of policies because they haven't had any at all. These princes in shining armour, suddenly seem to be very, very interested in this sort of thing. Well I say to them, why have the federal Tories been silent on this? They haven't said boo. The things you have said, some of which even made sense I will grant you, they certainly have not said. We are waiting for them to come up with some constructive policies, such as our national party and our provincial party have.

I want to say that I really don't think condemnation of Otto Lang is in order. He is not now a member of parliament. He certainly is a minister of the Crown. But I tell you that if any good ideas come out of this I will certainly be relaying them to the gentleman who will be replacing the Hon. Otto Lang. I am sure Father Ogle in Saskatoon will be extremely interested in knowing the wishes and the thoughts of this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the real question before us today is not whether the Canadian Wheat Board should or should not have ordered 2,000 hopper cars, or whether the need for hopper cars over the next six years will be 10,000, 15,000 or 16,000 cars. The real question before us is what improvements are essential to the overall system if we are to move 30 million metric tonnes of grain a year by 1985. The 21 million tonnes we now move strains the system almost beyond its limits. How can we possibly increase that movement by 50 per cent?

Now our job as legislators is not to blame the Canadian Wheat Board for making a move that it wrongly thought it was forced to make, but to be sure that we have an understanding of what the major capacity requirements are that will be necessary to meet our objectives. Then we can go on to determine how we will resolve the fundamental issue of who is to provide the money to make these improvements so that the work could get started. Increasing the volume of grain which the transportation and grain handling system will be able to put through in a year is a complex combination of making the many parts of the system match together more evenly and with better timing and strengthening various stress points. More movement requires putting more trains through in a day. Putting more trains through in a day requires that each train move faster. In order for trains to move faster, particularly in the mountains, grades need to be less steep, curves need to be more gradual . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . (and Tories need to be reduced also) and tracks need to be in better condition.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Fill the valleys.

MR. MOSTOWAY: — Fill the valleys, well, I don't know. If you're going to try to fill them with Tories, you're still going to have valleys because there aren't too many of them around. Some solution must be found for delays caused by trains meeting each other, Mr. Speaker, and I mention that because I'm sure you aren't aware of that. Now some solution must be found to blockages caused by the increase in maintenance crews that the increase in movement has made necessary. Increasing rail capacity means moving more cars on the same trains, moving larger cars rather than smaller ones to increase tonnage, and that means more horsepower. Increasing rail capacity means including a margin for natural disasters in the physical facilities. The storms will occur but there must be sufficient capacity in the overall system that they do not dictate the difference between being able to move desired quantities and not being able to, over the period of a year.

Increasing rail capacity then means not one improvement, but a series of improvements, not one project costing millions of dollars, but several projects costing several millions of dollars each. The investment required is not millions but billions of dollars. The situation . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well, I say, hon. member, I am finally getting through to you and I am telling you that these are certain things that will smooth out the transportation system. If you're not interested, fine, but there are people who are interested.

The situation is complicated by the fact that we have two rail companies, each operating relatively independent systems and hence each requiring many of the same improvement expenditures. Where the investment required a most intensive, in the Fraser Canyon, double tracking the entire section for both rail companies is financially unthinkable. Now configuration discussions must be ongoing but there's no denying that investment requirements to raise rail capacity to 30 million tonnes of grain a year by 1985 will be billions of dollars. While these improvements will also assist in the movement of other commodities, grain movement, which accounts for about 25 per cent of rail traffic, will have to assume its share providing funds for these improvements. Rail capacity that can deliver 30 million tonnes a year will only be of value if the port throughput capacity is also there.

In Vancouver, the physical limitations relate almost completely to the space, not enough space for cars or trucks on the waterfront, not enough space for yards and terminals to be closer together and not enough space to expand rail facilities on the lower mainland. Now terminal capacity in Vancouver will be significantly improved by the new 10 million bushel storage space recently opened but further storage space will be needed in the future.

At Prince Rupert, we badly need the interchanges agreed to by the railways at the grain-handling and transportation summit in Winnipeg in January so that grain from both CN and CP lines can move out through that rail line. In order to make full use of the rail line to Prince Rupert, improvements are needed at that port. Facilities for cleaning and drying and storage — a consortium of grain companies is at work on this.

At Churchill, the rail line leading to Churchill is not strong enough to move hopper cars. It can only carry boxcars. Investment is urgently needed on the Herchmer division to bring it to standard where it will be able to move hopper cars.

That is the physical capacity of the rail network but we must also discuss equipment. Estimates put shortages of hopper cars at 4,000 a year now, increasing to 6,000 by 1981 and at 9,000, 12,000 and 15,000 a year by 1985. Now the provision of rail cars

April 17, 1979

will not in itself make possible the movement of 30 million tonnes. Indeed the cost to provide sufficient grain cars will be one of the lesser expenses by comparison to the system improvements we have been discussing, but they are necessary. Bringing the system up to a level where it can deliver 30 million tonnes a year to waiting ships spells one word — investment. Now we're talking money, bit money and several billions of dollars but there can also be no denying the fact that now is the time. Unemployment is high and we can create jobs tomorrow for assets tomorrow. The work is labor intensive and Canadian centred and if we are, in fact, to be ready to move 30 million tonnes by 1985 then we have no choice. The time is now.

How do we get at the problem? Well, three solutions have been put forward and I add the fourth one and that's to say to eliminate Tory MLAs and Tory MPs.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MOSTOWAY: — That doesn't solve it by one-quarter. That solves it by three-quarters. Now, there is a solution we put forward to the Grain-handling and Transportation Commission in 1976, an idea that has been around for years but is now gaining new momentum. The railways of Canada should be owned and operated as a public utility, for and by the people of Canada. So this should be the first priority of the railways, not profit.

Now, the second solution is the one put forward by Mr. Emmett Hall in the grain-handling and transportation report . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well if you want to call your leader in, maybe he may be particularly interested in the wise words of Mr. Emmett Hall in his transportation report.

Now, the third is the wheat board's proposal for the purchase of hopper cars. In examining the three proposals, Hall is obviously a compromise of the public ownership approach. The Hall solution really says, let's give the railways one more chance by looking at the different approach to compensation. Let's compensate the railways adequately for the movement of grain and still protect the crow rate.

I have stated before that the wheat board proposal is, in my opinion, a narrow proposal because it assumes a resolution by some other means of all of the other problems confronting the transportation system — the ports, the diesel power, the Fraser Canyon and the rate issue. It assumes the continuation of the branch line and rehabilitation subsidy.

Now, Saskatchewan has adopted the Hall compromise embodied in the crow rate guaranteed plan. I tell you what, not only is the crow rate here, in fact I hear a crow constantly from the side opposite and I wish it would stop yapping. I just say, if the hon. member can't contain himself, take a cue. What me, listen to me, be silent, and courteous.

