

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 21, 1995

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

says:

Prayers

Therefore we urge the provincial government to address the needs of Cabri and area and provide the funds necessary to ensure that a minimum of one acute care bed be available at Prairie Health Care Centre.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition today. The prayer is as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, and urge the federal government to recognize that gun control and crime control are not synonymous.

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

Mr. Speaker, the constituents that have signed this petition are all from the town of Shaunavon, my home town.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions to present today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to support Bill 31, An Act to amend the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code (Property Rights), which will benefit all property owners in Saskatchewan and specifically firearm owners, in order to halt the federal Liberal government from infringing upon the rights of Saskatchewan people.

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

These petitions come from Swift Current, Moose Jaw, Gull Lake, Regina, Langenburg, Beauval, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My petitioners today come from the town and area of Shaunavon, Gull Lake and area, as well as one from Saskatoon, I see here. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to allocate adequate funding directed towards the double-laning of Highway No. 1; and further, that the Government of Saskatchewan direct any monies available from the federal infrastructure program toward double-laning of Highway No. 1, rather than allocating these funds towards capital construction projections in the province.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will every pray.

I'm happy to table these on behalf of our constituents today.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, my petition reads and the prayer

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 11(7) they are hereby read and received.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to allocate adequate funding toward the double-laning of Highway No. 1.

And of citizens petitioning the Assembly to oppose changes to federal legislation regarding firearm ownership.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, sir, and to all the members of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Mike Anderson and his wife Michelle who are seated in your Speaker's gallery. Mike will be known to the members of the House as no. 66 centre with the Saskatchewan Roughriders, entering, I think, his 12th season with the Riders, having joined the team in 1984.

This is the 10th season as a starting centre. I think the linemen always like to say very simply that it is them who guarantee that people like Kent Austin get a chance to break every record in the play book because they guard the quarterback. Having had a nephew playing in college football in the United States as a tailback, of course he says that it's his speed and not the lineback — but I think it's the linemen that do the job.

And certainly Mike has been doing his job because he's been a key member of the Rider team that won the Grey Cup in '89, selected to the Western Conference all-star team in 1988, graduated from San Diego State in '84. His dad, which I did not know until the preparation of the notes, was also a member of the Roughriders from 1953 to '58. And his wife Michelle, and Mike, are both graduates of San Diego State in athletic medicine.

Time doesn't permit me to go through his other community efforts, but this is a person who is not only an outstanding athlete, but highly educated. He is a community-minded person, and given the fact that this is Grey Cup year coming up, 1995, and Mike's going to be playing in the Grey Cup for the Saskatchewan Roughriders, I want him to be introduced to you and to everybody in the House. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**International Day for the Elimination of
Racial Discrimination**

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. On this day we must acknowledge the sad fact that racism is still prevalent in our society. Racism exists every time we look at a person and make a judgement on that individual based on our preconceived notions about them because of what they appear to be.

Prejudice has no place in our society where more and more among us look to other races and cultures for the richness and variety their cultures bring to our own.

Instead of looking at this day as an occasion to celebrate the advances we have made in eliminating racism, we must instead make it one on which we continue to try to end racial discrimination of all kinds wherever we might encounter it in our lives.

Discrimination of any kind is intolerable, but that based on race is particularly reprehensible. I ask all people today to commit to try to improve our society and ourselves as individuals by speaking out against racism today and every day. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — Mr. Speaker, 35 years ago in Sharpeville, South Africa, peaceful demonstrators against apartheid were massacred by security forces. To commemorate this tragic event, in 1966 the United Nations declared March 21 the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

In 1986 on this day, the Canadian parliament called on all Canadians to join together to eliminate racism from our society. In 1988 representatives from the federal, provincial, and territorial governments declared that this day be recognized in all Canadian jurisdictions.

It is now 35 years after Sharpeville, Mr. Speaker. It is a sad but true fact that on this day we can report some progress, but not enough. The most fitting way to honour this day would be to declare it no longer necessary. And soon, we hope, we will.

