

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly
March 15, 1982

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NOTICE OF MOTION

MR. ROUSSEAU: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall, on Wednesday next, move first reading of a bill referred to as An Act to Provide Accessibility to Buildings for Physically Disabled Persons.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Canadian Union of Public Employees' Strike

MR. TAYLOR: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question to the Minister of Health. Today, Mr. Minister, we see another of the habitual demonstrations at this legislature on opening day and the all too familiar chant of "We want a contract." Mr. Minister, you are using the honest workers of Saskatchewan as pawns in your political game. Will you give the assurance to this Assembly that you will have your officials take part in meaningful negotiations and get away from the political manipulation that is the case today?

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, as usual the member for Indian Head-Wolseley doesn't understand the situation. First of all, Mr. Speaker, the agent of the employer is the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association and not the Department of Health. Mr. Speaker, let me say that in the vast majority of the cases, in 95 per cent of the cases I believe, contracts are agreed upon at the bargaining table. My understanding from the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association is that worth-while negotiations were going on until the withdrawal of services. I would simply, as I have said in the past, Mr. Speaker, ask both the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association and CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) to get back to the bargaining table and hammer out an agreement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. TAYLOR: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps you don't hear too well, but it doesn't sound to be going too good to me. Mr. Minister, you are the minister in charge of getting the funds from this province to supply the health services in this province. Do you realize that those people out there are facing ever-increasing costs just as are the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union) and the teachers in this province? They are facing increasing utility costs and gasoline costs. They are facing SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) premium increases. The list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, my question is this: will you realize this situation and use your influence to try to bring about a negotiated settlement to this serious strike?

HON. MR. ROLFES: — Mr. Speaker, in reply to the member I think it should be understood that in the last 10 years the particular union that has withdrawn services

has received an increase of well over 200 per cent in its contracts. The consumer price index in Saskatchewan during that period of time rose 126.8. The last proposal, I am told, put on the table by the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association was over 11 per cent, close to 12 per cent. I am also told, Mr. Speaker, that the average consumer price index increase in Saskatoon and Regina was 10.5 between January 1, 1981, and January 1, 1982. So the proposal that has been made by the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association certainly is above the rise in the cost of living. Mr. Speaker, what I am simply saying is that if they went back to the bargaining table — both CUPE and Saskatchewan Health-Care Association — an agreement could be hammered out. I urge them to go back. I did that when the union withdrew its services and I urge both parties today to go back to the bargaining table and hammer out an agreement.

Feed Freight Assistance

MR. THATCHER: — Question to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, today is the last day for cattlemen to file applications for feed freight assistance. I am sure the minister is well aware of the length and the severity of this winter and the toll that it has taken on the cow herds in many areas of Saskatchewan. In light of the fact, Mr. Minister, that this winter has been considerably more severe than in other years, and that perhaps miscalculations have been made as to the length of the feed stacks on the part of some producers, would the minister be prepared to make a clear, definitive statement today indicating that the feed freight assistance will be continued, or at least extended, for a reasonable length of time since trucks are now coming in from Alberta at probably the greatest rate since winter began?

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, I cannot make a clear, definitive announcement today with respect to the situation as it affects the movement of feed freight assistance. I think the hon. member for Thunder Creek will know that the Government of Saskatchewan has been very generous in dealing with the drought situation, providing assistance for the livestock producers in the province of Saskatchewan. You will know that we have provided an extension from December 31 to March 1 — I think it was February 15 — and extended it as well to March 15, hoping that the movement could in fact take place by March 15. I think the hon. member would want to agree with me that that has been a generous approach indeed. I think the hon. member would want to agree with me and the Government of Saskatchewan that we want to get matter cleared up as quickly as possible. I think we would want to make an analysis of our situation before making a final, clear definitive decision with respect to feed grain movement.

MR. THATCHER: — Supplementary question to the minister. Mr. Minister, at the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) convention you several times indicated that this government was on the side of the farmer. Now I ask the minister today: is being on the side of the farmer cutting off ranchers at the time of depressed prices when they need the hay worse than ever, when winter appears to be hanging on? Is that what the minister calls helping the farmers — being on the side of the farmers? Will the minister say yes or no, that he will or won't extend it?

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — I tell the hon. member for Thunder Creek, I think very clearly the Government of Saskatchewan is, in fact, on the side of the farmers. I think the hon. member knows full well that the federal government, in its participation in the drought situation here in Saskatchewan, cut off its assistance in August of 1981, and we are well into 1982. I think it was August of 1980. August of 1980, I stand to be corrected by the hon. member for Redberry. It cut off August 31, 1980. So the hon. member for

Thunder Creek well knows that we are on the side of the farmer with respect to facing the drought situation.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Thunder Creek also knows that we are on the side of the cattleman, having introduced to the province of Saskatchewan the only stabilization and marketing scheme for beef in this country and in fact on the North American continent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Hog Price Fixing

MR. THATCHER: — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Affairs. Mr. Minister, I am sure you are aware that on February 19, in Calgary, Intercontinental Packers Ltd. was one of several charged with conspiring to fix the prices paid to Alberta hog producers. The charges were laid on February 19. I am sure that the minister is also aware that the Alberta hog commission has filed a statement of claim against Intercontinental Packers along with some others in excess of \$73 million, allegedly for conspiring to price fix. My question is this: in light of the action taken in Alberta with regard to this alleged conspiracy to fix livestock prices as they pertain to pork has the minister already commenced an investigation into the activities of Intercontinental Packers Ltd. in the province of Saskatchewan? This possible and potential alleged price fixing might be gouging producers of dollars in an already depressed situation.

HON. MR. KOSKIE: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that the matter raised by the hon. member relates to the situation in Alberta. One cannot automatically make the inference that it is the same here. I think since the matter is before the courts that it is inappropriate at this time for us to comment on the investigation which is taking place. We will allow the court process to go forward and obviously the situation will be monitored in Saskatchewan.

Obviously the inference which the hon. member makes is that when we have the situation in Alberta the same situation operates in Saskatchewan. I think that is an inference which is not sound on fact but the situation will be monitored.

MR. THATCHER: — The minister is perhaps not aware of these consumer matters but the minister, I am sure, is aware that normally court cases of this nature take six years to resolve. Is the minister suggesting that Saskatchewan producers should wait longer than six years for his department to investigate the same packing companies — Intercontinental Packers and others? Are you suggesting that our producers should wait in excess of six years before your department will consider investigating this situation?

Would the minister be prepared to state today, in light of the situation in Alberta and the strong possibility that the same situation may well exist in Saskatchewan, that he will immediately instruct and order his department of commence an investigation immediately?

HON. MR. KOSKIE: — Well, first of all, there is no evidence that it is going on in Saskatchewan, as I indicated previously to him, and of course he has brought forward no evidence whatsoever. I want to say, with respect to conspiracies and the anticommon law legislation, that it falls within the jurisdiction of the federal government.

You know that as well as I do.

The investigation would take place under the Department of Consumer Affairs, federal jurisdiction, in respect to the nature of the conspiracy which involves companies that operate interprovincially, as well as intraprovincially.

MR. THATCHER: — A supplementary to the minister. Mr. Minister, the hog industry and the cattle industry are experiencing extremely depressed prices and in our neighbouring province the packing plants, including Intercontinental Packers, have been accused of price fixing and gouging the consumers — pardon me, gouging producers of this province. If the minister is telling us now that his department refuses to act, perhaps the minister could enlighten this Assembly and enlighten the producers of this province as to exactly what function his department performs if it won't become involved in this one?

HON. MR. KOSKIE: — I think the hon. member, as usual, is making his little speech. Obviously, a time will come (in the near future, I hope) when the public can weigh the nature of his statements.

I want to say that in respect to consumer legislation, this government stands on its record. I ask you, what other province has a home-owners' protection act? I ask you what other province has . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order!

Power Rate Increase

MR. GARNER: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for Sask Power. Mr. Minister, no doubt, and hopefully, you are aware of the tough economic times that all of the people of Saskatchewan are facing today due to your power rate increase, which since 1975 have been in excess of 85 per cent. One gentleman with a business and apartment block paid \$240 in 1979, paid \$450 in 1981, and in 1982, in these tough economic times, has to pay \$1,005.

My question to you, Mr. Minister is: what does your government intend to do for not only the small businessmen in Saskatchewan but everyone who has to pay a power bill in the province of Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think, as the hon. member is well aware, power rate increases in this province have been reasonable. The hon. members will perhaps not be aware of work that has been done by the Canadian Electrical Association, for instance, to show that the Saskatchewan Power Corporation has had lower rate increases than any other utility in Canada during the decade of the 1970s.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — They will also, in particular, note that the increases of the private utilities in Alberta have been many, many times greater than the increases of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. No one denies the fact that cost increases and inflationary pressures are giving rise to cost increases in all respects. What we do in Sask Power Corporation is maintain the strictest controls over costs; we maintain the strictest control over rate increases and we ensure that we provide effective service within those increases. We will certainly stand our record against any power company

in the country and certainly against the friend of the Tories in Alberta, those private companies across the border.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. GARNER: — Supplementary to the minister. Is the minister then saying to the people of Saskatchewan that it is wise to go and buy natural gas from Alberta and leave the natural gas capped in Saskatchewan, in fact coming out of farmers' water wells in the province of Saskatchewan? Is this the common sense of Sask Power: to send tax dollars to build up the Alberta Heritage Fund and not bring in a rural gas distribution system for the province of Saskatchewan?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — The common sense of the Tories is well illustrated by their proposal to tap water wells in order to supply gas to Saskatchewan communities and farmers. That shows you the kind of common sense they would apply to any policy with respect to natural gas. Their facts are also well illustrated as being wrong, as they have been time and time again in any discussion of natural gas in this province.

Here in Saskatchewan, again as I suspect the hon. member should know (he would only need to read the annual reports of the Sask Power Corporation to understand this fact) we have a long-term plan with respect to the utilization of Saskatchewan gas and the distribution of it to customers here in the province. We have a 20-year supply of gas in this province that we have determined is available. We draw upon that at the rate of approximately 5 per cent a year which is a sound policy of management in order to utilize that gas and assure the benefits over the 20-year period, which is not a long period of time. So I think the hon. member, if he would look at the facts, would agree that the approach we take in the utilization of Saskatchewan gas is a wise one and a prudent one and certainly there is no way that we in Saskatchewan could help but buy and purchase gas from Alberta as well in order to meet the needs of this province.

MR. LANE: — We hear the member for Kinistino making his last speech in this Assembly and we appreciate the fact that it is the last speech in this Assembly. I would like to direct a supplementary to the minister responsible for Sask Power. Your government and members of your government are on record as opposing a rural natural gas distribution system to the farms and towns of rural Saskatchewan. Is that still government policy? Secondly, the member for Estevan in the last Assembly said that there was a study by the Saskatchewan Power Corporation as to the cost of a rural natural gas distribution system. Senior officials now say no such study existed. Would you be prepared to table that study immediately for this Assembly and prove that it in fact exists?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, first of all with respect to the allegation that there is not a policy in place for the availability of natural gas in rural Saskatchewan, that is untrue and the hon. member will well know, if he wishes to check the facts, that there have been numerous connects made in rural Saskatchewan with respect to the supply of natural gas.

The particular debate that the hon. member is referring to is the question of the costs involved and the major extension of the natural gas system beyond the current policy framework. There has indeed been a review within the Saskatchewan Power Corporation of this whole question. We certainly have been drawing on facts and figures that were part of the earlier financial studies. Those do show the costs of the

Tory proposal to distribute natural gas across the province to all users as being in the neighbourhood of \$1 billion and escalating. We can, however, illustrate to you that we are studying this question carefully, and that the question of a changing policy framework is something which is constantly under review and under examination.

MR. LANE: — Supplementary. Will you now table that study?

HON. MR. McARTHUR: — Mr. Speaker, when the material from the study is available, I will be glad to provide it to the hon. members. I might add, Mr. Speaker, that the fact the final material is not available is part of an ongoing process of study. One would not be surprised that the early data, which is part of this study, is something which was available earlier. We'll make the remainder available to the hon. members in due course.

I'd just like to assure the hon. member that I will make that information available to him in due course, as I have indicated.

Energy Agreement

MR. ANDREW: — My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, on October 26, as you were clinking glasses with the good Prime Minister Trudeau on the energy agreement, the Minister of Mineral Resources put out a press release that basically said that there (speaking about the energy agreement) as in other areas both governments — yours and Trudeau's — have taken the necessary steps to ensure that the industry will remain economically viable in Saskatchewan. Mr. Premier, the oil industry is not economically viable in the Swift Current southwest region. It's not economically viable in the Southeast, and it's not economically viable in the Lloydminster northwest heavy oil fields area either. Would you now admit, Mr. Premier, that you made a serious error in judgment in that energy agreement, and will you go back to Ottawa now and throw that agreement away, and try to draw up a new energy agreement which will get the oil industry in this province moving again?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I think the energy agreement, which was entered into by our government following similar agreements entered into by the governments of Alberta and British Columbia, was an agreement which addressed the problems of the petroleum industry in Canada at that time. Yes, the difficulties which are now being experienced, particularly by the industry in the Southwest, are difficulties which do not stem from any provision of the energy agreement but stem rather from the fact that markets are not available because the usual place where the oil is marketed (in the northern tier of the United States) has available to it crudes from other places, and this does not permit Saskatchewan crudes to be sold. Those circumstances do not flow from any actions following from the energy agreement but rather from the current world market situation which we all hope will be temporary.