The crow rate guarantee plan is exactly what it says — a plan to guarantee the rate to the producer, yet compensate the railways for the cost of moving grain . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me we have a Tiny Tim in the crowd.

The compensation by the federal government includes a return on investment for the railways, or in other words, compensation on the basis of the Snively principle. Under this plan, the provincial government would co-operate by resolving the processing industry problem — the alfalfa industry and the rape seed crushing industry, with the

same compensation. This in turn would encourage the development of secondary agricultural industry in Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Absolutely. Now when it comes to slick talking, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, I hear you are a master at it.

Some say that won't work. Even if the railways receive compensation they won't equip the system and therefore, we still won't be assured of getting our grain to market. These people argue that you have got to capitalize the system. But to that I say, that's all we've ever done id capitalize the system. Have they moved the grain? What guarantees are there that \$700 million into rehabilitation and \$500 million into hopper cars will move the grain? By Mr. Lang's own figures, the federal government has spent on the rail lines in this country since 1970 \$256 million on hopper cars, \$3.14 million on box car rehabilitation with another \$7 million committed, 445 million on box car subsidies, \$175 million spent and \$700 million committed in branch line rehabilitation. A total of \$1.5 billion of the taxpayer's money has gone into capitalizing the rail transportation system for grain in Canada. And have they moved the grain? What assurance do we have that another half a billion dollars on hopper car will get the grain moving? At what point is it time to call a halt on this whole capitalization exercise?

It seems to me that an agreement each year with the railways under the crow rate guarantee plan would give the railway some incentive tom over the grain because they only get paid for what they, in fact, move. The more grain they get to port, the more they get paid, and the more they invest, the larger the operating revenue. We would not be so foolish as to compensate the railways for what they do not move. The Hall proposal and the Saskatchewan proposal is to pay the railways full compensation for grain movement but only for what they do move. Now, under this approach, Mr. Speaker, if the railways do not deliver, then there is only one choice left and that is public ownership of the railways, to be operated as a public utility in the interest of all Canadian. Now, to me, the game that the railways are playing is for the taxpayer to capitalize the whole system and to additionally obtain the removal of the crow . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, I see the hon. member says hit him again. I don't think the hon. member is present. So, we will just ignore the remark if I can be so bold.

Now, to me, the game that the railways are playing is for the taxpayer to capitalize the whole system and to additionally obtain the removal of the crow. Mr. Speaker, the federal solutions have not worked — \$1.5 billion of taxpayers' money over seven years and still not enough boxcars, not enough rail capacity and not enough hopper cars.

Our position is that the rail equipment should be purchased and maintained by the rail company. This is the only way that it makes sense. No independent company, even service Crown corporations, looks to an outside body for the supply of the equipment that it needs to operate, but the federal policies have driven the wheat board to the point where they feel they have no choice but to lay producers' money on the line.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has a proposal which will solve the transportation issues in a broad sense, which will get at not just symptoms, but at root causes. The Saskatchewan proposal is a good proposal and I am pleased to move an amendment to Resolution No. 15 as follows, seconded by the hon. member for Morse (Mr. Gross). It read as follows:

that all of the words after 'this Assembly' on line 1 be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

April 17, 1979

endorses the Government of Saskatchewan's initiatives in developing alternatives that would ensure that adequate rolling stock available for the movement of Saskatchewan grains to market, and further, that this Assembly condemns the failure of the Government of Canada to ensure adequate provision of rolling stock, thereby forcing the Canadian Wheat Board to purchase grain hopper cars.

Debate continues on the motion and the amendment concurrently.

MR. R.J. GROSS (Morse): — Mr. Speaker, I hadn't planned to speak on Resolution No. 15 but after that tremendous speech by the member for Saskatoon Centre . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . another reason why I decided to enter this debate is because of the member for Moosomin (Mr. Birkbeck) and the member for Rosthern (Mr. Katzman) who proposed the main motion. I find interesting the new twist they have adopted when it comes to the crow rate. I see they have developed some new twists because they feel that they are wavering. They are wavering because they are losing credibility out in the country when it comes to talking about the crow rate. As I recall the main motion is talking about boxcars, and if I remember the speeches of the member for Rosthern and the member for Moosomin, I heard very little about box cars but heard a lot about crow rate. I heard speeches about how now they are the great saviours of the crow rate and had it not been for a Tory government or opposition (pardon me) in Saskatchewan . . . they are now the new saviours of the crow rate, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it takes too much going back to the record and checking to see if these are the facts of life or not. You'll soon find out that the Tories are sadly lacking in credibility in that area.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I have taken the opportunity to copy out of the last Western Producer a clipping called Crow fix-up group taxes case to Ottawa. I find it interesting to be reading the Western Producer when the member for Rosthern and the member for Moosomin are talking about how they're going to save the crow rates and what a terrible disgrace it is that people are talking about killing the crow rate. I ask the members opposite to carefully consider what they're talking about when they are talking about the crow rate, and who supports what and where. Mr. Speaker, I find some interesting analysis in the clipping from the Western Producer, Thursday, April 12, and I suggest to all members they pick up the copies that are on their desks. It was just tabled a few minutes ago. It is written by Barry Wilson of the Western Producer:

OTTAWA — Promoters of a plan to change the statutory freight rates on grain movement quietly took their case to the federal government officials last week. A member of the informal group of producers, agricultural industry representatives, and railway representatives which developed the plan during the winter, said in an interview that meetings with civil servants and several department were held after the Canada Grains Council meeting, April 3 to 4.

The articles goes on to say:

We want to start getting an understanding here, said the producer official, who asked to be left anonymous (again not wanting to be identified as to who they are). He said a planned meeting of the caucuses of the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives had to be cancelled because of the election, so the politicians will have to wait until after May 22.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I find that very interesting. Members opposite just told us moments

ago how they are great saviours of the crow rate and people who are out to destroy the crow rate are wanting to meet with members opposite but cannot do so until after May 22, until after a general election, for fear that the people of the country might find out who's who on the crow rate debate.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the article goes on to talk about full steam after the election. Headline in the same article, 'When the election is over, we'll be going full steam, he said' Whoever he was, he didn't want to be identified. We'll be making the plan known to the industry in a formal way for its analysis.

Today, he said grain company officials (Saskatchewan Wheat Pool) have not been involved in the talks. The attempt to develop a plan to change the Crow's Nest freight-rate system has been couched in secrecy since it began last winter with a series of private meetings involving some producers, some processors, some politicians and cattlemen, and senior officials of the railway as well.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask you, who are the politicians involved? Who are those politicians? The Tories on the other side remain silent when we talk about the abandonment of the crow rate. I think they are involved up to their necks in the death of the crow rate, and I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite are now taking the pitch, when the resolution is talking about boxcars, that they are supporting the crow rate, when indeed they are on record as opposing it.