Until that day comes, we should all, I propose, pay somewhat less attention to the big picture on the world scene and concentrate more on what we as individuals can do to totally eliminate racism from our own lives and from our immediate surroundings. As we renew our personal commitment, we should, on a positive note, remind ourselves that the opposite side of racism in Saskatchewan is our awareness and celebration of the cultural diversity of this province. A diversity reflected in our motto, "From Many Peoples, Strength." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with both my colleagues in recognizing the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It was my pleasure to attend a breakfast meeting in Saskatoon on Saturday which was

organized by the Saskatoon & District Labour Council and the Saskatoon Multicultural Council, and it was a discussion on how to eliminate racism in the workplace.

There were several speakers there who outlined examples of racism that they had faced in the workplace, and as they tried to achieve something that we should be able to take for granted in today's society, namely being accepted as an equal. But there was a large turnout, Mr. Speaker, which indicated to me that there's hope that the goal of equality in the workplace and a desire to accept and respect our cultural and racial diversity has taken hold.

I'd like to congratulate the labour council and the multicultural council for bringing people in the community together to talk about ending racism and to promote tolerance and understanding as we approach the 21st century.

Today, I think, reminds us, Mr. Speaker, of hard struggles that people have had in Sharpeville and elsewhere, to establish these simple truisms — that we're all members of one human race and one human family. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Radio Station Raises Funds For Health Care

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it's my great pleasure to congratulate Z99 Radio of Regina for its recent radiothon, the beneficiary of which was the Regina General Hospital and the Regina Health District. Z99 is the station that Regina people will know as . . . it's the station we listen to because our children change the dial to Z99, or so we say.

From last Thursday morning until 6 p.m. Saturday, the morning team of C.C. and Lorie Lindsay were on the air broadcasting live from the Cornwall Centre. I'm told that they didn't need any coffee; they were just using their youth and their enthusiasm and their commitment to the cause as a stimulant.

Mr. Speaker, the result of the 36-hour radiothon was \$27,050 raised. This money will be used to supply two hospital infant heart and lung monitors and four home monitoring units.

The effort by the station, its staff, and the many individuals, businesses, and organizations who contributed is very welcome and is a great statement of the support for our hospitals and the health board.

I want to mention Z99's sister station in Saskatoon, C95, has a similar radiothon, and in October they raised \$29,000 for the Royal University Hospital.

This, Mr. Speaker, is the eighth year that Z99 has raised money for children. I know all members will join me in thanking Z99 for their very good efforts.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

**Wascana Energy and Joseph Bighead Reserve
Natural Gas Agreement**

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While on the theme of racial discrimination, I want to tell you that we are in fact moving forward.

This past Thursday I had the pleasure of attending a very important signing ceremony in my riding involving the Joseph Bighead First Nation and Wascana Energy based out of Regina. The signing signalled an agreement for the joint development of oil and natural gas reserves in and around the Joseph Bighead First Nation Reserve near Pierceland.

Both sides will benefit from this agreement. For Wascana Energy, the entire Beacon Hill/Mannville gas pool will be treated as one engineering challenge. They no longer have to take into account the considerable difference in royalties between the provincial Crown land and reserve land.

For the band, money will now flow in from all of the gas pumped out of the area. Band members no longer have to worry about the off-reserve wells draining gas from the reserve land with no compensation.

In the process of reaching this agreement, the band made it clear that they wanted to acquire business knowledge. Therefore, Wascana Energy worked on this request and the result was a company called Pee-Kay Resources Developments Corporation. This band-owned oil and gas company will give band members valuable business experience and will provide new opportunities.

I would like to congratulate Chief Ernest Sundown, his head men, elders, and band members, and Wascana Energy for building a solid economic future by using Saskatchewan's resource base.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Passing of Max Braithwaite

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness that I report on the passing of Max Braithwaite, a Saskatchewan-born author who was one of our province's most successful writers.

Braithwaite's career spanned more than 50 years. He started as a freelance writer for *Maclean's* in 1945 and also wrote several books for children, as well as scripts for radio, television, stage, and film.

Max Braithwaite was born in Nokomis and spent his childhood in Prince Albert and Saskatoon. After receiving his teaching certificate, he taught at various one-room schools across Saskatchewan.

It was these experiences, Mr. Speaker, that inspired Braithwaite to write *Why Shoot the Teacher*, the first in his trilogy of prairie experiences. This was followed by *Never Sleep Three in a Bed* and *The Night We Stole the Mountie's Car*. The latter won him

the Steven Leacock medal for humour, a feat that he humorously noted not even Steven Leacock had accomplished.