MR. ANDREW: — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, the industry is having problems in this province. The Southwest is probably going to shut down for a period of six months. Would you not agree, Mr. Premier, that you made a serious giveaway in that energy agreement when you agreed in effect to allow the federal government to tax the Saskatchewan Power Corporation by paying grants in lieu equal to that tax? Did you not really make a serious mistake by allowing that, by agreeing that in effect the federal government can tax the Saskatchewan Power Corporation and because of that serious move by you, we see once again the people of Saskatchewan paying further and further costs in their power bills?

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I've obviously lost the thread of the hon. member's thought. It is not at all clear to me how any tax paid by the Saskatchewan Power Corporation could in any way lead to the shutdown of wells in southwestern Saskatchewan. All the wells there that we're talking about are oil wells and none of them are gas wells. Accordingly, any difficulties that the industry in southwest Saskatchewan may be experiencing are in no way attributable to any arrangement made between the Government of Canada and the Government of Saskatchewan with respect to the taxation of natural gas.

I think we all know that the federal government has every legislative jurisdiction to tax the sale of natural gas to consumers. There is no possible argument against that. The argument simply was whether or not it would levy a tax on consumers or whether it would have us collect the tax and not put the difficulty to the consumers of taxing it at the consumer level. We took the position that we were not obligated to pay the tax. We are not obligated to pay the tax. We do not pay the tax. Admittedly, we do pay an amount in lieu of tax so as to give the consumers relief from having the tax applied at the consumer level.

MR. ANDREW: — Mr. Premier, for six years you tramped around this province and across this country saying that you would stand against and would fight any move by the federal government to impose a tax on a Saskatchewan Crown corporation. You come to an agreement with Mr. Trudeau in Ottawa behind closed doors and the first thing you do is give away on that principle, and you allow them to tax the power corporation and do more against the people of this province.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — We are hearing the member for Kindersley and not the member for Olds-Didsbury, but it sounds a good deal like the same line peddled by the members for Olds-Didsbury. I could understand why you would want to occupy that ground which is rapidly being eroded from underneath you in constituency after constituency. I understand why you want to recoup a bit of that, particularly in Kindersley.

I want to say that an examination of that agreement will make it perfectly clear that there is no admission of any right by the federal government to tax the Crown corporations. Indeed, we had commenced a legal action to make that clear until the federal government conceded that in the agreement. A reading of the agreement will make that clear. A further analysis of the constitutional situation will make it clear that the federal government could have applied that at the retail level (and I hope no one denies that, because they do it with respect to gasoline). We were faced with the question of whether or not the federal government should levy it at the retail level or whether we should collect it and remit it to the federal government as a grant in lieu of taxes. We did the latter. It cost no Saskatchewan citizen one extra penny and our legal position is firmly ensconced and admitted by the federal government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Interruption of Motion at Hour of Adjournment

MR. SPEAKER: — Prior to our normal hour of daily adjournment on December 9, 1981, we experienced an awkward moment which helped to demonstrate that parliamentary

procedure must always be adaptable to new circumstances and prepared to meet the challenge of the unexpected or the unanticipated. At that time, the Premier was on his feet to move a motion for which proper notice had been given. He was in the course of making his introductory remarks before moving the motion, when we reached the normal hour of adjournment. Although he indicated he had more to say, a motion to adjourn the debate would have been out of order, since the question was not yet before the House nor had any debate taken place. Therefore, the Chair was left with no alternative but to intervene, according to rule 3(3) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, 1981, that the Assembly adjourn.

As I indicated at the time, the situation posed a new problem for the Chair. Neither the rules nor the procedures of our Assembly address themselves specifically to a situation where a motion is taken up but not yet moved at the time of adjournment. I have checked with other Assemblies whose rules provide for compulsory hours of adjournment, but because of different procedures their practices do not offer practical guidance for our Assembly.

Furthermore, the parliamentary authorities are of limited help in this matter, although it is perhaps worth quoting Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice*, 19th Edition, page 375 on the moving of motions:

A member called upon to move a motion may speak in its favour before he actually proposes it. But a speech is only allowed upon the understanding, first, that he speaks to the motion; and, secondly, that he concludes by proposing his motion formally.

I have allowed the motion taken up on December 9, but not yet moved, to stand on the order paper, as I sensed the Assembly felt the hour of adjournment interrupted the mover.

Honourable members will notice that *Votes and Proceedings* for that day do not record any reference to the Premier's motion since that motion was not moved. I refer all hon. members to Sir Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice*, 19th Edition, page 374, which states:

If the mover of a motion or an amendment has not finished his speech when business is interrupted or postponed, or if the Speaker has not yet proposed the question on a motion or an amendment, no entry appears in the *Votes and Proceedings*, as the House is not put in possession of it.

However, I am disturbed about a potential but unintended abuse which arises from this situation. For instance, a member could give notice of a motion at a proper time, rise to speak and simply continue speaking until the adjournment hour, purposefully not moving the motion. Until the motion is moved, it is the property of the member in whose name it stands. Once moved, it is the property of the Assembly to debate and decide upon. The potential abuse of our rules here is that a member might take up a motion and speak to it but never move it, and thereby deny the Assembly the opportunity of dealing with it.

Taking into account the lack of precedents or direction from parliamentary authorities, it is incumbent upon me to guide the Assembly on this matter. First, I rule that the procedure used to deal with the motion which was taken up prior to the hour of

adjournment on December 9, 1981, not be considered a precedent of this Assembly. Second, I rule that since the motion in question remains on the order paper, the Hon. Premier may again take it up, continue his speech and move the motion in order to allow debate on the question.

This ruling will help to clarify this anomaly within our rules but will not prevent possible future problems of a similar nature; neither will it offer complete protection from abuse. Therefore I would like to remind all members that the House relies on your good will and respect for the rights of other members to debate and decide upon all topics that are raised in this Assembly. I would also like to suggest that when the rules of the Legislative Assembly are next reviewed this particular problem be studied.

MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to make one comment. I'm going to ask the Speaker a question of clarification if he wouldn't mind, after proceedings today. Did Mr. Speaker in his statement indicate that his ruling today was not to become a precedent? Was that stated? I would like that for clarification. And, if so, I have to ask Mr. Speaker how he could ever make a ruling and immediately rule that that ruling cannot be a precedent in the future. In fact, the whole parliamentary process . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! I think I get the intention of the member's comments. I think it's quite clear if the member will take the opportunity to read the ruling which I have worked through several times. He will find that it says that it is not a precedent as he related in his remarks. I think the ruling explains itself quite carefully. There is a situation here which could occur at some time in the future, and all that I intend to do at this time is stand by the ruling I've given to the House, which I believe is quite clear, and we can then move on to the next order of business.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Crow's Nest Rate

HON. MR. MacMurchy: — At the close of my remarks, I wish by leave of the Assembly to move the following motion:

That this Assembly, recognizing the grave social and economic implications of the federal government's attack on the crowrate, rejects the federal government's plan to abolish the statutory crowrate and replace it with a law designed to protect the railroads, and affirms the commitment of this legislature to the crowrate with its fundamental principles of a fixed rate for producers and equal rates for equal distance.

Mr. Speaker, before moving to my remarks, I wonder if I might have the opportunity to introduce to the Legislative Assembly some visitors from British Columbia and the province of Manitoba. They were in a meeting with me this morning with respect to the motion that we've just put before the Assembly. They are in the Speaker's gallery. I am pleased to introduce the Minister of Agriculture from British Columbia, the Hon. Jim Hewitt.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. MacMurchy: — The Minister of Highways and Transportation and the

Minister of Agriculture from the province of Manitoba, Sam Uskiw.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. MacMurchy: — We welcome the visitors from British Columbia and Manitoba. I may say that the Minister of Economic Development, the Hon. Hugh Planche, and the Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Dallas Schmidt, were with us also this morning from Alberta and had to return to their duties in the Alberta Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the matter before the Assembly is indeed a very, very important matter and I think I would like to move forward with my remarks.

In the province of Saskatchewan, we have been talking to farmers and rural people from the depth and breadth of the province — farmers and community people in Porcupine Plain, Birch Hills, Vanguard, Bengough, Kamsack, Foam Lake, Watrous, Southey, Biggar, Herbert, Rabbit Lake, Smeaton, Midale and Whitewood. These were meetings organized by the Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation. I was pleased indeed to see a number of members of the Legislative Assembly participate in those meetings and I was pleased to see that a number of the members of the Legislative Assembly opposite participated in the meetings. The hon. member for Arm River was, I believe, at two of the meetings himself. We welcomed the hon. member for Kindersley and the hon. member for Moosomin. I think the hon. member for Rosthern was at a meeting, was he not? No, I'm sorry. The hon. member for Rosetown-Elrose was at one of the meetings. We welcomed them to the meetings.

Mr. Speaker, we talked to farmers and rural community people in Manitoba, in Roblin and in Swan River, and in Alberta, in Grande Prairie and in Spirit River. Farmers and community people across Saskatchewan and in Manitoba and Alberta have a common concern and that concern relates to the federal government's plans to do away with the 1925 crowrate statute. The concern is that the law for the farmers is to be replaced by a law for the railways. So the question to be asked, Mr. Speaker, is: what does the 1925 statute mean to these farmers? Why are they so concerned across the Prairies? Well, it means two things, Mr. Speaker. One, it means a fixed rate in law for the farmer.

The prairie farmer in 1925 was a captive shipper to the railways. Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly I would argue that in 1982, likewise, he is a captive shipper to the railways. The farmer has no choice but to move his grain by rail to the ports of Thunder Bay, Prince Rupert, Vancouver and Churchill. The fixed rate allows the farmer to pick up the law of Canada and know what it is going to cost him to move his grain to those ports. Railways can't tamper with that rate because it is the law of the land.

The 1925 law not only provided a fixed rate, it provided a fixed rate on a per ton/mile basis. The fixed rate in law if the producers' protection against the greed of the railways. The fixed rate on a per ton/mile basis is what gives us the second feature of that 1925 law — equal rate for equal distance. Now, equal rate for equal distance gave the farmers of 1925 the delivery system. It gives the farmers of 1982 the delivery system because with a per ton/mile rate fixed in law, it doesn't matter where the producer lives — in the north or south part of the province, close to town or far away from town. It doesn't matter whether he lives on a weekly mainline or a weekly branch line, a tri-weekly branch line or a tri-monthly branch line, whatever. As long as the distance from the port is the same, the rate for transporting the grain is the same.

Equal rate for equal distance built the country elevator system. It is well known that the farmers of Saskatchewan built their own country elevator system — the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool — which handles about 60 per cent of the grain which is produced in the province of Saskatchewan. They built that system close to the producers. They built that system on branch lines, secondary mainlines and mainlines. Equal rate for equal distance built the family farms; it built the rural communities; it built the special fabric of Saskatchewan where the good times and the not so good times are shared and where people are always there when people need help.

Farmers on the Prairies are concerned because the Pepin plan destroys the fixed per ton/mile rate in law. In doing so it not only puts the producers at the mercy of the railways but it destroys the fundamental equal rate for equal distance principle and places the communities in jeopardy as well.

Mr. Speaker, in its place the Pepin plan guarantees:

1. Adequate compensation for the railways in law;
2. That the producers are going to pay more;
3. Over the long term, variable rates for farmers.

Mr. Speaker, I defy Mr. Pepin, the federal Minister of Transport, members of this Assembly, or anyone to show me a fixed rate per ton/mile commitment in the February 8 announcement. It is simply not there — the fixed per ton/mile rate is gone in the announcement. And without a fixed per ton/mile rate in law, equal rate for equal distance is gone and variable rates are just a step behind.

The federal minister, Mr. Pepin, denies that he has destroyed equal rate for equal distance. He says he can't deal with that question because it is being left to his negotiator. Yet the terms of reference published by the federal government for the negotiator clearly state that the negotiator is to work within the February 8 announcement. And the February 8 announcement, Mr. Speaker, destroys the fixed per ton/mile rate in law, and it replaces it with a statutory framework guaranteeing adequate compensation to the railways.