Mr. Speaker, it's hard to prove it. The member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) says, prove it.

MR. E.A. BERNTSON (Souris-Cannington): — A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. What's the point of order?

MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, the point of order is that the motion, as I see it, deals with things like hopper cars, etc., etc., and I have real problems in relating his comments to the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: — I realize this is a fairly broad resolution, dealing with the misappropriation of funds in excess of \$80 million for the purchase of hopper car, without consultation, and an alternative which suggests insuring adequate rolling stock available to move Saskatchewan grains to market. My perception of the debate at this point is that the member is in order. I'll listen very carefully though, to make sure that he does stay in order.

MR. GROSS: — Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that now the opposition is becoming very touchy on this issue of crow rate. When they made the motion, not 10 minutes ago, they talked very much about the crow rate. The member for Moosomin (Mr. Birkbeck) talked very outspokenly about the crow rate and how the opposition across the way is now the great saviour of the crow rate. I can appreciate why the member for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson) isn't interested in talking about the crow rate. He supports an interest lobby group which is very much opposed to the crow rate. He is very proud of supporting an organization — the Palliser Wheat Growers — that is openly against the killing of the crow rate. The member for Thunder Creek (Mr. Thatcher) is proud of being a founding member of the Palliser Wheat Growers. It is nice to have on the record, because it is going to make it very interesting in the election campaign when we talk about who supports the Palliser Wheat Growers and what the Palliser Wheat Growers

April 17, 1979

stand for.

Mr. Speaker, in this debate, while it is fairly wide-ranging, I hear nobody on that side of the House talk about the transportation critic for the Tory federal caucus, Don Mazankowski, who has some very interesting pronouncements about crow rates. He's saying that he could be persuaded to kill the crow rate, talking about being persuaded to join the concepts of more rail line abandonment and beyond. They conveniently forgot about what their Tory caucus has said about the crow rate; they have conveniently forgotten about what their stands are federally on the crow rate and I think for good reason. It is noticeably silent, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have a fair amount more to say on this debate. I know members of this side of the House have a tremendous amount more to say also and I, therefore, beg leave to adjourn the debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

Resolution No. 17 — Plight of Farmers in Souris River Valley

MR. R.A. LARTER (Estevan) moved, seconded by Mr. E.A. Berntson (Souris-Cannington):

That this Assembly condemns the Government of Saskatchewan and the Government of Canada for their insensitivity to the plight of the farmers and communities in the Souris River Valley, as demonstrated by their failure to act on at least three recent studies of the problem and the future of the Souris River Valley.

He said: Mr. Speaker, speaking to the resolution, I would like to take some of the members of this Assembly back a little in history, on the flooding of the Souris Valley, before man took it upon himself to temper with the natural flow of this river and increase the building of dams, highways, roads, low level bridges and the draining of farm lands. We were not faced with flooding conditions every year before these things took place. Now, instead of hoping we don't have another flood in the spring, we are sure we will have one. As a matter of fact, even a government news release indicates that we are going to have very serious flooding in the Souris Valley this year. I think this is borne out by the fact that we had an abundant supply of moisture last fall and the ground was saturated and we had an excessive snowfall this winter, and coupled with the last snowfall (which probably was another 2, 3 or 4 inches of rain) it's certainly going to contribute to the flooding of this valley.

Here is a record of the flood years from the year 1904 in the valley (especially at Roche Percee) as supplied by a pioneer of that area, Mr. Jack Smart. The valley at Estevan had extra flood years between the years of 1959 to 1976, but in the Roche Percee area from 19094 to 1916 there was a span of 12 years between floods; 1916 to 1926, 10 years between floods; 1926 to 1943 a span of 17 years; 1943 to 1948 a span of 5 years, but this is the year they blew the dam at Midale and this caused additional flooding. From 1948 to 1969 there was a span of 20 years without flooding; 1969 to 1974 a span of 5 years ; 1974 to 1975 a span of 1 year; 1975 to 1976 a span of 1 year. These are the years, Mr. Speaker, when the drainage increased in the upper Yellow Gras marshlands and this was at Roche Percee. In might add there have been floods in the Estevan area

between Midale, between Mainprize Park and Estevan in the last 7 out of 8 years and this year is going to be 8 out of 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, in the early years the pioneers of that area built bridges at the high level so that the water could flow under them, but as the flow increased they no longer could get, in the spring, from one side of the bridge to the other. These are now low level bridges and they act as rubbish collectors and the water flows over them so they are impassable much of the spring and summer. As well as the obstruction in our river which we have talked about many times, we are the bottom end of the funnel. There are roots, trees, silt and the farmers are now draining access water to our rivers. This is done without any stems of controls. There is no regard to the capacity of the river to contain the extra water. Therefore, the surplus water has no place to go and no option but to flood our properties. The spill piles on the strip mining have been placed too close to the river and as a result thousands and thousands of tons of silt have been washed into the river. In places where it used to be 12 feet deep in the river, it is now approximately 3 feet, to give you an idea of what happened to the silt. I believe, this again was a government responsibility in direction on the spill piles.

We, of course, realize that we are at the bottom of the funnel and with the additional draining by man, our valuable farm land upstream has flooded constantly, land which farmers in the bottom of the funnel consider very valuable to them.

The recent three year Souris River study has done nothing to alleviate the fears or solve the problems of the people in the Souris Valley below Dr. Mainprize Park. These people have been to countless meetings, both with and without government people, over the many years. From the environment of SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation), to the Department of Agriculture, I must say their closest contact has been with the EMO (Emergency Measures Operation) people who have worked with them year after year in the floods . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, I was there on the sandbags every year. I might add, Mr. Minister, I will be there this year, poor back and all.

Unless you have experienced a flood you have no knowledge of the work it entails to clear it all up and to make it liveable again. The loss of business, the loss of farm revenue, the heartache and the expense has frustrated all of these people for many years. These people were told for many years that Long Creek definitely did not flood now. This was probably the case when Boundary Dam wasn't there. Since Boundary Dam has been built it now contributes to the flooding in the area. This was proved in 1976, when the release from water from Boundary Dam caused flooding as far back as Midale, but now in order to protect them the water must be released at high rates at a time of year in order to protect the cooling capacity of the dam. The water is forced back upstream as far as Mainprize Park and you certainly cannot convince these people that Boundary Dam certainly has contributed to their problems.