His books captured perfectly life on the prairie and were filled with wit and compassion. Braithwaite realized that it was this wit and compassion that gives Saskatchewan residents their ability to survive even in the harshest times.

In his words, Mr. Speaker, Braithwaite strived to be, "one hell of a good storyteller." And that he was. The literary world will be a bleaker place without him.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

GRIP Surplus

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The opposition caucus is pleased once again to present some of the many, many questions we have received from our very popular "Mr. Premier, I want to know" initiative. It seems that the people of the province have a lot they want to say to you, Mr. Premier. Here are just a few of the things that they are asking.

This question comes from David Davis from Estevan. Mr. Premier, your Finance minister feels that the agriculture industry was dealt a severe blow by the federal Liberals. And if she feels this way, why did she take 189 million farm dollars from these same people? Where is the justice? Is a surplus more important than the people?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Yes, I certainly would like to have the chance to respond to David. Certainly the constituent is accurate in pointing out that we have been dealt a very serious blow by the federal Liberal government. They have taken away our Crow benefit. They have not replaced it with a plan, have not made decisions. We don't know if even the paltry 1.6 billion that we are getting . . . we don't know how we're getting it or when we're getting it. We don't know what branch lines are going to be abandoned.

Mr. Goodale says that don't worry, it won't be that bad, but nobody's saying what will happen. So obviously that is a very dramatic hit on Saskatchewan agriculture.

As to the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) surplus, Mr. Speaker, we put back \$130 million of our GRIP surplus into agriculture. The federal government chose to put out less than 50 per cent of theirs back into agriculture. So I think on balance we are the government that is supporting and fighting for farmers in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Farm Fuel Tax

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have a question for the Premier. This comes from Kazim Karp

from Speers. Mr. Premier, I want to know why you are taxing the heck out of farmers, i.e. 15 cents per litre gas tax, 9 per cent tax on our grain trucks and parts and etc. Alberta farmers pay half the price we do for farm fuel. Don't you understand that farmers are the backbone of the Saskatchewan economy?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for that question. Obviously I don't agree with the fundamental proposition or assumption behind the question because it indicates, in the wording of it, a taxing of the farmers. What the situation is of course, as the hon. member opposite will know being a part of the government of the day, was a very huge deficit and debt.

And in approaching this very major fiscal problem that we have as Saskatchewan people, we try to do it in a balanced way, balanced and fair way where there would be reductions of government services, redesigning of government programs on the one hand to save money, and unfortunately given the size of the debt, taxation which is based on the principle of ability to pay. Nobody likes to pay taxes, that's for sure, but there is no singling out of any particular group in this area.

Thankfully it's all beginning to pay off. The member knows that we have announced a balanced budget for '94-95, and in fact a surplus. And the surplus will be going down to the down payment of the debt, and for the next four years there will be further surpluses. And as the member also knows, in the budget we've announced a tax decrease on the deficit surcharge of \$150 per taxpayer and up to \$300 per two-family working incomes. So it is going in the right direction.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

GRIP Surplus

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier as well. And this question comes from Eric P. Pankratz from Foam Lake.

Mr. Premier, I want to know why farmers are not on a level playing-field with farmers from Manitoba and Alberta. All their federal and provincial GRIP premiums were used and distributed to farmers. As well, Saskatchewan lost federal dollars when GRIP was changed. You ripped us off.

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to respond to Eric. That information is not correct. I would submit that Saskatchewan farmers are indeed ahead of Alberta farmers at this point in time. We have negotiated a GRIP replacement with the federal government. Alberta has given notice to get out of GRIP, are trying to get their farmers out immediately, and they have no replacement program for their producers.

In Saskatchewan our hog and cattle producers have NISA (net income stabilization account). In Alberta and Manitoba they have nothing. So, Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear that Saskatchewan producers at this point in time are ahead of our neighbouring provinces.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question, to the Premier as well, comes from a constituent from the Kelvington area — Eugene Patenaude, I believe is how you pronounce the name.

Mr. Premier, I want to know why you are trying to kill the family farm. Today I received a statement from SCIC (Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation) stating an overpayment on the 1993 GRIP, a program you cancelled. Why don't you pay the consequences? I fail to see any positive action from your government to date. You take away part of our guaranteed income, and now you are killing us with health care cuts. What's next — our shirts?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Well thank you. I would be glad to respond to Eugene. And I'll probably get a chance to talk to him in person so I'll give a more detailed answer when I get a chance.