Mr. Speaker, the negotiator has no power to deal with the issue of a fixed per ton/mile rate in law. The federal minister has already said there won't be one. Mr. Pepin has already said that equal rate for equal distance is gone. What does the loss of the fixed rate in law and equal rate for equal distance mean to farmers? The fixed rate gone means that the producer will no longer be able to pick up the law and know what he is going to pay. Obviously he can't see it in the law of Canada. But more importantly, what does it mean he is going to pay? Based on the federal government's own figures, the cost to farmers will be 10 times crow or 13 times crow by 1990 — \$1.10 a bushel more than the farmer is now paying, or \$1.49 a bushel more than the farmer is now paying. Well, the federal minister in Regina last week calls this analysis of the Government of Saskatchewan scare stories, half truths, fibs, inflammatory remarks, funny figures. Well, I've been using them around this province and into Alberta and Manitoba, and not one farmer laughed at those funny figures.

He says (this federal minister) that the rate won't be 15 cents a bushel next year. He admits that. But neither will it be five times crow next year, so he says. Mr. Speaker, w

have never said, nor does our literature say, that it will be five times crow by next year. What we have said is that by the federal government's own figures it will be 10 times crow by 1990, or 13 times crow by 1990. And, Mr. Speaker, the federal minister, Mr. Pepin, has not denied that it will be 10 times crow by 1990, or 13 times crow by 1990. The federal government says it will not be 5 times crow next year, in the 1982-83 crop year, because the federal government will cushion the increase for some period of time. Well, the key question is: how long will the federal government cushion the increases?

Well, the federal minister, Mr. Pepin, announced on February 8 guarantees guaranteeing a cushion of \$612 million for four years to 1985. If he cushions the increase for four years, the rate to the farmer by 1990 will be 13 times crow. But, Mr. Pepin says that the \$612 million is indefinite. If the federal government continues its payment of \$612 million per year to 1990, the rate to the farmer will be 10 times crow by 1990. So, if the federal government's contribution continues to 1990, it is 10 times crow; if the federal contribution ends after four years, it is 13 times crow.

Both of these scenarios are explored in our Save the Crow pamphlet which has gone to Saskatchewan people — a copy of which I will be glad to table in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Now, to Mr. Pepin, the federal minister who says we shouldn't use such scare stories, we point out that all the analysis in the Saskatchewan materials in this booklet is based on figures released in his February 8 announcement.

Just to sum up, Mr. Speaker. No fixed rate in law means that the farmers in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta pay 10 times crow or 13 times crow by 1990. Prairie farmers, who return \$5.6 billion annually to the nation's balance of payments, who are farther from port than any of their competitors in the world market place, will once again be at the mercy of the railways.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what about the loss of equal rate for equal distance? I want to tell you that the farmers across this province, Manitoba and Alberta understand the meaning of equal rate for equal distance. Without that fixed per ton/mile rate in law, the railways can charge higher rates on the branch lines than on the main lines — 10 cents a bushel, 15 cents a bushel, 20 cents a bushel more on the branch lines. Farmers would have no choice but to haul to that main line. Without that fixed rate (fixed per ton/mile rate) in law, the railways could offer discounts at one elevator or one community over another. So the branch lines aren't secure without equal rate for equal distance. Those who live on the main lines will not be secure without the equal rate for equal distance in law. Discounts to the inland terminals and discounts for the unit trains are what you can see in the future because the Pepin plan destroys the fixed per ton/mile rate in favour of economy and efficiency. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker and members of this Assembly, when I hear the words economy and efficiency as they relate to grain movement by rail I see two pictures in my mind — the inland terminal and the unit train.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, the farmer would have no choice but to pass his own community to haul to another centre, to pass his own community and communities and haul to the inland terminals.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Transport Commission, last Tuesday in Prince Albert, issued

a decision to adjourn all the branch line hearings until a decision is made with respect to the crowrate and the implications of the Pepin plan. The Canadian Transport Commission understands the implications of the Pepin plan for branch lines on the Prairies. The Canadian Transport Commission understands that without the principle of equal rate for equal distance, without a fixed per ton/mile rate in law, its many hours of listening and deliberation, its decisions and recommendations to preserve specific lines would be meaningless.

Mr. Speaker, with the Pepin plan the railways will finally have gained what the railways have been after — control to rewrite the map of rural Saskatchewan. I say this because the railways will decide which rail lines live and which rail lines die. The railways will decide which communities stay and which communities go. This announcement of five weeks ago today by the federal Minister of Transport, Mr. Pepin, gives them this control because it destroys the law for farmers and it replaces it with a law for the railways.

Mr. Speaker, in this plan, in this announcement, there are really only two sides. Either you are on the side of the farmers of the Prairies or you are on the side of the federal Minister of Transport, Mr. Pepin, and his buddies the railways. I want to say that the farmers of Saskatchewan are prepared to fight the Pepin plan. It becomes clear in our meetings that over 95 per cent of the farmers oppose the Pepin plan and are prepared to fight for their historic right to a fixed rate per ton/mile in statute — fixed per ton/mile rate which protects them from exploitation by the railways, a fixed per ton/mile rate which gives them equal rate for equal distance.

Mr. Speaker, at some of the rural meetings which we held, there were people who stood up and said, “Well, you really can’t do anything about this; it’s all done. let’s talk about something else.” To those we can’t say anything but that you are on the side of the railways and we’re on the side of the farmers. There are some who say that the government shouldn’t embark on an all-out campaign to get this plan stopped. To those I say that for every 100 bushels of grain that goes into the international market from Canada, Saskatchewan produces 60 bushels. Alberta produces 25 bushels and Manitoba produces 15 bushels. If anyone thinks that Saskatchewan should not take the leadership to put out an all-out campaign to get the Pepin plan stopped, then he is on the side of Pepin instead of on the side of the farmers. I say in this Assembly that this government shares with the former chief justice of the province of Saskatchewan, Emmett Hall, the conviction that the Canadian Wheat Board, as well as the statutory crowrate, is a source of stability and prosperity for prairie farmers. This government shares with Mr. Hall the concern that if the crowrate is gone the destruction of the Canadian Wheat Board will not be far behind. And to those who say we shouldn’t embark on an all-out campaign to get the Pepin plan stopped in order to protect the statutory crowrate and to protect the Canadian Wheat Board, I say you’re not on the side of the farmers, you’re on the side of Pepin and the railways.

Mr. Speaker, I can in this House respect those who say where they stand. But, Mr. Speaker, one can have no respect for the dishonesty of those who do not have the courage to say where they stand with respect to the Pepin plan. The job, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely clear given the implications of the Pepin plan. But the job is also to find a way to ensure we have a modern rail system while leaving that crow statute intact for the farmers.

Mr. Speaker, we put forward a solution. The Saskatchewan alternative would ensure a modern rail system through a direct equity investment in system improvements. But the federal Minister of Transport says our direct equity investment concept would have us

owning 100 per cent of the finest money losing enterprise in the country. I ask this question in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker: are Saskatchewan grain hopper cars, which this year will carry 45 million bushels of grain to port on behalf of prairie producers, returning \$330 million, a money losing enterprise? And consider that these cars will carry that grain every year for 40 years.

I ask in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, are prairie branch lines, rehabilitated to carry farmers' grain from local delivery points to export, money losing enterprises? And is it a money losing enterprise to say that the people of Canada should begin to own and control what the people of Canada have financed for the last 100 years?

We on this side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, say that there is a way to ensure a modern rail system and keep the law for the farmers intact. That way, Mr. Speaker, means stopping the Pepin plan. And in this fight there are only two sides — the side of the farmer or the side of the railways. The federal government and the federal minister, Mr. Pepin, have chosen the railways — against the side of the farmers with a statute containing a fixed per ton/mile rate, with adequate compensation guaranteed in law for the movement of grain.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I say to this Assembly, Allan Blakeney, our Deputy Premier, Roy Romanow, and every member on this side of the Assembly stands squarely on the side of the farmers against the Pepin plan. I leave it to the members opposite to indicate in this Assembly where they stand. I am very pleased to move, seconded by the hon. member for Saltcoats, the Minister of Rural Affairs:

That this Assembly, recognizing the grave social and economic implications of the federal government's attack on the crowrate, rejects the federal government's plan to abolish the statutory crowrate and replace it with a law designed to protect the railroads, and affirms the commitment of this legislature to the crowrate with its fundamental principles of a fixed rate for producers and equal rates for equal distance.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. KAEDING: — Mr. Speaker, it is with a deep sense of concern over the future of our province that I rise to second the resolution introduced in this Assembly by my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture. This resolution voices the rejection by the province of Saskatchewan of Mr. Pepin's plan, a plan to do away with the fundamental principles of the crowrate.

Mr. Speaker, we in Saskatchewan are well aware of the need to improve the rail system and we are aware of the need to guarantee adequate future capacity of the system which moves our grain. We have long held the view that these improvements to rail capacity — improvements vital to the development of agricultural industry — can most reasonably be made through a program of public investment. This public investment, Mr. Speaker, will allow Canadians to own what we are paying for and have been paying for the past 100 years, and this public investment will guarantee the future capacity required to move our grain, so as ably indicated by the Minister of Agriculture.

But, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pepin holds a different view. He tells us that to provide an economic, efficient railway system we must remove the crow. He tells us that the farmers must pay the costs. He tells us that we cannot have equal rates for equal

distance. He tells us that the farmer cannot have a guaranteed rate. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, why Mr. Pepin holds this view?

It is clear to us in Saskatchewan that Mr. Pepin believes that in the long run the farmer and his neighbours must assume the full cost of grain movement. He holds this view in spite of the massive resource wealth and public monies given to the railways in recognition of their responsibility to move grain under the crow. Mr. Pepin holds this view. Mr. Speaker, despite his willingness to subsidize air travel and other transportation services close to \$1 billion annually and despite his willingness to accept the heavy drain on the national economy created by the tariff protection afforded to eastern industry and by subsidies of eastern oil.

Mr. Speaker, we can only conclude that Mr. Pepin either fails to understand or chooses to ignore the importance of the principles in the crowrate for the province of Saskatchewan. The Minister of Agriculture has already spoken about the importance of the crowrate to the producer. He has outlined the direct costs of the Pepin plan to our farmers — a direct increase in payments for transportation of \$15,000 per farm by 1990 even if the federal government continues to pay \$600 million into the system. That is a payment which we feel is by no way guaranteed.

I would like to turn for a moment to some other costs in the Pepin plan, social and economic costs that are not so apparent or at least not apparent to Mr. Pepin. What are these other costs? Well, Mr. Speaker, we in Saskatchewan, rural and urban dwellers alike, are well aware of our dependence on the agricultural economy. The effects of the increased costs to move our grain under Mr. Pepin's plan will be felt widely across this province. For every dollar the producer must pay in increased railway charges, consumer spending will fall about 64 cents. Farm investments will fall by 38 cents. Housing construction would fall by 13 cents. savings and taxes would be reduced by something like 9 cents. Mr. Speaker, we are talking in total about annual losses to Saskatchewan farmers, merchants and others of something like \$1.4 billion annually, even if the federal funding continues.

Under Mr. Pepin's plan, the town of Langenburg in my constituency could well lose somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$1 million in farm income alone. Its merchants could lose something like \$300,000 in retail sales, and \$500,000 in farm investment could be lost. Yes, Mr. Pepin's plan promotes serious financial hardship for our farmers, but, Mr. Speaker, in turn, it will cause hardship to all of our residents.

The Pepin plan assures the producer that he would pay more, much more, to move his grain. In addition, it fails to assure the fundamental principle of equal rate for equal distance. The railways set free by Mr. Pepin's plan could charge higher rates on lines they wish to abandon, and could charge different rates on the same line to consolidate their delivery points. I see farmers forced to haul their grain long distances with large trucks, and I see them hauling their grain to centralized delivery points chosen by the railway.

What will these long heavy hauls do to our road system? All of us who have driven an oil road used by heavy trucks have felt the result. Mr. Speaker, as a result of Mr. Pepin's plan we will need to undertake a massive upgrading of our roads to handle this grain truck traffic, or we may have to let them return to gravel because they certainly can't stand that kind of punishment. We already have evidence of the mounting road costs caused by modest elevator consolidation and rail line abandonment. That was very evident at the rural municipal conference which just ended last week.

A recent study prepared by my department shows that we will see only very modest increases in the costs of maintaining highways and municipal roads if we are successful in increasing our grain production by 50 per cent. You simply translate the 50 per cent additional production; the costs will not go up a great deal. However, Mr. Speaker, when you combine increased production with the consolidation of our grain transportation system already approved through the abandonment of 1,460 miles of branch line, the story changes and increased costs begin to show up very significantly. Our figures show that under that scenario it would cost an additional \$4.6 million per year for our municipal roads, plus approximately \$5.3 million per year to upgrade our provincial highway system. That's a total of \$9.9 million in increased costs alone, Mr. Speaker, and that's only as a result of only minor consolidation of our grain handling system.