As you know, the Souris is an international watershed running into North Dakota through Minot and back into Manitoba. I have mentioned before to this assembly we are completely amazed that even though you did not have to work through anyone except the IJC (International Joint Commission) on this international waterway, nonetheless it would have been expected the people of North Dakota would have had some consultation with you during your Souris River study. This was not the case. As a matter of fact I don't think other than the public hearings, the people in our area had any input except the presentations they gave at these forums and I don't believe they were listened to very thoroughly. We consider this being very narrow minded and short-sighted. As a result of the continued frustrations by the people of the Souris

April 17, 1979

Valley, a new association has recently been formed known as the Souris River Protection Association (SRPA). They have instructed its lawyers in Estevan to research the feasibility of commencing legal action against the Yellow Grass Conservation and Development Area Authority along with the individual farmers for downstream damages caused by ditching of the Yellow Grass marsh area. I suppose this is ending up exactly the way the former Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding) expected it would as they have suggested earlier many times that if you don't like what your neighbour is doing with his water, sue him. It is a shame the Government of Saskatchewan and the Government of Canada cannot and will not accept the responsibility through its elected official and it has come to a state of suing a neighbour.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this government has done very little in the way of assisting the people of the Souris Valley in the way of compensation of losses or the solving of their problems for the future.

I, also, Mr. Speaker, would like to mention that some time ago, as was brought up in the House today, the member for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson) and myself arranged for a meeting with the former Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Agriculture and did have that meeting. We did discuss various aspects of the flooding. We proposed to the minister there should be some compensation paid to these people who were flooded year after year. Quite naturally the ministers could not give us an answer on this bill but promised an (and gave us no hope rally) in three weeks time. During this period the election hit and there was no meeting called. The Hitchcock Water Users later on in the fall, November or December — the former Minister of the Environment mentioned this meeting — arranged for a meeting with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding) and former Minister of the Environment (Mr. Byers) without informing either the MLA for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson) or the member for Estevan (Mr. Larter). At that meeting, the former Minister of the Environment stood up and told these people right off the bat that there had been no meeting with the member for Souris-Cannington or myself. I call that a very grave deception in deceiving people in my constituency and I resent it very, very much. I'm very, very surprised at the former Minister of the Environment making a statement like that to constituents of mine. I believe he should give an apology to myself and the member for Souris-Cannington or give a public apology in this House or resign and call an election.

AN HON. MEMBER: — I will, I will.

MR. LARTER: — I mentioned before that we are facing possibly one of the first floods in the Estevan-Roche Percee history in 1979. In was very surprised when the Minister of the Environment today said they had really no contingency plans, that his department had carried out their work and they were measuring the snow and measuring the possible flood flow. I don't think there's any minister on that side of the House has shown any leadership to the people of that area every. As for the MLA, he shows all he can with the facilities he has to work with.

AN HON. MEMBER: — You want this MLA to make the decision, he'll trade chairs with you.

MR. LARTER: — I'd like to give you a few examples, Mr. Speaker, of what has happened over the past years. These are news clippings that were taken from copies of either the local weekly or the Regina Leader Post. Roche Percee residents beat flood, flood water supply provide main concern. Many of the briefs mentioned drainage work in the

Yellow Grass area, north of Weyburn, as the cause of their spring flooding problems. Flood victims demand government action, citizens voice concerns on Souris River future. We feel the Hon. Neil Byers came to our meeting of September 9 with his mind completely unresponsive to any of our problems. Dikes creating floods on Souris at Roche Percee; flooding predicted again for district, 1976; Souris flood centre south of Estevan, flood group formed; Souris River flood danger; ditching in marsh may cause lawsuits — this may come about very soon. Plans outlined to fight flooding.

AN HON. MEMBER: — '75, '72.

MR. LARTER: — In 1863. This all makes us frustrated and angry. Souris River Flood Prevention Association, another potential flood, Weyburn Review; progress is necessary and we certainly are not against a better living for everyone but when construction is contemplated on waterways, it should not be hazardous to another human being, referring to the people upstream draining on the Yellow Grass marsh area. Roche Percee campground expected to be flooded; Souris River flood danger meeting seen as a waste of time. Mr. Smart felt that the Hon. Mr. Byers came to their September 9 meeting, uninterested, unresponsive to any of their problems. Legal action considered, worse yet it has authorized the construction of many ditches under the guise of agricultural development knowing full well that those ditches cause an increase flow of water in the river channel and worse flood damage downstream. Reply received on flood letter, 'Flood becoming annual affair.' 'Flood forum decides to seek legislation.' Answering a question on who grants permission to drain water, Mr. Mitchell said that any private drainage did not require approval; that any person affected by drainage could sue — wonderful leadership by the government of the province of Saskatchewan in assisting some of their constituents in the Estevan area.

I would like also to mention, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding) mentioned the other day that offers had already been made to some of the people in that area regarding purchasing of land. One of the recommendations which was made on the Souris River Study was to have progressive purchasing of land in that area. In that meeting with the Minister of Agriculture and the former Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Agriculture mentioned there were very few parcels of land that would have to be purchased. I mentioned to him that in making offers they want to remember that these people have to relocate and buying this land should be on the basis of how much it costs to relocate, taking into consideration damages and how to back these people had digress over the years in the farming operations. I might mention that is true. The agriculture department has made an offer already for, I think 240 acres of land and it is a direct insult to the people who are living on that land. I don't see how he could even make an offer like has made to these people. Therefore, I think you are going through the motions but it is really not your intention to even buy the land in that area. I so move.

Debate continues on the motion.

MR. E.A. BERNTSON (Souris-Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, in seconding this motion, my remarks will be brief because I'm quite anxious to hear what may come from the other side. I commend the government on one point that is, at least in part, they have recognized that there's a problem.

I understand there have been no government expenditures for at least the last two years towards draining the Yellow Grass marsh. The Yellow Grass marsh was very marginal and picked up for a song by anybody who has it. The assessment on that land has

April 17, 1979

increased considerable through drainage subsidized by this government. But what has happened downstream? What's happened in Oxbow and Estevan? There have been three studies in recent years, three studies in the Souris Valley. The most recent one is a joint study between Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the feds at a cost of \$1.2 million. But what came out of that study? Nothing. Absolutely nothing, another volume to go to the archives to collect dust.

MR. BOWERMAN: — Did you get the report, Eric?

MR. BERNTSON: — Yes, I did, thank you.

For eight of the last ten years, including this year, the Oxbow and Estevan areas have suffered flood conditions as a result, in part, of your drainage programs in the Yellow Grass marsh area. I wonder if the minister would pay attention? He may get a chance to respond a little later.

MR. BOWERMAN: — I'll give you the date when it started — 1942.

MR. BERNTSON: — Thank you. What is the attitude of this government as it relates to the plight of the people in the Oxbow-Estevan area and people downstream in the Souris River Valley? It says something in this motion about insensitivity. Let me tell you something about the attitude of this government as indicated to us by people of the Hitchcock Water Users Association and others. Quite simply, it's an attitude of I don't care. First, I want to apologize to the former Minister of Environment for accusing him of misleading the House earlier today. I've had a chance to consider the exchange back and forth in the House. I don't think he was misleading the House. I don't think he has a clue what was going on. I don't think he was deliberately misleading the House at all.