But, Mr. Speaker, we did not . . . we are not killing the family farm. We are doing all that we can to support and maintain the family farm.

The payment that the question refers to is the GRIP surplus which would have accrued had we collected premiums from farmers. What that statement is that Eugene has and maybe doesn't understand is a statement that says that's what he would have paid had the program continued, and then at the end of the program, would have gotten that money back. What we've chosen to do is not collect the money so that we don't have to put him through the agony of borrowing the money and then receiving it back later.

So when the program winds down, there will be \$26 million left in the GRIP surplus which will be paid back to farmers on top of having their '93 and '94 payments deferred.

So we again treated farmers as fairly as we could on the GRIP surplus. We put 130 million of our share of that surplus back into agriculture, into things that will help farmers to adapt and change to the new future and help us survive the hit that we've taken from the federal government on the Crow.

So we're certainly working to . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question comes from Mr. M. Scott Morvik from Eastend, Saskatchewan, located smack in the south-west corner of the province, Mr. Speaker, and south of the Cypress Hills, the home of Scotty the Tyrannosaurus rex.

Mr. Premier, I want to know where all my GRIP money went. Near as I can figure you slipped about 300 million of producers' money which should have been returned to those who paid the premiums, not thrown into some new program I want no part of. Mr. Premier, will you answer Scott today?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, speaking of dinosaurs, I think the two political parties opposite are the only

ones who want to go back to '91 GRIP. I think if you test with farmers, they've moved on and are ready to adapt into the new world.

Mr. Speaker, farmers are getting back their share of the GRIP surplus the same way that we wound down tripartites for beef and hogs and honey; the surpluses were redistributed to the people who contributed them, and in addition to that we've taken most of our provincial share and put it back into agriculture. So I think on balance that that has been a very fair treatment of Saskatchewan farmers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is also to the Premier and I am pleased that he has seen it appropriate to selectively answer some of them. Since this question pertains to him in particular, perhaps he will deign us with an answer.

And this question comes from Elroy Schneider from St. Walburg, and he asks: Mr. Premier, since I am quitting farming, having gone broke because of your GRIP changes, why can't my share of the total \$180 million GRIP fund be paid directly to me so I can pay off my creditors? If not, would you consider returning the government contribution of your pension plan to the government coffers? Would you do that, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, again the farmers' share of GRIP surplus is being returned to them. In fact better than waiting until the program is wound down and paying it out at that time, we have taken the extra step of deferring payments so that they haven't had to make the payments in '94 that would then be refunded to them. So again I think the answer is the same as before. We have treated the farmers under GRIP as fairly as we could, given the financial burden that we have in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Rail Strike Legislation

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have just heard from a number of Saskatchewan farmers who believe this government has attacked farm families in this province. And now the NDP (New Democratic Party) in Ottawa has teamed up with the Quebec separatists to block back-to-work legislation to end the rail strike. In fact this morning I heard a former NDP MLA, John Solomon, defending the obstructive tactics of the NDP caucus. I know the Premier likes to say, a Tory is a Tory is a Tory. Well a New Democrat is a New Democrat is a New Democrat. And New Democrats like John Solomon are putting their union friends' interests ahead of the best interests of Saskatchewan farmers and other industries.

Mr. Premier, have you spoken to your NDP colleagues in Ottawa? Have you explained to them how their NDP tactics are hurting our province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the members opposite that clearly we have been very consistent in our position that we would have appreciated and have wanted a negotiated settlement.

And we made that clear as early as last Tuesday and introduced a motion in the House, worked on a motion in the House with the members of the opposition, that clearly stated the preference of this Assembly; not only the government but the members of the opposition, with the exception of trying to get the Liberals to vote on this motion because they simply weren't here for the vote.

But to get to the point, we have had a position in this Assembly, opposition members and government members, that we supported a negotiated settlement. You've spoke to it; you voted for it. But at the end and as an end result when all else failed, the back-to-work legislation was in order.