What one must then ask, Mr. Speaker, is: what will be the cost of providing a road network required to move our grain under the Pepin plan, under a centralized system — a plan that will lead to a centralized grain transportation network forced on farmers through variable rates? The answer, Mr. Speaker, is amazing indeed. Our closest calculations show the additional costs of putting in the highways and municipal roads required under Mr. Pepin's railway design delivery system would be something in the neighbourhood of \$3.3 billion. Even if we were to stretch this out over a period of 20 years, as is the customary when you are dealing with road systems, it would mean that there would be a cost of something like \$165 million per year simply for construction of roads. Add to that another \$55 million per year in annual maintenance costs and you come up with a cost to each Saskatchewan farmer, on an average basis, of something like \$3,700 per year in higher taxes and in hauling costs. That's \$3,700 over and above the more than \$15,000 for increased railway charges, as the Minister of Agriculture has pointed out, and over and above the staggering costs to our merchants, contractors, and other businessmen.

Yet Mr. Pepin tells us that his plan will be good for the Saskatchewan economy. Yes, it will be good economics for the railways. But I haven't met a farmer yet, Mr. Speaker, and I've talked to a lot of them, who believes it will be good for the province.

Mr. Speaker, the statutory crowrate does two things. It gives the producers a fixed rate, in statute, that can't be tampered with by the railways — a guaranteed rate.

It also gives us equal rates for equal distance. Equal rates for equal distance guaranteed that elevators could be built close to the farmers, and the rates to port would be the same for the same distance.

The country elevator system resulted from this set of principles. The family farms and our rural communities grew up around the country elevator system, and the family farm and our rural communities gave us the world's most efficient producers of prairie grain. They gave us our Saskatchewan way of life — a way of life which we all value.

Rural Saskatchewan is not only a good place to grow wheat, Mr. Speaker, but it is a darned good place to live, because of the people and what we have built. We have fought the battle to preserve and even enhance the quality of life in the rural areas of our province. We don't think it should be preserved without change. We don't think that is either desirable or possible, but we want to preserve much of what is good in our rural way of life.

Mr. Speaker, people in rural Saskatchewan have been willing to work for their communities to build the community rink or the recreation hall, or in hundreds of other ways. Our government has worked alongside our residents to preserve our rural way of life. We have adopted policies to support their efforts, and it does take that extra effort, Mr. Speaker — often more money and more work — to provide services in smaller centres. We know that.

As a government, we have supported smaller schools, smaller hospitals, and care for senior citizens in smaller communities.

In addition to the regular per-pupil grants for schools, we added another \$13 million this year to help maintain education in rural Saskatchewan, in those areas which are sparsely populated and where enrolments are declining.

Mr. Speaker, we know that people living in rural areas, such as in my constituency of Saltcoats, want facilities such as gymnasiums, resource centres, and shops in their schools. We help to finance those, like the new gymnasium in Stockholm, the library in Dubuc and the new industrial arts shops in Esterhazy. All of these are on rail lines which could well be in jeopardy if Mr. Pepin's plan were to become a reality.

We know that it is going to cost more to deliver health services in smaller centres. It costs \$105 daily per patient to provide hospital care in the town of Langenburg, and only \$85 per patient-day in a larger centre such as Esterhazy, or perhaps \$100 in a place such as Melville. We know we have to take this into account when we fund hospital care. We know it will cost more to provide special care for our senior citizens in smaller communities. So we take that into account, because we place a high value on our rural way of life. We do this, Mr. Speaker, because our government reflects the high value our Saskatchewan people place on our rural communities. Mr. Pepin and his colleagues fail to understand that, or they choose to ignore it.

They did not understand it when we fought to keep our branch lines open, and when we fought to keep our elevator system. But, Mr. Speaker, we made them understand then, and we will do it again. Make no mistake — if the principle of equal rate for equal distance is lost, we will lose many of our branch lines. We will lose many of our elevators. What we will have is a centralized system designed by the railroads and forced on Saskatchewan through variable rates. What we will lose is a way of life.

We know that today the job of building our rural communities is tough, but we do it, and we do it because the rewards are great. Mr. Speaker, our rural communities, particularly on branch lines, will have an even more difficult time staying alive under Mr. Pepin's plan. I am deeply concerned about the future Mr. Pepin and the railways would create for our province — a future where each farmer would pay over \$15,000 more to move his grain by 1990. He would pay and pay dearly to move his grain while continuing to subsidize air travel, eastern industry and oil imported for eastern use — a future that would see farmers with no statutory rate for moving grain, a future of uncertainty. Mr. Speaker, under Mr. Pepin's plan I see the future of the family farm and the social and economic fabric of rural Saskatchewan threatened. I see our rural communities and a way of life sacrificed in the interests of more profits for the railways.

Now, I know Mr. Pepin, in his speech the other day, said that we are alarmists, Mr. Speaker. He said that only variable rates that will not harm the producer would be allowed. But here again I think we see the core of the problem. We in Saskatchewan know that any variable rate will harm the producer and we know that any variable rate

will harm our rural communities. Mr. Pepin does not seem to understand this, or he chooses to ignore it.

We are deeply concerned about the loss of the crowrate principle of equal rate for equal distance and a statutory rate for shipping grain, and what it will mean for our province.

But we are not alone in this concern, Mr. Speaker. It is a concern shared widely across the province of Saskatchewan. Last week I had the opportunity to spend a great deal of time with the reeves and councillors of Saskatchewan's rural municipalities during their annual convention. They, too, are concerned. The leaders of our rural municipalities considered very carefully the whole range of issues, Mr. Speaker. They listened to all points of view. They heard government speakers and they heard Mr. Pepin and gave him a quiet but I know a cool hearing on Friday morning.

Mr. Pepin, in his address to the SARM convention, attempted once again to convince farmers that increasing rates would be good for them. He attempted to ridicule statements made by our government and by the Minister of Agriculture, statements which indicate that under the Pepin plan rail rates might soon reach five times the crow.

He gave some examples, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister of Agriculture has already alluded to that. He suggested that next year's rate would be higher than 15 cents per bushel, maybe 50 per cent higher or about 23 cents per bushel. And he said that would cost farmers something in the neighbourhood of \$750 each. He said that he didn't think that would be an unacceptable burden to the average farmer. But he also went on to say that his proposal would contemplate annual adjustments based on inflation.

Now assuming that this 8 cents per bushel increase, which he thought would be reasonable for next year, is compounded regularly for five years, then the rate, even according to Mr. Pepin's figures, could well be close to 65 cents per bushel by the year 1986, or about five times the crowrate.

There would be an additional cost, Mr. Speaker, of something like \$4,500 — I'm sorry, Mr. Thatcher — not significantly different from the statistics quoted by Mr. MacMurchy.

Also noticeable by its absence, Mr. Speaker, was any reference in Mr. Pepin's speech to equal rates for equal distance, one of the major concerns of farm organizations. When Mr. Pepin was pressed in the question period he would only say that Dr. Gilson would give no assurance that variable rates would not be instituted. And, Mr. Speaker, I might say that that particular issue was not lost on the people at the SARM convention.

Well, Mr. Speaker, maybe Mr. Pepin has confidence in Mr. Gilson's ability to deal with this issue. But I regret that 90 per cent of Saskatchewan farmers do not — particularly if he is going to take advice from the Western Commodity Coalition, the Western Barley Growers or the Canadian Cattlemen's Association.

After listening to Mr. Pepin and after giving very careful consideration to this issue, what did the reeves and councillors of our rural municipalities conclude, Mr. Speaker? They concluded, as I have, Mr. Speaker, that the Pepin plan would spell disaster for our province. To add their support to the fight to save the crow the members of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities at their convention passed a resolution directing their leadership to promote the official position of their group. That

position is stated pretty clearly. It says that the crow is not negotiable.

Mr. Speaker, we know where we on this side of the House stand on the issue of crowrates. We stand where we always have: squarely behind the majority of Saskatchewan farmers, who don't want to negotiate away the protection of the crowrate.

But we are not so sure, Mr. Speaker, where the Liberals or the Tories stand on this issue. Liberal leader Ralph Goodale tells us that he opposes changes to the crow. Mr. Goodale also opposes the changes in Mr. MacEachen's budget. He also opposed Mr. Lalonde in his energy program. In fact, if you listen to Mr. Goodale speak, he opposes just about everything that his Liberal counterparts in Ottawa are doing. One has to wonder by what measure of credibility he calls himself a Liberal at all. Either he is right and the rest of them are wrong or he is in the wrong party.

But the PCs are even harder to figure out. Grant Devine, in his learned writings as a professor and economist at the university, found no end of reasons to criticize the crowrate concept and spent a great deal of his time explaining why it was disadvantageous to western farmers.

But now that he is a politician, he contradicts his earlier announcements and says that he can't be held accountable for what he earlier said or what he earlier believed. I doubt, Mr. Speaker, whether western farmers can be coerced into believing that kind of doubletalk.

We look at the organizations which are so eagerly embracing the Pepin plan and, not surprisingly, they are organizations strongly backed by well-known PCs and Liberals who would like nothing better than the destruction of our orderly marketing system and the statutory rate.

I quote from one PC MP who said they will have to keep their heads down until after the Saskatchewan election so as not to embarrass their provincial party, but will be able to come out and show their true position thereafter. That doesn't add very much to the confidence western farmers will feel in the Tory position no matter how enthusiastically they now claim to support the crow.

Actions speak louder than words, Mr. Speaker, and we will be watching very closely the performance of both the provincial and the federal PCs in the weeks ahead as this debate continues.

I want to urge all members of this Assembly to join with our government, our rural municipalities, our farm groups and our residents in supporting this resolution. I urge all members to support the fight, not just to keep a law but to keep a way of life in Saskatchewan. I know, Mr. Speaker, that you have observed that I'll be supporting the resolution. Thank you.

MR. BERNTSON: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the tone of the Minister of Agriculture when he brought this motion to the House today. I thought he kept it relatively on the high road, a vastly different tune than he was singing around the province with MacMurchy's travelling road show which cost the Government of Saskatchewan \$77,000 for only one month and which he claims was his defence of crow. That's exactly what it was, Mr. Speaker. It was that minister's defence of crow and not the

defence of crow that should have come from Saskatchewan, from this Legislative Assembly. That \$77,000 should more properly show up on the election expenses he turns in to the New Democratic Party.

I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, how this motion in fact came to the floor of this House. The Attorney General will know. He got the message from the Premier while he was in Saskatoon the other day that something is happening down in Regina, we should be paying attention to it.

Let me just quote the Premier. On December 5, 1979, in this House he called for a guarantee on crow because it was a 1979 election promise of the federal Progressive Conservative Party. He also said:

We expect the opposition in this Legislature to stand with us in demanding that crow be protected.

In that same speech, the Premier called on the federal Minister of Transport, Don Mazankowski, to guarantee that the railway system moved grain. The Premier's words were:

We expect him to act and act decisively and act soon.

AN HON. MEMBER: —When was that?

MR. BERNTSON: — That was December 5, 1979. You have to wonder just how sincere he was when eight days later his federal NDP colleagues voted with the Trudeau Liberals to bring that government of Don Mazankowski down. It also seems strange, Mr. Speaker, that only one year ago, on a very important matter facing the people of Canada and the people of Saskatchewan at the opening of the spring session, the Premier (once he had made up what his position was on the constitutional question, which seemed to take quite some time) climbed down off the fence and said:

We have to put this motion because I believe it represents something that everyone in this House can support. It represents a position which will be widely supported by people across Saskatchewan. We believe this is the best way to go. All of us could state in ringing prose our own position but that is to invite division in this House when we are looking for support from all sides of this House.

That is what he said on the question of the constitution, but the difference was that he wasn't on the eve of a provincial general election when the constitutional question was before us. So he sends the MacMurchy road show out on the hustings — publicly funded — to whip up the emotions of the people of Saskatchewan when every political party in Saskatchewan and the vast majority of the people of Saskatchewan are essentially on the same side of the question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: — You guys have about as much respect for this House as the Liberals in Ottawa. The Liberals in Ottawa didn't even have the decency to bring this question of crow to the House of Commons. The policy statement on rail transportation by the Hon. Mr. Pepin was made in the city of Winnipeg by a minister who sits in a government that doesn't have one representative from the agricultural community in western Canada.

This is a very important matter to the people of western Canada and it appears in Saskatchewan also that the parliamentary process and parliamentary committees are going to be ignored until, through some cunning of the opposition, we develop the strategy to get you finally to put a motion, so that crow can be debated in this House and a unified, unfragmented voice is sent to Ottawa.

I would like to deal briefly with the proposal introduced by the federal Minister of Transport. First it sets out to abandon the existing statutory freight rate that commits the government to a level of funding equal to the 1981-82 railway revenue shortfall and it calls upon producers to meet any future cost increases beyond the 1981-82 shortfall in negotiations with the railways. We must think about that for a minute, Mr. Speaker. What chance do producers have negotiating freight rates with the railways? Governments have tried. Giant corporations have tried. It would be very difficult indeed. That is a serious weakness in the federal crow proposal.