MR. THATCHER: — Could he have been lying, is that possible?

MR. BERNTSON: — A very real possibility.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just review a bit of recent history, just to maybe help the former Minister of Environment, as it relates to . . .

MR. BOWERMAN: — Since the 1930s or recently?

MR. BERNTSON: — No, I'm talking about since last August.

When I questioned the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kaeding) on April 10 relating to a meeting that the member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) and I had with him and the former Minister of the Environment, the question specifically was, you said you were going to provide us with your options within three weeks. That response never came. We are still waiting for it.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Pay attention, Neil, don't pretend that you're reading.

MR. BYERS: — Thank you.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Oh, he was just pretending to read.

MR. BERNTSON: — O.K. I'll take back that apology.

A question that has never been answered that of options. I then went to the Minister of Northern Saskatchewan, asking him (the current Minister of Northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Byers) why he would deny to this group of Hitchcock farmers, that ever met with the member for Estevan and myself. He tried to skate out of it, Mr. Speaker, by saying, Mr. Speaker, I met with the representatives of the Hitchcock Water Users' Association this fall. I agreed to the meeting. I understood that the member for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson) was going to be there, and he didn't show up. I would have loved to have been there, Mr. Speaker, except nobody told me there was a meeting or when it was or why or where. But that is aside from the real issue.

Mr. Speaker, just to indicate to you the insensitivity of particularly this government as it relates to the people in the Hitchcock Water Users' area, people who, in eight of the last ten years have lost all of the productive land in the Souris River valley, a problem that was in large part caused by this government. When they met with the former Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Agriculture, they were told, the opening statement of the former Minister of the Environment was, there will be no compensation and if you don't like it, sue us. That sounds like a real sensitive organization to me.

I am going to listen very carefully and I warn the minister when he responds to this, he had better weight his words because a transcript is going to all the people in the Hitchcock Water User's Association and others. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I think that it is just despicable that this government has used the people in the Souris River Valley and particularly the people of the Hitchcock Water Users Association this way. I take a kind of a convoluted delight in seconding this matter. My hesitation in seconding it, Mr. Speaker, is that I am just ashamed that this government would act in such a fashion that this motion should ever have to show up in the order paper.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. A.W. ENGEL (Assiniboia-Gravelbourg): — Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this resolution for several reasons.

Resolution No. 17 proposed by the hon. member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) and seconded by his seatmate for Souris-Cannington (Mr. Berntson) condemns all governments, Mr. Speaker, the one in Ottawa and the one here in Regina, for their alleged insensitivity to the plight of farmers and communities in the Souris River Valley.

They use this word, insensitivity, and when I listened to the member for Souris-Cannington I am wondering just why he is so sensitive about having missed the meeting. I have done that in the past. I have missed meetings before. He is looking for an excuse to save face back home. He must have been out campaigning in the federal election, because he didn't say anything about flooding. His main thought was about how sensitive he was when he must have been out campaigning down there. I appreciate his remarks and in particular the remarks of the member for Estevan.

The imaginary prosecution on the part of far away people is a well known or well used ploy. In my mind's eye I can visualize the hon. member going about his constituency gleefully cultivating this imaginary insensitivity of other MLAs on the government side and other elected representatives in Ottawa. I believe he does all this with the purest of selfish motives and I, therefore, cannot find it in my heart to condemn him too severely, Mr. Speaker. But I must warn him that there does come a point when people start believing their own propaganda, a point where the political myth maker slips across the

April 17, 1979

line into possession of a full blown persecution complex where reality no longer has any meaning.

The wording of this resolution carries dangerous overtones of having crossed the dangerous line. I would hope that the hon. member could still accept a few facts and is still able to wrench himself back into the real world before it is too late.

He speaks of government reports. I presume that the first report of which he speaks was the federal/provincial Saskatchewan Nelson Basin Study of the early '70s. Those were the days, hon. members may recall, when the main concern of Souris Valley residents was the lack of water, a perpetual fear that there wouldn't be enough water to sustain agriculture and the lack of water would be a barrier to industrial development. The Saskatchewan Nelson Basin Study was, therefore, a study of water supply. It found out that if more water was ever needed in the Souris it would be possible, at admittedly a great expense to divert water from the South Saskatchewan through the upper Qu'Appelle, Boggy Creek and the Wascana into the Souris reaches within Saskatchewan. It has also found out that some of that diverted water could be, if needed, pumped across the height of land into the Antler and subsequently Manitoba reaches of the Souris. Admittedly, Mr. Speaker, no action has been taken to divert this water. The reason why is surely obvious to the hon. member. The problem in Souris is no longer a lack of water. Today's complaints are not about too little but about too much water. In 1974, and this is where I beg to differ from the member for Estevan (Mr. Larter), but in 1974 acting promptly on these new complaints the provincial government initiated its well-known freeze of all drainage projects, halting the wet weather tendency to drain one's upper level properties at the expense of one's lower level neighbours. This prompt and decisive freezing of all drainage projects to help protect people downstream on the Souris can hardly be put forward as an example of insensitivity on the part of the government. Saskatchewan's drainage freeze could have been used as an excuse for stalling further studies of water use. As the hon. member knows it wasn't. Instead of delays this so-called insensitive government authorized the former minister of the environment to meet with the Government of Canada urging that the Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba join with us in financing, and I'll quote from the agreement reached:

An assessment of the water and related resources of the Souris River basin and the demands being made, and likely to be made upon them, to set objectives related to the management of these resources in Canada and to develop an appropriate plan to meet those objectives.

His efforts, Mr. Speaker, were successful. The joint agreement was signed on October 28, 1974. This was a big expensive, detailed study. It cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan \$263,000 and many years of professional time which was contributed at the expense of other problems elsewhere. The report was received almost four years later, in June of last year. The task groups formed to carry out report recommendations began meeting in October of last year. It includes special assessment of many short term solutions which have been proposed from time to time, such as Yellow Grass drainage, channel improvement upstream from Estevan, diking to preserve flood plain building development and reservoir construction or improvement. But here again back as October 1977 the former Minister of the Environment meeting with his federal counterparts urged that the two governments should agree to start work in important contract proposals even before the final report was issued. To back up this pressure hon. members will note that in this year's budget, Saskatchewan has already

proposed to set aside \$225,000 for purchase of flood-prone land. The member for Estevan (Mr. Larter) call this an insult to the farmers; \$225,000 and another \$70,000 for flood mapping and detailed planning required to overcome flooding problems at Weyburn, Estevan, Roche Percee and Oxbow. Our government under the leadership of the present Minister of the Environment (Mr. Bowerman) has done this despite the fact that Ottawa is so far, reluctant to enter into a formal implementation agreement such as that in effect in the Qu'Appelle but prefers to approach problems under the existing programs.