That legislation has now been introduced in the House of Commons and we see no reason at this point in time to hold it up, and that is our position, especially when you have both the union — the main union involved — and the railways also saying that back-to-work legislation is in order. And I quote:

CAW president Buzz Hargrove said in Toronto that he told both the Bloc and the NDP on Monday morning that there was absolutely no advantage or reason for them to delay the legislation.

We agree with that. I hope that the members opposite agree. And later today we'll be introducing a motion under rule 17 that will ask for that . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, maybe you should explain that to your federal counterparts then, because it is them, along with the Quebec separatists, that is holding up this back-to-work legislation, and you're aware of that, and all Saskatchewan farm families are aware of that as well.

This is very typical behaviour for the NDP and the Liberals in Ottawa. First the Liberals, including the Agriculture minister from Saskatchewan, attacked farmers in Saskatchewan by destroying the Crow. Then the NDP, including five NDP MPs from Saskatchewan, attacked farmers by blocking back-to-work legislation. That's your party that's doing that, Mr. Premier — standing for the union leaders instead of Saskatchewan farmers.

I guess that's not surprising when you look and see how you people also attacked Saskatchewan farmers by gutting the GRIP program and taking \$188 million away from farm families.

Mr. Premier, how can you pretend to speak for Saskatchewan farmers when you and your NDP colleagues in Ottawa attack

farm families again and again and again?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite, the Leader of the Conservative Party, would listen, he would know that what he says is absolute nonsense.

The fact of the matter is that everyone wanted a negotiated settlement. You wanted a negotiated settlement; you voted for that motion last Tuesday. We wanted a negotiated settlement. We said at the end of the day if negotiations didn't work, back-to-work legislation would be in order.

The railways agree with that position put by the legislature in Saskatchewan. The union, CAW (Canadian Auto Workers), agrees with that position. We're all in agreement. And for you to stand here and say that there's any other motive of anyone in this House or of the union or of the railway, is nothing short of playing politics with the lives and economic future of our farmers. And that is unfair.

I say to you again that we have voted on this motion in the House, and I challenge you to support the motion which we are going to move under rule 17 later today which asks for speedy passage of the legislation . . . will see the grain and commodities moving in and out of the province by rail.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Patronage Appointments

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This NDP government is becoming more and more like their Tory predecessors of old. It has become secretive, arrogant, and defensive. And yesterday we tabled a memo which advised the dismissal of all members of the SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) board with no consideration at all for their qualifications as board members.

The Premier would not even defend his own actions. Today I ask the Premier once again: was it NDP practice to dismiss Saskatchewan people from their board appointments just because they weren't New Democrats?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, on August 24, 1992 the Liberal leader speaking in this House on a discussion we had with respect to how the civil service should be competent and impartial, said the following, on page 2963:

I don't think that it's unreasonable for people, whether they be a New Democratic government or otherwise to hire people, whether they be New Democrats or anybody, as long as they're competent.

That was your policy in 1992. I think that's a policy in 1992 which she probably doesn't stick to in 1995. Certainly the federal Liberals don't stick to it, judging by their list of patronages in Saskatchewan and in Canada. I think it's a reasonable statement of our position.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan look to this particular Premier to tell the whole truth, whether it's about patronage or about Phoenix Advertising. People look to the Premier to bring the truth to light. And when the Premier won't answer serious allegations, when he buries the Phoenix report, people lose trust in his leadership.

Let me refresh the memory of the Premier. Today I tabled two more lists generated by the Milenkovic memo — one for SaskTel, one from SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation) — further evidence that entire boards were dismissed, Mr. Speaker, entire boards without evaluation, on the basis of nothing but pure politics.

Mr. Premier, will you justify today, how, with no evaluation of these people, you arrived at a decision to simply dismiss all — all of them. If not politics, then what was the deciding factor?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm more than happy to respond to the inconsistencies of the Liberal leader, the member for Greystone, who seems to take one position in 1992 in which, as the Premier has indicated, she indicates that it's unreasonable for people, whether they be New Democratic government or otherwise, to hire people whether they be new Democrats or anybody as long as they're competent. That's her position in 1992.

I don't know what has changed, Mr. Speaker, because in recent days we have heard the Liberal leader talk about it from a different point of view, saying in fact that she would make patronage appointments. She has said that on the radio. She is quoted in the newspaper and she is quoted in other places.