While acknowledging, Mr. Speaker, the importance of the federal government's commitment to meet the current shortfall, I have to say that we cannot accept a freight rate structure that will have an open-ended escalation clause that would result in increased charges being put on the backs of producers. I think they call it a statutory framework as opposed to a statutory rate, not too much unlike the statutory framework introduced by this government in our gasoline road tax in Saskatchewan. There is no way that we accept either one, Mr. Speaker. A statutory framework is a statutory framework and unacceptable to this side of the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: — Nor can this party accept the removal of the statutory freight rate insurance. This would have the effect of relieving the railways of a continuing obligation and shift it onto the backs of the producers as well. Mr. Speaker, the farmers of Saskatchewan and the farmers of western Canada simply cannot afford it. It is estimated that next year farm income will drop by 15 per cent. Statistics reveal, Mr. Speaker, that fuel costs will rise by 25 per cent in 1982. This is on top of a 63 per cent increase in the last two years. This amounts to an 89 per cent increase in fuel prices over a three-year period. Between 55 cents and 60 cents of that fuel price increase goes to the coffers of governments. It is a massive rip-off, Mr. Speaker, and on the backs of the producers.

Farmers simply cannot afford the additional cost that would come out of the Pepin proposal. We are being strangled at the present time by high interest costs, energy costs, fertilizer costs, machinery costs, and chemical costs. Most of those conditions are the products of governments at both levels. The farmers in fact, Mr. Speaker, are facing reduced commodity prices. I understand that no. 1 wheat in Minneapolis last week was about \$3.30. All of this is causing serious hardship to the agricultural community of western Canada. The additional freight rate would simply add to that burden.

Mr. Speaker, the anomalies of freight rates between processed and unprocessed products must also be resolved. We have said, as well, that this can be done and must only be done with the provision that there is full and adequate consultation with the producers of Canada. Furthermore, we believe as well that the railroads should not be relieved of their statutory obligations. We believe they have an ongoing obligation, and

should continue to shoulder that ongoing obligation. We believe as well, Mr. Speaker, that the federal government had an ongoing responsibility in addition to the provisions of the 1981-82 shortfall, because there are several artificial and natural advantages that our competing countries have when it comes to getting our fair share of the export market potential.

We believe that export grain is a very major contributor to the balance of payments, and this is an issue that has to have support in financial terms, in marketing terms, and in moral terms, in ensuring that we can maintain healthy production in the export market of grains. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, contrary to the position taken by this government, I believe very strong arguments can be made for no further payments to the railways until they at least demonstrate that they have installed adequate capacity, that they have put in place the kind of performance that will assure the producers that they will deliver the grain on time in a reliable and effective fashion and I stress, Mr. Speaker, to the satisfaction of the producers.

The proposal advanced by the members opposite of injecting \$2.1 billion into the CPR does not move one additional bushel of grain and, in fact, it is a further burden to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. Some people believe that the Crow's Nest Pass freight rates have always been a losing proposition for the railways. I want to tell the House that the Crow's Nest freight rates have not been a losing proposition, and were not for the first 35 years. Up until about 1967 the Crow's Nest freight rate was in fact a compensatory rate. The railways made money on it. They built vast empires during that period of time. And to suggest, as this government does, that we should be injecting \$2.1 billion into the CPR I think borders on lunacy.

People will argue that for the federal treasury to pick up the crow gap is quite a bit of money and that it will tax the federal treasury far too much. I don't believe that to be the case. The federal government is extracting a substantial amount of revenue out of western Canada in the form of energy taxes, \$51 billion or \$52 billion over the next five years, and that's in addition to the grants in lieu of taxes that our Premier saw fit to dump into the federal coffers as well. Every time a farmer fills up his tractor or combine between 55 and 60 cents of every gallon of fuel that goes into that machine goes into the federal treasury. That's almost outright confiscation against our food producers, and an additional burden the farmer simply cannot afford. And the Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan wants to buy a railroad. He has a heritage trust fund in Saskatchewan and he want to buy the CPR. The minister wants to pay taxpayers' dollars in a way which will not improve the transportation system one iota. It won't move one additional bushel of wheat. Here again, he is prepared to tax the people of Saskatchewan to fund a major portion of the freight bill to move Saskatchewan grain which, in fact, is getting around the crow.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the presentation made by the Minister of Agriculture today was vastly different from the one that he has made around the hustings over the last several weeks. I say to you also, Mr. Speaker, that I am pleased that the government House Leader did, in fact, overrule the Minister of Agriculture and propose a motion that could be supported by this House so that our voice would reach Ottawa in a unified fashion — not the fragmented partisan gobbledygook that the Minister of Agriculture was trying to send down to Ottawa at the cost of \$77,000 of taxpayers' funds. But if you understand where they're coming from, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister of Rural Affairs . . .

AN HON. MEMBER: — Is that Premier Devine we're talking about?

MR. BERNTSON: — I'm glad he raised that. Talking about credibility and quotes and the minister for Sask Power or the minister of increased power rates or whatever talking about Dr. Devine's quotes. I want first to deal with a couple of quotes in your happy little NDP rage. The first one says (and this is comparing freight rates — crow versus compensatory rates):

In Canada, at Canora, Saskatchewan, it is 27 cents per hundred weight . In Minot, North Dakota, it is \$2.33 per hundred weight.

There's no question, Mr. Speaker, that from Minot, North Dakota, it's vastly more than it is from Canora, Saskatchewan, but, in fact, in Minot, North Dakota, today, it is about \$1.40 per hundred weight and no way near the \$2.33 you want.

But the interesting one is the quote you credit to my colleague, the member for Rosetown-Elrose. December 3, 1980, you credit a quote to my colleague, the member for Rosetown-Elrose. What were they talking about in *Hansard* that day? Everything but crow. You can look that page up, down and sideways and you won't find the member for Rosetown-Elrose quoted there anywhere.

They also go to great lengths, Mr. Speaker, to quote from the *Agricultural Science Bulletin*. The *Agricultural Science Bulletin* is published by the Division of Extension and Community Relations, University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon and they quoted from this . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, they did and I am prepared to provide you with copies although I'm sure you have them; you just haven't read them all.

In any case, this is a quote from the *Agricultural Science Bulletin*:

Conceptually the manner in which the Mississippi River system is financed and operated offers a possible development alternative applicable to the Prairies. The federal government in the U.S. spends considerable public funds on the maintenance and development of the Mississippi transport system. In summary perhaps (and he is comparing it to the Prairies) the entire economic development of the prairie region needs to be reviewed as we modify and adapt our transportation system to meet the expected needs of the twenty-first century. It would seem that equitable access, federal financing and full economic development are necessary prerequisites to the generation of an acceptable transportation system for western Canada.

And that of course is one Dr. Devine from the same *Agricultural Science Bulletin* which you pulled all your quotes from. All I'm saying is that your credibility is being tested and it was best set out in an editorial, Mr. Speaker, in the *Leader-Post* last Saturday, when it said.

If the NDP government's real intention were to mount opposition to crow, it would be intent upon garnering support for that cause anywhere it might come from, including the opposition, as it did on the constitution. And once the Legislative Assembly reconvenes next week the government also would want to be able to present the federal government a unanimously supported bipartisan resolution on the crow of the type presented by PC House Leader, Eric Berntson. If the Blakeney government fails to accept such support and if it continues to wield its political crowbar at the opposition rather than in Ottawa, it will provide further evidence that the NDP's real intent is to use

crow to peck away at the foe within rather than the one without.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BERNTSON: — The government's political opportunism has become transparently obvious. Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I am pleased that the New Democratic House Leader overruled the Minister of Agriculture and brought this motion to the floor and it will receive the support of this side of the House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. CODY: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say it is an extreme pleasure for me to be here today to rise and work on this great debate, particularly on behalf of my fine constituents in the Kinistino constituency.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. CODY: — Mr. Speaker, before I begin my main remarks I just want to say a few things about what the Leader of the Opposition had to say. It was very interesting, to say the least. He talked about the Minister of Agriculture and the public road show. He says the minister is out there with a public road show to whip up support for the crow. Surely we want to whip up support for the crow. Obviously they don't; otherwise they would be saying that it's good to have a road show, it's good to have people out there, it's good to have meetings. But what are they saying over there? They say, "All you're doing is whipping up support for the crow." You bet we're whipping up support for the crow and it's coming our way every day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. CODY: — He says in the Pepin plan it says something to the effect that the farmers negotiate with the railways. Well, I'll tell you something. In our plan there are no farmers negotiating with the railways or anything else — the crow stays!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. CODY: — There is no negotiation. We have said from the onset that we will have no part in negotiation . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I know they would like to see the farmer negotiate with the railways. I know the member for Thunder Creek would like to see people negotiate with Pepin. I know he would like to see his friends in the Palliser Wheat Growers' Association negotiate, but we in the New Democratic Party, and particularly those in the government on this side of the House, say there will be no negotiations on the crowrate.

Mr. Speaker, it was the most interesting speech I've heard in a good number of years. You are supposed to be here talking on a resolution to retain the crow. It's supposed to be a resolution which all parties and all people in this House are onside with. But what did he talk about? Did he talk about the crow? I barely heard him mention the word "crow," number one. Number tow, I barely heard him say the words "statutory" and "to retain the statutory rate." No, I'll tell you what he talked about. He talked about the constitution. He talked about oil agreements. He talked about the cost of production. He talked about interest rates, and he talked about reduced prices.

Now why don't we talk about the crow. That's what this resolution is all about. But I can

tell you the PCs in Saskatchewan, led by Dr. Devine, are scared to talk about the crow, and there's no question about that.

He says also that the Minister of Agriculture today was soft. He said he was certainly softer than he was when he was out on the hustings. This is what he said: "His presentation was vastly different than on the hustings." Well, I can tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that we at least were out there talking to the farmers. I want to ask the Tory opposition today: how many meetings have you called? You haven't called one — not one official meeting has been called by your spokesman. How many meetings has the critic of the Department of Agriculture called? No, he didn't call one. He didn't even go to one, Mr. Speaker. I think it's tremendous to think that the Minister of Agriculture saw fit to go out and hold 16 meetings amongst the public of Saskatchewan. And what have you done? You haven't called on meeting . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition went on to say, "I'm going to now show you the NDP rag." Well, I'll tell you what. It's a good informational piece. And I can tell you we're getting just dozens and dozens of letters and phone calls saying that that is tremendous information, the kind of information that is wanted. That's exactly what they're saying to us.

He went on to quote, "You show in your pamphlets the rates from Canora to be 77 cents, and you say that the rate in Minot is \$2.33." Then he took the next couple of minutes, Mr. Speaker, to try to defend the railways and the large grain companies in the United States, saying they're not gouging the farmer as much as that. No, it's probably only \$1.40. Well, I'll tell you, if you want to haul a bushel of grain to Minot and you want to transport it to the Lakehead, you're going to pay \$2.33. There's no question. But I'll tell you what they've done. They have gone to some of their friends and advocates who advocate two things: one, they advocate unit trains; two, they advocate inland terminals. And if you go to some of the big grain companies in the United States you will find that the rate system down there may well produce the rate you're saying, but that's for unit trains and inland terminals. We're saying it's \$2.33 for the ordinary individual; that's what it is.

Mr. Speaker, it didn't take very long for this House to find out exactly where the Tories stand on the crowrate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. CODY: — It is a far cry different when a member from this side of the House stands up and when a member from that side of the House stands up. We don't have to squirm in our seats for fear of having to hear some of the comments by the Leader of the Opposition or by their leader, Devine, quoted back. We can stand in this Assembly with pride and listen to comments made by the Minister of Agriculture and the Premier.

The members opposite in their stand on the crowrate remind me of a parable in the Bible, where the man built his house upon the quicksand. Mr. Speaker, the Tory house has begun to sink. There is no question about that. It is sinking and the rats are fleeing. The rats are fleeing the sinking ship, just as the Liberal ship was sinking in the early 1970s. Only this time instead of the rats jumping to the Tories, they are jumping to the Western Canada Concept and the Unionests or whatever they call themselves today.

Mr. Speaker, despite what may be going on with the members of the party opposite, we

in the New Democratic Party, both federally and provincially, stand clearly opposed to any change to the crowrate. You can ask my colleague back here and he will say the same thing to you.

In the past short while, Mr. Speaker, I have read with interest the Tories' attempts to mislead the public on this issue. I suppose it shouldn't be a surprise to me that they are misleading the public because it was just about two or three weeks ago now that their leader in essence told the people of this province through the *Leader-Post* that as a politician he didn't have to tell the truth. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is what he said in the *Leader-Post*: that as a politician he didn't have to tell the truth. First it was Colver and the dirty hospitals and medicare. Now it is Grant Devine and the crows.