Among the specific projects which because of Saskatchewan determination and foresight, we expect to see accomplished in this coming year are diking through the Weyburn business district, relocation and flood-proofing of buildings in the Weyburn flood way, and building relocation in Roche Percee. We are also hopeful to be able to improve the Weyburn reservoir. We now know from past experience that short-term band-aid solutions which merely transfer excess water problems from one area of agricultural land to another are not the sensible answer to flooding. That is why the Minister of the Environment insisted upon a thorough study of water management in the total river basin, that is why he has been patiently resisting short-term solutions and with equal patience has insisted upon a total plan for total improvement. To be blunt, there are some problems which cannot be patched up. Dikes and claims won't do the job. The only practical answer is relocating buildings and freezing all future flood plain development. Some popular, quick and easy solution, I'm sorry to say, just do not stand up when subjected to a scientific analysis of all of the facts. To define our insistence upon long-term benefits and our constant pressure for the joint study of problems and the joint implementation of findings of study recommendations as insensitivity is an utterly unrealistic misrepresentation of the facts.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I cannot completely condemn the hon. member's careful, cultivated political indignation. But to keep chanting this worn out insensitivity slogan now that the studies are over and now that money has been budgeted to start carrying out flood protection projects, could be, as I suggested earlier, a danger sign.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to move an amendment to Resolution No. 17, seconded by the member for Weyburn (Mr. Pepper):

That all the words after the word assembly in the first line be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

commends the Government of Saskatchewan for initiating a comprehensive study in the Souris Basin to evaluate the problems in that area and to recommend ways and means to correct these problems, further commend the Government of Saskatchewan for negotiating with the federal government an implementation agreement for such recommendations and for including funding to deal with some of these problem areas as identified by the study.

I so move.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

Debate continues concurrently on the motion and the amendment.

April 17, 1979

MR. J.A. PEPPER (Weyburn): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words in support of this amendment presented by the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg (Mr. Engel). I want to say them on behalf of my constituents in the Weyburn riding because I know that a clear majority of them would disagree with the wording of the motion.

The Souris River has caused flooding and erosion problems in years past for the city of Weyburn and the farmers who have land, Mr. Speaker, in or near the Souris Valley. That is a fact which has long been recognized by the Saskatchewan government. It has only been much more recently, however, Mr. Speaker, that anything has been done about the problems.

I would say the eight years of the Blakeney government in office have been marked by a greater awareness of the concerns of Weyburn and the Souris Valley farmers and a commitment to continued action in improving the situation.

Flooding in the Souris River is linked in a very significant way, Mr. Speaker, to the spring runoff from farm fields and pasture land bordering the valley. The great surge of water each spring is made worse by a number of drainage projects which were built to empty sloughs and low spots on farm lands. In 1974 the provincial government put a freeze on all further drainage projects protecting downstream residents from potentially serious erosion and from flooding problems. I would like to remind the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, that in the same year the Government of Saskatchewan pressed the governments of Manitoba and Canada to co-operate with us in studying the problems of the Souris River Basin. Now, Mr. Speaker, as you know that study was undertaken and as of last June the report has been in the possession of the provincial government. Since that time the various departmental officials involved have looked at the report and its recommendations and, as of October, task groups have been meeting to map out the implementations of these recommendations.

As was noted earlier, Mr. Speaker, and also in the budget debate, the provincial government has set aside \$225,000 this year for the purchase of Souris Valley land which is flood prone. In addition to that, as was mentioned earlier, Weyburn will be getting dyking built to protect the business district relocation or flood protection for buildings in areas highly subject to flooding, and major improvements to the Weyburn reservoir and waste-water treatment facilities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the money has already been allocated and the flood protection project will soon be well under way. That will be a very popular course of action in the Weyburn constituency. Weyburn was chosen to host the public release of the Souris Valley Basin Study report, and at that time the then minister, Mr. Byers, invited public comment on the report. Since that time, the public reaction has been extremely favourable and I'm sure that actively reflects the support the provincial government will have in assisting the communities and the farmers along the Souris Valley in the years ahead.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a very important subject and a very important topic to that area. I will have more to say in support of this amendment at a later time, and against this motion. So at this time, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Resolution No. 20 — Promotion of More Favorable Tourism Climate

MR. W.J.G. ALLEN (Regina Rosemont) moved, seconded by Mr. D.F. McArthur (Regina Lakeview):

That this Assembly urge the Government of Canada to take immediate steps to promote a more favorable tourism climate in Saskatchewan by (1) eliminating the unnecessary delays and undesirable atmosphere created by inadequate customs services in Regina, (2) improving air service for Saskatchewan travellers within Canada by creating more direct links by air with other centres in Canada, and (3) establishing an international airport in Saskatchewan to accommodate increased international business travel and to encourage increased tourist visitation.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I'm moving a resolution this afternoon which deals with air service in Saskatchewan in general, and Regina in particular.

On January 31 of this year, a PWA (Pacific Western Airline) charter landed in Regina with 49 passengers. Customs cleared only 40 and nine passengers were ordered to proceed to Calgary for customs clearance. They had to remain in Calgary overnight and return to Regina the following morning.

On February 27, 1979, another PWA charter from Barbados landed in Regina with 53 passengers. Arrangements had been made with Ottawa to have all the passengers cleared in Regina. The passengers were requested to remain in the aircraft because they could not be accommodated in the holding area, as another flight was scheduled to arrive.

Two couples at a time were deplaned for customs processing. Luggage was lined up in the hallway and corridors so processed passengers could identify and pick up their luggage. Passengers on other flights had difficulty moving in and around the airport because of strewn luggage.

These Mr. Speaker, are just two recent examples of the problems we are experiencing at the Regina Airport. The Regina Airport facilities are inadequate and have been for a long time, particularly for customs and other inspection services. These inadequacies have been recognized by all levels of government and both the provincial and federal governments have made commitments to improve the airport to accommodate traffic demands in the next two decades.

Members will recall the Regina Airport study and the recommendations contained therein which were approved both by the Hon. Gordon MacMurchy for Saskatchewan and the Hon. Otto Lange for the federal government. Meanwhile custom services provided at the Regina Airport, due basically to the lack of adequate facilities, are restricted to 40 passengers as a maximum number that can be processed and cleared until special arrangements are made. This situation has caused a great deal of inconvenience to Regina people and to others who use our airport. I believe that a great number of charters have omitted Regina because of a lack of adequate customs services. I say this because there have not been that many charters boarded and deplaned in Regina despite the many people in southern Saskatchewan who are taking charters from elsewhere.