Mr. Speaker, what is the crow? What is this sacred bird of the West? Well, it is not the destructive economic tool that Mr. Devine and the PCs or the member for Thunder Creek would like us to believe. No, Mr. Speaker, it is to the contrary. It is the mainstay of the economic well-being of the majority of rural Saskatchewan and rural Saskatchewan communities. The removal of the crow can be likened to the removal of the financial institutions from many small rural communities during the 1930s when R.B. Bennett and the Tories were in power in Ottawa.

In my constituency, Mr. Speaker, a community like Wakaw would lose up to \$814,000 plus if the crow goes to five times its present rate. That would mean that every man, woman, and child would have to fork out almost \$1,000 each just to maintain the community's present level of activity. This sum is in addition to what they now spend. This, of course, assumes that there will be no variable rates. If variable rates do come, and it is certainly part of the Devine plan, the economic cost will be even greater as Wakaw is on a branch line. But I know nobody in the opposition would care about that as long as their friends get their profits. For a community like Birch Hills, the loss is even greater — some \$1.2 million.

What does all this mean? Does it mean farmers will be able to sell more grain at higher prices? no. Does it mean that the railways will cease their 30-year strike and start to provide service? no. Does it mean that the railways will now make a profit and reinvest their profits? No. They are making profits now and don't reinvest them in branch lines and lines to haul the farmers' products. Then why, Mr. Speaker, would the Tories and the Liberals want a change? I ask you that question and I ask it again to the two members opposite who are both in favour of the change of the crow. Why, then, would the Tories and the Liberals want to change the crowrate?

First, Mr. Speaker, in looking for the answer, you can look at the public record on political financing. You just look at how many dollars Cargill Grain has given the PC Party. You can even find some from Pioneer, Otto Lang's company, and you can find some from the CPR. Mr. Speaker and members of this House, I'm not going to tell you how much this is, because I think it's worth while for all people in Saskatchewan to search the records to find out exactly what the private grain trade and the CPR have given to people like the member for Meadow Lake, the member for Arm River, and the member for Rosetown. I think that's exactly what they have to do in your constituencies — find out exactly how many dollars you got from the people you are now trying to protect.

Well, Mr. Speaker, why did they want to change? As I said a minute ago, it's because they don't want to lose some of the chief contributors to their political coffers.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, you can look at their representatives. Otto Lang worked for the private grain trade. Grant Devine used to work for the federal Department of Agriculture. The member for Thunder Creek acts on behalf of the stock growers' association, and the Leader of the Opposition acts as a spokesman for the Palliser Wheat Growers — all of them want to get rid of the crow. All of these interests, Mr. Speaker, want to do away with the crow and the wheat board. And make no mistake, if they are successful in doing away with the crow, the wheat board will be next.

Mr. Speaker, during the 1975 election campaign the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (and too bad he isn't in here at the moment) had an interesting individual campaigning on his behalf. I happened to run out there at the time. He was right in my area of Glencairn, I'm referring to the then Liberal transport minister, Otto Lang — yes, the minister of transport at the time, a Liberal, Otto Lang, trying to elect a Liberal, Mr. Lane. As everyone knows, Otto was a leading proponent of the changing of the crow, abandoning branch lines, establishing variable freight rates, and using the open market rather than the wheat board. yes, Mr. Speaker, the member for Qu'Appelle and the former minister of transport turned grain executive are old buddies, just like two peas in a pod.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member for Qu'Appelle, who became president of the Progressive Conservative Party in Saskatchewan, shows a lot in common with his leader, Mr. Devine. Mr. Devine also did work for the federal Liberal government in the areas concerning western agriculture. You bet he did. You should read some of those reports by Mr. Devine, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. His buddy, the member for Qu'Appelle, the former president of the Conservative Party, and his buddy, a grain executive, Mr. Otto Lang, former Liberal transport minister — it all ties neatly into a package if you want to look at it, Mr. Speaker. This neat group of friends, Mr. Speaker, has led us into today's crisis. That's why we're in the crisis today. Together this group of well-worn bedpackers has spun a plan which potentially could destroy the family farm and many of our rural communities.

And I say let it be on the Conservatives' heads in this province to lose communities and lose population in those small communities, as well as the devastation of the loss of income by our farmers. Let that be on your heads. It won't be on ours.

Mr. Speaker, so far I have failed to include some federal Tories in this neat little circle of what I call plotters, and I apologize for this because I think that it is a serious oversight and one should ensure to give credit evenly to all of them.

Mr. Speaker, in the late '50s and early '60s the then federal Progressive Conservative government started the whole ball game of permitting the railways to separate all of the revenue-bearing properties and activities into separate companies. This then represented the first crack in the Crow's Nest agreement. This error was followed by the Liberal progression on this Tory plan. I wouldn't be talking about cracks on the head if I were the member from down in the east part of the country, whatever his name is.

Their first move, Mr. Speaker, was to appoint Mr. Horner, a long-standing opponent of the crow, to a new position of grains transportation czar. Mr. Horner — something tells me he also was a Conservative at one time. I'm not sure he is now — his brother certainly isn't — but I think he is. They also, at that time, appointed another proponent for changing the crow to the position of Minister of Transport — Don Mazankowski, like Horner an Alberta Conservative, who was also, according to the *Calgary Herald*, "laying out the ground rules for changing the crow." And now the Conservatives in

Saskatchewan are saying, "Oh, not us. We're different." Well, you can ask the new Minister of Agriculture for Manitoba who I spoke to just about two weeks ago. He said that Sterling Lyon, the former Premier of Manitoba, now the Leader of the Opposition — it didn't take him long to get back into his familiar role — made the statement that the crow must be changed. Mazankowski says the crow must be changed. And now the Tories in Saskatchewan say that they're different and the crow won't be changed. Mr. Speaker, I simply say to you, do not believe anything the Tories in this province tell you, because it won't be fact.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are notorious for stealing program ideas from political parties, and this plan to change the crow is obviously a theft from the Progressive Conservative Party. I say that the Liberal plan is just a theft from the Progressive Conservative Party's plan. Mr. Speaker, simply put, the Tories are the thinkers of the right and the Liberals are the doers. Devine said that he was all thumbs and boasted about his academic achievements — the Liberals have implemented his plans, implemented the Tory leader's plans. Mr. Speaker, in the fine tradition of the Tories, Grant Devine and his thumbs have risen out of the doldrums to do in the family farm in rural Saskatchewan and I think it will haunt him someday.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Tories are reeling under the political realities of their past crow position. Now they'd like to go back. They now would have us believe that they fully support the crow, just as they tried to have the people in 1978 believe that Collver would make a great spokesman for the West. That's what they said. They said that Collver would make a great spokesman for western Canada, just as in 1978 when they tried to make Saskatchewan residents believe their leader, Collver, had placed his assets in a blind trust.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Kinistino won't buy this sham; they will not buy this. They didn't in 1978, and they won't in 1982. Mr. Speaker, the crow is not just an emotional issue, and the reaction to the Devine-Pepin plan is not just a normal reaction to change. The reaction to any change in the crow is a deep and highly motivated concern over the economic survival of the 80 per cent of our Saskatchewan farmers who Mr. Devine once referred to as inefficient.

Mr. Speaker, can you imagine a professor, a doctor, a well-educated person from a farm background, saying that 80 per cent of the farmers in Saskatchewan are inefficient? Can you believe that? What did he mean? Are they lazy, are they useless, are they no good? Well, I say that all of you should be out in rural Saskatchewan telling the farmers this. That is exactly what you should be doing, and see what they have to say to you. We cannot believe these people are inefficient. We believe they have a place in this great society of ours.

Mr. Speaker, the farming community is suffering far too much from the Tory-Liberal high interest plan now . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, he wants to talk about something else. Mr. Speaker, it is pretty obvious where the member for Arm River stands. Every time I mention the crow and the positions of the Tories he says, "Well, let's talk about something else. I don't agree about the crow."

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to another area of concern for a very brief moment. It ties into the crow. And that is what is presently going on in Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, at a time when western Canada and Canadian agriculture are poised on the brink of economic disaster, what are the federal Tory representatives doing? In the fine Tory tradition, they are attacking the Liberals on a bill concerning energy. They are not dealing with the

crow. No, Mr. Speaker, they are wasting an estimated \$400,000 per day of our money to sit and sulk because their friends in the oil industry are unhappy. That's what they are doing. Mr. Speaker, oil to them and profits to Imperial Oil are far more important issues in their lives than the crow and farmers' existence.

There is no question about what the people will say about the federal Tories, and what they will shortly say about the provincial Tories. Mr. Speaker, this so-called band of progressives who pretend to be the farmers' friends are fiddling down there while the farms burn and interest rates are high and their friends make great profits.

This same group of people, whom the members opposite fully supported, now are sitting idly by sulking because their friends in the oil industry are no longer getting the kinds of profits they want. The members opposite should hang their heads in shame, and they are now trying to hide their leader and his comments on the crow.

It is interesting to read their recent advertisements in the weeklies. There has been a lot of advertising in the weeklies lately and it is interesting to read some of it. In particular, I want to read one of them from the *Wakaw Recorder*, on March 16.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Where is that?

HON. MR. CODY: — I just heard the member for Souris-Cannington say, "Where is that?" Well, I'll tell you what, my friend: it is one of the finest little communities in this province, and my people will tell you so. I think it is a shame to think that a member from the opposition would snub a fine little community like Wakaw, and say, "Where is that?"

Mr. Speaker, I have this ad. It appeared on page 16 of (inaudible) and it's put out by the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan. It reminds me very much of the Tory medicare certificate in 1978. They had a medicare certificate out to ensure that you wouldn't lose medicare. Well, they didn't have an opportunity to use it because the people knew they wouldn't lose it. Just let me read some of what the ad says:

The crowrate must remain statutory and the federal government must pay.

It sounds great, doesn't it? But do they say that the rate should not be changed? No, they don't. They say it should be statutory. Statutory for whom? Oh, maybe statutory so the railroads get all the money they want. This is a Conservative ad, I'd like to have the members opposite know. Do they say that the farmers should never pay more? No, they don't. There is nothing in it saying the farmers should never pay more. Do they say that the farmers should pay more today because the Tory interest rate policies are screwing farmers' incomes, that maybe tomorrow when interest rates go down they can pay more? No, they don't say that. This ad basically says that they are prepared to negotiate the crowrate, because it simply says we should have a statutory rate. It doesn't say that we should have the statutory rate as it is today. It doesn't say that we should never change it. It just says we should have a statutory rate, and it doesn't say whether the rate should be good for the railways or good for the farmers.

Mr. Speaker, what I find more than amusing about this ad is the fact that the Tories have now moved their head office. And it says that here. It doesn't say exactly that they've moved but they've obviously moved, because the last time I read something about the conservatives it didn't have the same address on it. I'll just read a little bit here. It says: "265 Legislative Buildings, Regina, Saskatchewan, S4S 0B2; telephone (306) 565-

5302.” I called the number and it’s working well and it’s the party headquarters. It says then “Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan.”

This is at public expense, Mr. Speaker. And I want every taxpayer to know that the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan isn’t renting, borrowing or owning an office outside of this building pretty obviously, because they have moved their office into the Legislative Building at the taxpayers’ expense. I could have understood this if it had said the Leader of the Oppositions’ office or the critic for the Department of Agriculture’s office. I think that would be legitimate. But I certainly never expected we would see the day when the Tories would have their head office in the Legislative Building of Saskatchewan paid for by my people and your people and everyone’s tax dollar in this province.

Mr. Speaker, it shows how crass the Tories would be if they ever got to power. It shows what they would do with the taxpayers’ money.

There is a whole lot one could say about this sinking ship of the Tories, a whole lot one could say about why in one little speech today — the first speech we had by the Tories — nothing was said. But I guess the old saying that was noted in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* is a good saying. It was: “Birds of a feather flock together.” And I tell you I agree with that saying, because if you look at birds of a feather flocking together, you’ve got Grant Devine and Jean-Luc Pepin. You’ve got Gary Lane and Otto Lang. You’ve got Colin Thatcher and Jack Murta. You’ve got Grant Devine and Dick Collver. And you’ve got the PC Party and the CPR. These are what you call birds of feather flocking together.

Historians write that the dodo bird is extinct. I think that the people of this province know better. They know that in fact the dodo bird is alive and well in the PC Party, both federally and provincially. And if we are not careful they will ensure that the crow becomes extinct — not only the dodo bird but the crow.

Mr. Speaker, this Tory and Liberal pillow talk is causing nightmares for the Saskatchewan farmers and small businessmen. I think we should have it stopped and stopped immediately: mouthing platitudes like I heard today, issuing certificates of guarantee, and smiling on cue when then they hide the damage which they have caused to western Canada, particularly western agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, the Tories may think that the farmers have short memories, but I know differently. Farmers are not fools. Farmers are not dumb. Farmers are bright. They are not inefficient, they are efficient. I can tell you that after the next election the boys across the way will not be here because they have not fought for the crowrate like they should have.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. CODY: — Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that the constituents of Kinistino are in favour of the crowrate by 100 per cent and their member is going to do everything in his power to fight to see that it is not done away with as the Tories in Saskatchewan, Ottawa, and the grain trade would like to have happen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. GROSS: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, was interested in the comments of the opposition earlier today when we talked about the crowrate and the member for

Moosomin's comments in regard to the road show that Gordon MacMurchy has put on throughout this province. I was very interested by his comments because I detected in his remarks and in his voice a bit of worry — worry that it's going off too well, worry that it's becoming a success story. And that's what he is worried about.

For the benefit of members of this Assembly I want to give them a little bit of history as to what has been going on in that road show throughout the province. I have attended two meetings in my own riding and during those two meetings the member for Rosetown was in attendance and the member for Arm River was in attendance as well. Both of them took part in that meeting. Unfortunately, very quietly they were sneaking around the hall trying to gain support and make it look as a front, that they were supporting the crowrate. I had a number of people come up to me after the meeting, because at every one of those meetings there was a vote held, asking, "Are you or are you not in support of the crowrate?" I have no knowledge and I never watched what those two members were doing in the meeting, but the people who were sitting near them or around them advised me that the member for Arm River and the member for Rosetown had great difficulty in putting their hands up when the vote was taken, to a point where you couldn't register whether they voted for the crowrate or whether they voted against the crowrate. I give a good friend of mine in Vanguard, Saskatchewan, a lot of credit — Mr. Burton, a well-known, high-ranking Liberal, who stood up for his principles that night and stuck his hand up. He believed the crow should go. He believed that we should pay more. But the member for Arm River didn't have the ability to stick his hand up and show his signs.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's why Tories are sneaking around these meetings; that's why Tories cannot come and vote in favour of the crowrate. That's why the Tories don't like the \$77,000 spent thus far on the crowrate meetings. That's the reason why — because they can't come out and support the crowrate. That's the reason why they don't support the idea of having meetings out in the province informing people on the crowrate.

Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Cody announced earlier, the Leader of the Opposition had difficulty in talking about the crowrate. He went on to talk about everything but the crowrate. He talked about inflation; he talked about the cost of production; he talked about fuel prices; he talked about consultation; but he said very little about the crowrate. The only thing he referred to when he talked about the crowrate was the fact that he wanted to get together with us, that it is important that members on that side of the House and members on this side of the House join together like we did on the constitution. He talked about the constitution. I found that kind of interesting, because he said we joined together on the constitution to bring an important issue home. He talked about the need for us to get together and join on the crowrate and bring the issue home. He feels that it's important that we all join together.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I find that very difficult. I would find it very difficult trying to join the Tories. They may want to get on our bandwagon; they are very interested in getting on our bandwagon and supporting the crowrate. And, Mr. Speaker, the reason why they are interested in getting on our bandwagon is because they are in desperate trouble out in the country. They are in very desperate trouble out in the country. They are in desperate trouble because their leader, Grant Devine, is known from quotation after quotation as supporting the fact of getting rid of the crowrate.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when I decided to come in and speak on the crowrate, I thought perhaps a history lesson would be important in regard to the crowrate. But I thought about that again, and I said to myself that everybody knows the history on the crowrate;

everybody knows that we lost 25 million acres of Crown land and we lost \$25 million to the railways. They know that we had a big giveaway and that the railways have received in excess of \$800 million in grants since 1967 for railways. They all know that, so there is no need to talk about what is the history of the crowrate, and what is the history of the CPR in regard to the crowrate. The Assembly is aware of that.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there is a little bit of history that I haven't heard mentioned lately in the debate, and it's called the old task force report on agriculture of December 1969. It was written by, I believe, the federal Liberal government of the day which wanted to develop a circa model of agriculture. It wanted to develop a model of agriculture, of where agriculture would be in the next 10, 15, 20, and 25 years. Mr. Speaker, it put together a very controversial document.

Members of this House are fairly familiar with it, I think, because there was a great debate that went on out in the country about the task force report on agriculture. It sort of outlined the parameters and the guidelines which agriculture should take in the 1980s and 1990s. Mr. Speaker, the document that they tabled back in those days, this document here, is being followed with precision, step by step by step, in regard to where agriculture is going to go in the 1980s and 1990s.

Mr. Speaker, they didn't consult with farmers when they put that document together; they consulted with experts. There are a lot of experts around the province whom they consulted with when they developed that document, a lot of doctorates of agriculture that they consulted with, from whom they tried to get the scope and imagination as to where agriculture should be in the 1980s and 1990s. Those very people, those very doctors that went and put together the task force report on agriculture, are the reason why we are facing the dilemma we are facing today in agriculture, in regard to the crowrate, in regard to transportation and marketing and all the rest.

Some of those people that were involved, some of those people that were involved with their conceptual ideas, were people who were involved in university agriculture to a large degree. I don't know for sure because I haven't researched it well enough to find out if Dr. Devine had any hand in this document. The only reason why I don't think he had any hand in this document is because one of the major recommendations of this report does not coincide with the major recommendation of Mr. Devine. Almost in total, the 10 major recommendations in this report follow identically the Devine proposal for agriculture in all the statements and all the journals that he has written. But there is one that doesn't.

The one recommendation that does not follow Devine is in the area of what we should do with the family farm. This document says that the family farm is inefficient and useless. It's time we got rid of it; it's time to get rid of the outmoded and outdated family farm. Mr. Birkbeck for Moosomin would agree with that, because he's been on record many times talking about the need to get rid of the outmoded family farm. He'd understand that very well. The task force report on agriculture says that two-thirds of the farms in the province of Saskatchewan are inefficient, outmoded and outdated and we should get rid of them because they are not worth it. We've got to bring in a new system of agriculture. That was the task force report on agriculture. Mr. Devine does not agree with that theory. Mr. Devine didn't agree with that theory in his book because 66 per cent, he says, is not enough. He says that 80 per cent of the family farms are inefficient, outdated, and outmoded and should be done away with. The difference with the Liberals in Ottawa is they say 66 per cent and the Tories say 80 per cent.

You know, Mr. Speaker, my very first introduction to Grant Devine — Mr. Rousseau will be interested in this — was in the town of Vanguard, four years ago at an R.M. ratepayers' meeting. There were about 500 people attending the meeting, and Mr. Devine was the guest speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, I thought making a statement once about 80 per cent of the farmers being inefficient would be enough for him, but we listened with great care and much awe to Mr. Devine, who wasn't then the leader of the Conservative Party. He was only a couple of months away from becoming a candidate for them, but we listened with great care to his comments. Throughout that whole meeting Mr. Devine — for one hour and 15 minutes, non-stop — told the people in Vanguard, Saskatchewan, why we have to get rid of the family farm, why it's so important that we move agriculture from the inefficient mode that it's in now to a much more efficient agribusiness model. He was a researcher then.

I know we are very bad on this side of the House, because we obviously treat every word members of the opposition say very carefully. We keep very careful watch on what they say, when they say it, and how they say it, and Mr. Devine doesn't like that. He says that's when he was a researcher. We're not supposed to quote him when he was a researcher, when he spent 10 or 15 years of his life in the agricultural research field, when he helped develop goofy documents like this one, the task force report on agriculture, when he was involved in research work for Canada, when he was involved in research work for the University of Saskatchewan putting forward his stupid and backward theories and philosophy on agriculture. We're not supposed to quote him when he was in the research field as a professional, if you like, in agriculture. That's very interesting, Mr. Speaker. We're not supposed to report what he thought when he was a researcher, because now he's a politician, and now things are different. Now he can say whatever he wants. It's okay if he lies in terms of what his own personal philosophy is and if he doesn't tell the truth about what he truly believes in; that's quite fine. But, Mr. Speaker, I say to you, the people of this province are going to judge very carefully in the short few weeks, months and year ahead who Mr. Devine is and what Mr. Devine did say.

You know, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Devine believes in this corporate philosophy on agriculture. He said it in his agricultural journals. There are a good number of journals around. I don't know how many there are. It could be four, five, six, seven or eight — I haven't counted them. But in every journal that has ever been printed on his behalf he has outlined and mapped his philosophy on agriculture. He says that the socialist concept of agriculture — and that's what we have in our province . . . This document here, the task force report on agriculture, says that we have a socialist form of . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! Order! I wonder if we can cut out the cross discussion or at least reduce it to a level which we can accommodate in the House when a member is making a speech.

HON. MR. GROSS: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Devine does not believe in a socialist form of agriculture like we have in Canada. When you read his journals or read the documents that he has put together, he doesn't believe in that theory. He believes in an open market system. He believes in the free system of agriculture. He believes that family farms are outdated. He believes that corporate farms should be the mode. He believes that more agricultural processing should be done in this province. He believes that corporate agribusiness has got a very serious role to play in this province. He believes that we have to follow the road of open marketing. He doesn't believe in the Canadian Wheat Board. He never has. He never will. He has been trained and schooled and developed, and he has trained and schooled other students in the University of

Saskatchewan with the view that the way to go in agriculture is to get rid of the present system — to get rid of the socialist form of agriculture we take for granted today.

The reason why grain farmers like me and grain farmers in this very Chamber and throughout this province have been able to make a living is that we have an orderly marketing form of agriculture. He doesn't believe in that. He says we have to get rid of that. We have to get the free market system. We have to have Cargill Grain in this province, buy the line of the Palliser Wheat Growers, and go for inland terminals. We have to make agriculture more efficient, because it is not efficient under the present system. And that's Grant Devine — good old Dr. Grant Devine, the friend of the farmers.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite somehow have trouble believing that he actually said this — that he actually believes in corporate farming and that the socialist form of agriculture is dead. They also have trouble believing that he ever said anything bad about the crowrate. You know, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, it's not. Grant Devine has said many, many, many things about the crowrate, putting him on record on the crowrate. Mr. Speaker, I would like to just mention a few quotations from what Mr. Devine has written. He's gone to great pains and great lengths writing articles in journals of agriculture, and I want to read a few paragraphs of some of the things that Mr. Devine says. He says:

Based on a conceptual analysis of the Crow's nest rates, it is plausible to find that these rates may be retarding (I don't know who is retarded) the growth of Western Canada and consequently may not be in the public interest.

And that is your friend from that side of the House; that was your leader, the great friend of the crowrate. And he goes on, Mr. Speaker, in more articles that he has written. We talk about one that he wrote when he spoke in front of the standing Senate committee on agriculture. He says that economic distortions have likely developed as a result of the Crow's Nest statutory freight rate. That was as late as three years ago, Mr. Speaker. When you dig up some more material you find that he doesn't stop at that. He makes an attack on the country elevator system and on the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool when he says:

With either duplication or the inefficient use of present elevators (in other words, he doesn't believe in the country elevator system) at existing points, a reduction in points would concentrate activity and thereby increase operational efficiency of the remaining points and elevators in the system.

An attack on the country elevator system, Mr. Speaker — that's an attack in favour of inland terminals, of companies such as Cargill Grain and the Palliser Wheat Growers.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we could go on; there are several pages here about Grant Devine and what he says about the crowrate, pages of documents that he has written, not a speech or a misquotation here or there nor a word out of context here or there, but the facts of life in regard to Grant Devine and his stand on the statutory crowrate. You know, Mr. Speaker, as much as we would like to, it would be unfair if we just blamed Grant Devine for being the only man who had caused or created the problem of the crowrate or said anything on that side of the House in regard to the crowrate, because that isn't the case. There are other members on that side of the House who have a lot to say about the crowrate, and who in fact have said in this very Chamber what their views and thoughts are in very much detail in talking and discussing the crowrate.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the member for Thunder Creek, Mr. Thatcher, was a Liberal when he came into the House, and he changed his stripes to a Conservative. There is word around that he may even be a WCC candidate someday. I think it is important to read what Mr. Thatcher had to say about the crowrate, and I'm going to quote him. In case Mr. Thatcher has forgotten, I refer him to page 4470 in *Hansard*, and so you can hear Mr. Member for Thunder Creek, I'm going to start right at the beginning and read the entire thing. He is referring to the Minister of Agriculture, wherever he is — right there. He says:

Mr. Minister, it's common sense that when you can fire that grain straight out of that hopper car right on to a ship, the savings have to be passed back to the farmers. It's common sense and I suggest to you that it's time your government took a really close look at itself. It's time to get away from that concept of becoming paranoid whether you're going to haul your grain that 8 miles or 25 miles.

He didn't stop there . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . True? The member says that's true. That's very nice to know. He's reaffirming his position regarding where you should haul your grain. He says, and I go on:

I venture to say that not many farmers this winter, when they were paying 15 per cent, 16 per cent, 17 per cent interest on their operating loans, were going to quibble over whether it was going to be 8 miles, 20 miles, 50 miles maybe not even 100 miles. I venture to say that they would (be happy to haul their grain that far.)

. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Thatcher, the member for Thunder Creek . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . If the member wants to refer to what he said it's on page 4470 of *Hansard*. It's right there, in yellow; I have it underlined if you want a copy of it. That is what he said. He said it's quite okay for farmers to haul 15, 20, 25 or even 100 miles. That is the view of the member for Thunder Creek. Very interesting, Mr. Speaker. These are the saviours of the crowrate, and if they are the saviours they would believe that you can't afford to haul your grain 100 miles.

The average family farmer out there, with a five or six quarter-section farm cannot afford to haul his grain 100 miles. I don't know how the member for Thunder Creek could think they could possibly do that. They can't afford that kind of dramatic cost. They can't afford to haul their grain that far and then on top of that have to pay rates 2, 3, 4, 5, 10 and 15 times crow.

Mr. Speaker, if it were just Mr. Thatcher who was having problems trying to justify the crowrate, if he were the only one in that caucus that was having real problems justifying the crowrate, you could probably understand that, because he is a little bit different sort of individual from the rest of them. He has a little different philosophy. He could very conceivably become a Western Canada Concept member. The Liberal Party wasn't right wing enough and the Conservative Party is barely right wing enough. Obviously the only step left is the old Western Canada Concept. You can understand that when it comes to the member for Thunder Creek. You can understand why he couldn't support the crowrate and I give him credit for that. He has the gumption to stand up and say what he believes in.

But when it comes to the member for Rosetown-Elrose, I have real problems trying to

understand that. The member for Rosetown-Elrose is a fairly upstanding citizen in his community, who I think would defend the little fellow from time to time and would be involved in that. He, too, has put his mark on the crowrate. Mr. Speaker, on December 3, 1980, on pages 142 and 143 of *Hansard* (this is for the member's own perusal and I suggest he read it), it says, and for the benefit of the member for Thunder Creek, I quote:

The Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan is still saying, "No change in the crowrate." . . . I wonder if it is a realistic stand.

The member for Rosetown-Elrose wonders if it is a realistic stand to support the crowrate. He has real problems trying to understand whether or not you should support it. This was the policy which the Conservative government in Ottawa put forward during its short term in office. The member for Rosetown-Elrose is saying that the Conservative government in Ottawa, when it was there for that short six months, put forward a policy of getting rid of the crowrate, of changing the crowrate. "The government should get its head out of the sand and begin to look at something more realistic," he says. That's what the member for Rosetown-Elrose has to say about the crowrate. He isn't sure if he can support the crowrate. He is not sure.

Mr. Speaker, it showed up very nicely the other afternoon in Herbert. The Tories don't want to hear about those meetings any more, the meetings that we are spending far too much money on — \$77,000 on crowrate meetings. The member for Rosetown-Elrose says, "Maybe change is necessary."

The member for Rosetown-Elrose at the Herbert meeting, for the benefit of members in this Chamber, also had a problem with his arm that day when the motion was put. I watched him. He had a real problem trying to get that hand up. With great difficulty the member couldn't get his hand up. He tried. I want members in this House to understand that he tried real hard. He even had a friend of mine from the Herbert area as well, helping him along. He couldn't quite get it up.

The member for Rosetown showed his colours on the crowrate just like the member for Arm River showed his colours on the crowrate when they had an opportunity in public, in front of constituents of all shapes and forms. They could not get their hands up to support the crowrate. I was surprised, Mr. Speaker, that they couldn't do it that day. I was really shocked and surprised. I couldn't believe that they would actually keep their hands down and not vote when the crowrate was put as a question. But I can understand now. All you have to do is read a few of the pages *Hansard* in this House and you will soon find, Mr. Speaker, that they want to talk about something else, Mr. Speaker. They don't want to talk about the crowrate. They want to talk about nurses instead of the crowrate. They want to get off it.

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying earlier, I was shocked and surprised to find that they couldn't vote out at Herbert and Vanguard. And now I can understand, because I have just gone back and read a few copies of *Hansard*. And now I understand that they philosophically have never been able to support the crowrate. I don't want to leave out the member for Moosomin, Mr. Birkbeck. He has some very bold stigmas on the crowrate as well. He hasn't said . . .

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

MR. THATCHER: — The point of order is this. I don't really care when that member refers to me by name, which I think you picked up on both occasions. But when he starts

referring to my colleagues by their first names, I suggest to you that that is an abrogation of the rules in this Assembly. It is something which you have drawn to our attention on numerous occasions. I acknowledge that he is not doing it in an offensive manner at all, and I don't think it bothers anyone. I cannot help but speculate, Mr. Speaker, on what the results would be if somebody in this House were to do the same to a member on that side of the House, and I merely draw it to your attention.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! The member for Thunder Creek is a keen observer of the rules of this House and he is certainly right. I did hear the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources use a member's name rather than his rank or his constituency, and I would try to impress upon the member for Morse, I believe it is, that he should use the member's constituency name or his position in the House. I've heard members from both sides of the House today using people's names rather than their constituencies,. I would hope it would cease and I'm certainly glad the member for Thunder Creek brought this to my attention.

HON. MR. GROSS: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd be very happy to respect the rules in regard to that area. I know the member for Thunder Creek has great difficulty with this issue. I know he is struggling very hard to keep his head above water and maintain credibility and so for any reason at all he would gladly interject and try to change the subject and change the purpose of the debate.

All I can say in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, is that the member for Moosomin, Mr. Birkbeck, has had many times and opportunities to expound on his knowledge of the crowrate and he has made many inferences about the crowrate and where agriculture should be going. I think a couple of years ago he was the critic on behalf of the Tories regarding agriculture. I found one quote out of the *Western Producer* very recently about what he said about agriculture. It's a very simple quote and I think it sums it all up. He says:

The economics of agriculture dictate that bigger is better and should be given priority over the outmoded concept of the family farm.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that's a nice way to wind it up. I think it fairly eloquently shows where the members opposite stand in regard to the open market, where they stand in regard to the task force on agriculture, where they stand in regard to the crowrate, where they stand in regard to branch lines and inland terminals and all of that. They believe very strongly that the concept of agriculture that we have come to know in this province of Saskatchewan, and indeed in western Canada, is indeed outmoded and inefficient. It is time that it be changed. As the member for Rosetown-Elrose said in his speech in the House in 1980, "It is time to take our heads out of the sand and change the crowrate; it is time to get on with the job." So I think that members of this House will understand very nicely where the Tories are coming from on this issue.

We will do everything in our power to continue to inform the people of this province that the Tories opposite believe in only one thing: it means death to the crowrate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SWAN: — Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a privilege to have an opportunity to end this high calibre of debate that has been going on this afternoon. Sometimes I wonder if it is debate at all, or whether it is name calling.

Before I go into any number of remarks, I am going to make two direct statements, and I want them recorded so that the hon. member for Morse can read them.

The first statement is that I support 100 per cent the Crow's Nest Pass rate, and I support it at today's level, and I support it as a statutory rate.

The second thing that I would like to say to you is that I support the policy of equal rates for equal distance. That must be maintained if Saskatchewan's agricultural industry is going to survive.

Now, I would perhaps like to talk a little bit about some of the things you accuse us of, and some of the things which I think we could return the favour and accuse you of. I am not going to spend my time talking about the member for Morse, but I am going to spend my time talking about the Premier of this province, and some of the statements he has made, because I think that is more important.

On May 20, 1977, in a CBC TV interview, the Premier of the province made this statement:

I don't want to be quoted as saying I'm happy to see crow increase. That's not so, but I'm realistic enough to know that time goes on and costs go on, and I think farmers are realistic enough to say that at some time they would look at increasing the crow, provided they would receive the same legislative statutory protection that they now have for the crowrate.

That was Premier Allan Blakeney, Premier of the province of Saskatchewan. There are a number of other areas that I can quote to you on Allan Blakeney. There is another thing that Premier Allan Blakeney said, and I think you should be aware of it. He said:

Whether they (the railways) should get it (that is, additional compensation) from other sources of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which they got as part of the bargain, or whether they should get it from the Government of Canada, or whether they should get it from the shippers (that is the farmers), or some combination thereof, is perhaps what bargaining is all about.

This is an interview in *Business Life* of Premier Allan Blakeney. My goodness! Premier Allan Blakeney must be one of those liars that you were talking about a few minutes ago . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I think the member for Rosetown-Elrose — I don't expect this from him — unfortunately used an unfortunate combination of words there.

AN HON. MEMBER: — . . . (inaudible) . . . the Premier a liar.

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! You did not. I listened to the man very closely, and the member referred to the Premier as Premier Blakeney and called him a liar — "Perhaps he's one of those liars." Now I think that's an unfortunate combination of words in this House and I think the member should give some thought to withdrawing it.

MR. SWAN: — Mr. Speaker, I'll withdraw that statement. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I would think that the hon. member for Morse should also withdraw . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! I'm dealing with the member for Rosetown-Elrose's words now. If there are some other words which offended the member earlier, he should have risen at that time. Order, order! Why is the member rising?

MR. THATCHER: — I am rising, Mr. Speaker, because I think that you have misinterpreted the member's remarks. He did not call Premier Blakeney a . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order! I'll let the member handle this. I think I'm clear in what the member said.

MR. SWAN: — The NDP have a candidate out in Kindersley that I think we should talk about . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order! I've asked . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm sorry, I missed it completely. Order! The member just rose to his feet, began to speak . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Order! The first words I heard the member utter were something about an NDP candidate somewhere. I'm sorry, I didn't hear the member.

MR. SWAN: — Mr. Speaker, I withdrew the first time I stood up. Mr. Speaker, I would like to read to you a few comments made by the NDP candidate for Kindersley. Now, he agrees that the crowrate is up on the bargaining table and that the NDP is willing to bargain the crowrate. This statement was printed in the Kindersley paper and I think if any of you would like to go back and read that one, you are quite free to do so.

I'd like to get back now, to some of the reasons why I think that the crowrate must remain. At this point in time, farmers in this province cannot afford to pay any more than they are now paying if they're going to continue to operate their farms. Now, the provincial government has provided very little help to farmers in this province over the last few years. Indeed, the budget in agriculture has not been sufficient to maintain any good quality of agriculture within the province.

The price of fuel in Saskatchewan has risen since the early 1970s from 20 cents a gallon for diesel fuel until in 1979 it was at the 70-cent level and in 1982, today, diesel fuel is \$1.415 per gallon. Now, the prices paid for farmland during that same period have gone from about \$100 an acre to \$1,000 an acre, again about 10 times. When you go to farm machinery, costs are increasing rapidly. You can go out and buy a tractor today that would cost you as much as your whole farm would have cost you 10 years ago. These things are not acceptable if the farmers are going to be able to farm.

The statutory crowrate has been with us for a long time and I'd like to raise the fact that it was introduced by a Conservative government. That crowrate was introduced by a Conservative government in the beginning, and it was accepted. Without that original move by a Conservative government in Ottawa, it is doubtful if we could ever have settled the West without that crowrate being in place. Now, the crowrate has changed somewhat over the years, and in 1917 we saw increases taking place that ranged from 7 per cent up to 43 per cent. These were very serious increases that have stayed with us from that time to this.

I think when we look at the crowrate and what it's costing us we have to realize that the price of grain to the farmer this year has declined drastically, and it has placed many young farmers in very serious financial positions. I'm aware that the movement of the crowrate away from what we have at the present time would have very serious implications for many of our small towns, and for that reason we support

wholeheartedly the need to maintain that rate, because we want small town rural Saskatchewan to grow and to expand.

We also recommend that you put natural gas into rural Saskatchewan so that the small towns have a better opportunity, not a poorer one, and this is one of the things that would happen under a Conservative government.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read to you a few remarks from the *Star Phoenix*, from February 17, 1982, quoted by Mr. Fowler. He says:

Despite their effort for the principles outlined in the 1977 Hall report, the NDP leaders modified it by suggesting that the federal government and willing provinces provide the railways with \$2.1 billion in additional capital funding during the next four years. The Hall commission recommended that the federal government compensate the railways for any loss they were suffering on hauling grain. Under the NDP proposal, participating governments gain equity in the privately owned CP Rail.

And it goes on. You know, at one time the NDP took the stand that it supported the Hall commission report, and that it was the Hall commission report that should be implemented to save the agricultural industry in western Canada. This is the beginning of the change.

The other change you made was that the Hall commission recommended that the railways buy their own rolling stock, and you turned around and bought 1,000 hopper cars. So again, you didn't agree with the Hall commission report.

When Grant Devine did a lot of the research for the Hall commission report, it was acceptable, and he did an awful lot of that research. When you read the report, you accepted what was written. Now you're complaining every time that you stand on your feet about what Grant Devine has said. "Oh, he's the terrible man." He's the credible man who wrote a lot of that Hall commission report . . . (inaudible interjections) . . .

I would like to refer just a little bit to the tour that the Minister of Agriculture was taking around the province.

They want me to call it 5 o'clock. It's 5 o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.