The second point that should be made in this connection Mr. Speaker, is that these undesirable custom facilities have contributed to the suspension of direct air services

April 17, 1979

between Saskatchewan and the United States. Regina customs created problems for Norcanair in their scheduled service to Minot. Initially Norcanair was allowed a maximum clearance of 20 passengers which was later increased to 40. However, the manner in which the clearance was handled continued to cause problems. At times customs officials would only permit the deplaning of a limited number of passengers. At other times parties had been refused clearance in Norcanair and were required to reroute to Calgary for clearance and then return to Regina. Such clearance procedures resulted in passenger inconvenience, time delays and general dissatisfaction by passengers of the Minot-Regina scheduled route. This situation also deterred travel agents in Regina and Saskatoon from using Norcanair service to Minot for the clients who were southbound. The overall result of this was a lack of passenger loads for Norcanair which made the route unprofitable.

The suspension of the Minot-Regina service by Norcanair will cause numerous problems for the upcoming summer season for our northern Saskatchewan outfitters. The lack of direct air connections from Saskatchewan for U.S. fishermen from Denver, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Omaha and so forth, means that a fisherman cannot depart home and arrive in northern Saskatchewan the same day. The available air service from the United States will require an overnight stay in Calgary or Winnipeg prior to departure for northern Saskatchewan. Such inconvenience will discourage fishermen from coming to Saskatchewan in favor of destinations in Manitoba or Alberta. Saskatchewan residents have suffered much because of this situation. Many have to fly to other points like Winnipeg or Calgary simply to join charters. This is costing these people additional money. Those coming back are forced to make stops at other points for no other purpose than customs clearance and then to fly to Regina afterwards.

I believe that Transport Canada should move quickly to improve and renovate the airport in line with the agreed upon recommendations in the Regina Airport Study. I realize that that will take a year or two to accomplish. In the meantime I believe that customs should strive to provide full customs services and block off as much terminal space as is necessary for isolating international passengers from domestic traffic. They were able to do this with the Sweet Adelines when they came here in groups of more than 100 in April of last year. I can see no reason why they cannot do this again for the few charters which are not flying in Regina.

Another issue which has surfaced in relation to air service in Saskatchewan is the lack of enough direct links with other centres. Air Canada is the only transcontinental carrier that serves Regina and Saskatoon in Saskatchewan. CP Air does not fly to these points. Recently, PWA TransAir inaugurated its regional services linking both cities with Winnipeg in the east and Calgary and Edmonton in the west. Air Canada is trying to connect Saskatchewan with more one plane direct service to the major Canadian cities, to Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa eastward, and Vancouver to the west. A direct link was established to London from Saskatoon last year and the current bilateral negotiations between Canada and the United Kingdom may refine that operation. A trans-border service from Saskatchewan to the United States is contemplated, for example, linking Regina to Chicago via Winnipeg. Air Canada is, however, planning to move the flight back to Edmonton instead of Regina. The Regina-Winnipeg-Chicago route is already guaranteed under the Canada-U.S. bilateral, while the Edmonton-Winnipeg-Chicago route is not contained therein. A flight from Regina to Denver, a more logical and functional route than Regina-Minot is also being fought about by Canadian and American carriers.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I think it is a disgrace that we do not have an international airport in Saskatchewan. The airports at both Regina and Saskatoon are considered to be in the top 15 airports in Canada but do not have international status because no international flights are landing at them. Even when Air Canada started operating the Western Arrow Service from Saskatoon to Long this was not considered an international flight, at least not by the British. The British questioned this Air Canada operation because Saskatoon is not named in the current bilateral agreement for a point of origin for Air Canada's flight to England. This is also the reason why British authorities would not allow Air Canada to apply the maple leaf fare for its passengers from London to Saskatoon. The results in Saskatoon passengers paying more than Edmonton- or Calgary-bound passengers from London, both Calgary and Edmonton being further in distance from London than is Saskatoon. This is a ridiculous situation, but it is true. The bilateral air service agreement which Canada entered into with foreign governments has much effect on the international status of our airports. I call on the present Minister of Transport and the next Minister of Transport, not being the same person, to have Saskatoon and Regina named in the bilaterals of points of origin and/or destinations so that our airports might achieve international status

British Airways are now attempting to gain access to major points in western Canada, Vancouver, Calgary or Edmonton. Air Canada is against giving these points to British Airways, as it will cut deeply into their traffic. I believe Regina and Saskatoon could well be a compromise in this situation and it certainly would not cause much disturbance to Air Canada from Saskatchewan for international flights because they are giving us terrible service now.

To summarize, Mr. Speaker, in moving this resolution, I believe three things must take place:

1. The customs services at the Regina Airport must be improved if we are ever to receive the amount of tourist trade that our province is entitled to.
2. More direct links to other centres must be instituted forthwith so that business people in Saskatchewan and business people wishing to come to Saskatchewan to do business may do so more conveniently.
3. I believe that Regina and Saskatoon should both be made international airports.

Most people in Saskatchewan, indeed in Canada, believe that Saskatchewan has the brightest future of any province in our country. We should have air services that recognize that fact and that will help to contribute to our future prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

MR. KATZMAN: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: — What is the point of order?

MR. R. KATZMAN (Rosthern): — The third resolution, I believe, is incorrect, because it says establishing an international airport. We have one in Saskatchewan, in Saskatoon, if the member is not aware of that.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. The member is debating the issue rather than raising a point of order.

April 17, 1979

MR. D.F. McARTHUR (Regina Lakeview): — Mr. Speaker, I second this motion both with pleasure that my colleague for Regina Rosemont has moved this resolution, but also with a feeling of consternation when I reflect on the chaos and problems that currently exist at the Regina airport, as outlined by the member for Regina Rosemont.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, the situation is desperate at the Regina airport. It arises out of a lack of concern by the federal government in meeting the problem, a situation that I say, Mr. Speaker, has arisen because both the federal Liberal Party and the federal Conservative Party have become involved in this mindless attempt to restrict and constrain public spending even where it is needed and necessary such as in the case of the Regina airport.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. members from the other side laugh and show a lack of concern with the problems of the Regina airport. I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that in this modern world in which we live air transportation plays a very important role in the movement of goods and services and, therefore, the importance of adequate air facilities and air transportation should not be underestimated in the manner and style the hon. member's indicated just a moment.

Air transport is, of course, only one of the important modes of transport. I would say, in making these comments, that I do not want to suggest I think there is generally a need in Canada for increased spending on air transport. I believe, in fact, the federal government has in past history probably overspent in a number of cases with respect to air transport. But with respect to the Regina situation I advance to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the members of this Assembly, that the Regina airport is desperately in need of improvement and upgrading as the hon. member for Regina Rosemont has indicated.

Mr. Speaker, it is perhaps useful just to take a brief look at the history of the development of Regina airport in order to understand our needs here with respect to the kinds of things that have been outlined by the previous speaker.

Up until January 1972, the Regina airport was owned and operated by the city of Regina excepting for one interval when it was operated by the Department of National Defence. Under city management the airport provided excellent service to Regina and southern Saskatchewan. But times changed in the post-war period. There has been a continuous improvement in air service made possible by the introduction of larger and faster jet aircraft and by improvements in air traffic control equipment. There have also been other developments. Here in Regina, we have seen the rapid development of the city in residential areas, in the neighbourhoods in and around the airport. We have also seen rapid growth in the utilization of the Regina airport. Let me give you some examples.

In 1966, approximately 180,000 passengers passed through the Regina airport. By 1974, the figure had reached 400,000, today it is about 700,000, and by 1990, it is estimated that it will reach 1,400,000. Another example — in 1966, 3.5 million units of cargo moved through the airport. By 1974, it reached 6.5 million. Today it is near 9 million and by 1990 it is estimated it will be 17 million.

The same kind of figures apply with respect to mail utilization. All of these figures indicate a tripling and quadrupling of utilization in a little over 10 years and a further doubling by 1990. The implications for the future both in terms of the compatibility of the airport and residential development and in terms of expansion associated by

increased utilization, were widely recognized by the city and the provincial government years ago, and played no small part in the decision to transfer ownership to the federal government in 1972 so that the public investments made in air transport in other parts of the country could also accrue to Regina. Alas, Mr. Speaker, no one at that time, I think, in the provincial government or the city, fully comprehended the degree to which this federal government is capable of cynicism and inconsistency and even outright discrimination in matters such as this.

In 1974, two years after the federal government had acquired the airport, it completed a report in which it suggested marginal improvements would be made to the airport and minor alterations to the terminal and parking facilities in order to bring the airport up to the level necessary to provide services and meet needs into the 1980s. This report, Mr. Speaker, was complete hogwash. Anyone with any sense knew it in 1974 and knows it today.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, at that time, there were people in Regina and in the Government of Saskatchewan who were concerned with these problems. Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, in 1975 we had and still have, a minister of Municipal Affairs in this province who was a full match for Otto Lang and his cynical friends. When the federal government indicated it intended to be guided by the findings of its 1974 report which as I have said, 'failed to deal with all of the important issues,' the Minister of Municipal Affairs politely but firmly told Mr. Lang that it was not good enough. He informed Mr. Lang if he expected to have the zoning necessary to operate the airport, he would have to do better. He insisted the major issues would have to be dealt with.

As a result of this, the federal government finally agreed, as the member for Rosemont had indicated, to a major planning study to look at the real issues associated with the long term use and development of the airport. The study was completed in December, 1977, and based on the kinds of things outlined by the city of Regina, by concerned citizens' groups and by the provincial government, it confirmed all of those kinds of concerns. It confirmed that the course being pursued by the federal government to date was short-sighted and totally insensitive to the real needs and problems. The report in many respects appeared to be a milestone for Regina and the efforts of our people and our governments to gain a recognition in Ottawa of our legitimate needs. The federal government in participating in this report appeared to recognize that air traffic over residential areas of the type and kind we've had could no longer be tolerated. It appeared to recognize the need for services required to meet international scheduled and air charter services. It appeared to recognize that the future demands that will be placed on the airport will require major redevelopment. All of this, Mr. Speaker, was confirmed at a joint federal-provincial-city press conference held June 13, 1978 at which time Mr. Lang attended and agreed that development would have to take place. If I might just quote:

At a news conference Tuesday (this is Tuesday, June 14, 1978) federal transport minister Otto Lang said the government will begin detailed engineering plans for the expansion of the airport which includes construction of a second north-south runway and development of more terminal building space.

He went on to indicate how this was going to be accomplished and indicated that the federal government was accepting the recommendations contained in the report. Now this report, Mr. Speaker, as the member for Rosemont (Mr. Allen) indicated, was accepted by the province. It doesn't deal with all of the problems, in particular the air

April 17, 1979

traffic over Lakeview and Lakeview area, associated with the east-west runway, is not dealt with adequately. But it was recognized by the province and the city that it is a federal airport and that the kind of progress that had been achieved with the findings of this study, indeed, meant a major step forward and in so recognizing that the decision was made to participate and go along with the kinds of requirements required of the city and the provincial government.

But since the press conference, Mr. Speaker, in which there was a great deal made of what the federal government was going to do, I'm sorry to say that it doesn't appear that much more has happened. No improvements have been made in customs and inspections as was promised. Despite requests from the province, the federal government has provided no schedule for undertaking the major recommendations that they say they have accepted. No plans have been forthcoming, even though those plans have been requested, and indeed, demanded on many occasions.

The last straw, Mr. Speaker, to my mind, comes with the tabling of the federal estimates in parliament a short time ago. Those estimates, Mr. Speaker, and I have them here, contain no provisions for 1979-80 for even beginning to implement the commitments that Mr. Lang made in that press conference. No money is allotted to improving the terminal and thus to make provisions for services so lacking. No money is allotted for land acquisition; no money is allotted to begin work on the new runway — all essential features. All we have in those estimates, Mr. Speaker, is a provision to improve the existing north-south runway, a provision that must surely reflect an intent to maintain the status quo. This, I say to you, Mr. Speaker, is close to a scandal. After having promised these kind of developments we see, hidden in the estimates clearly an intent not to proceed with the developments that have been outlined. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that this arises and results from the kind of attitude, as I mentioned earlier, that has now become so common and so standard in Ottawa as put forward by the Conservatives and Liberals both, constantly cutting back, constantly hacking away at important public improvements and public spending projects, attacking public spending at every turn. Cut backs, and once again, Regina suffers from those cut backs and the members opposite are saying, oh well, we support the Regina airport development. But I say to them again, they can't have it both ways. They're part of the attacks that have been levelled against government spending at the federal level and the provincial level with the result that we get this kind of shameful neglect of our important needs in this province.

AN HON. MEMBER: — That's right.

MR. McARTHUR: — This shameful neglect of people's needs that is now becoming a way of life for our federal government.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Sorry, everything for Toronto, nothing for Regina.

MR. McARTHUR: — That's right, Mr. Speaker, it is shameful that this is happening. It is shameful that the long-standing and pressing needs of the people of Regina and southern Saskatchewan with respect to their airport are once again being pushed aside. Mr. Speaker, I hope that all members will support this motion and in so doing, show their support not only for this resolution but also for the proposition that federal cut backs, so much supported by both Liberals and Conservatives, are doing nothing but harm to people in Saskatchewan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid to say what time it is after another time but I do have a great deal more to say on this so I would beg leave to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly recessed from 5 until 7 p.m.