That's different than what the policy of this government is, Mr. Speaker, because the policy of this government is we will, as we have in the past, appoint people to boards and commissions who will support the policies of the government, who are competent and can do the job, and not because they would have any particular ties to any particular affiliation.

And there is a long and substantive list of people who have been appointed to boards and commissions who are clearly not New Democrats, including our present candidates of the Liberal Party in constituencies where they happen to have been nominated.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Investigation of Phoenix Advertising

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Premier will have the courage to answer this one today. Mr. Speaker, on the issue of patronage there is no bigger patron for Phoenix Advertising than this particular government, a company that is the subject of a prosecutor's report that the Justice minister refuses to make public.

In 1993 the government referred the Milgaard case to the Alberta Justice minister on the grounds that the Saskatchewan government was too close to the issue. And the Saskatchewan

Justice minister at the time, and I quote: we did that because two members of this legislature were involved in the investigation. End of quote.

Mr. Speaker, the government is too close to the Phoenix case as well. Phoenix has benefited from millions of dollars of government contracts. The Minister of Economic Development, as it is apparent, has worked out of the office. And the connections go on and on.

In these cases, Mr. Speaker, standard practice is to refer the issue out of province.

My question to the Premier is: given that your Justice minister refused to make the prosecutor's report public, will you now do the right thing, Mr. Premier, and refer the report to an ethics commissioner in one of our neighbouring provinces for an impartial review?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the member from Greystone, the Liberal leader, who from day to day seems to change her position on almost every issue that there is in the front of Saskatchewan, and read to her a letter that has come from one of the people in the industry, Tap Communications Inc., in which clearly they say — and this is not the only one; they all support the policy of open tendering, where people can bid openly for advertising, communications work — in which Mr. Penner says, I remember a time not so long ago when there was no opportunity to bid on government work. The change that you have instituted is still very refreshing, and we look forward to future competitions.

That's a vindication of the policy of this government, and that's clearly different than what exists with Liberal governments, as is the case in Ottawa under the federal Liberal administration which this Liberal leader supports, Mr. Speaker, and is a part of.

And I want to quote to you and the House, Barrie McKenna, parliamentary bureau, who recently reported the first major piece of government advertising business awarded under new policy guidelines introduced last May by Public Works minister, David Dingwall, was split by two agencies with close Liberal ties — Vickers & Benson Advertising Ltd. of Toronto and BCP Stratégie Créativité of Montreal. Both companies had lent some of their top talent to help the Liberals get elected in the 1993 campaign.

Mr. Speaker, that's Liberal policy. That's not the policy of this New Democratic . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ACS Employee Conflict of Interest

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister responsible for ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan). Mr. Minister, on Friday you promised to investigate what appears to be a conflict of interest by an ACS employee who was moonlighting as a

private bill collector. Mr. Minister, what have you found out about the matter and what action are you taking?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, we are still reviewing this matter, and we will continue to do that until we are satisfied whether or not there is any conflict of interest or any wrongdoing. And we will investigate this very carefully.

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, farmers — and there are thousands of them in this province who deal with ACS — need to be certain that their confidential files are not being misused. Already on last Friday afternoon, you were saying that there was no indication that information was used improperly, that you had already had a quick look at it, that this individual has not taken the personal files of Saskatchewan farmers with him to his private bill-collecting job. And yet you have the audacity to stand in the House on Tuesday now and say that you haven't done anything yet. And you were quick to point out to the media on Friday afternoon that there was no impropriety.

Mr. Minister, that's not acceptable. Bring the whole goods to the House as you've got them, and tell the farmers of this province that their records have not been misused.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know where again the member is coming from. On Friday he brought it to the House, which was the first time it had been brought to my attention. I of course immediately telephoned out to ACS to get information.

The initial information I got is that we have not found any conflict of interest. Now we are certainly continuing to investigate, as the member opposite is asking, to investigate this thoroughly, and of course we will. And it is impossible to investigate thoroughly in one day a file as serious as this.

The member is making serious allegations and I certainly hope that he has some information for those allegations. And if he has information that would help us to investigate this, I wish he would bring them forward because we are going to get to the bottom of it. We view this as a serious charge, which indeed it is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Minister, I remind you, and this is the conflict of interest formula that all government employees have to subscribe to: a conflict of interest in any situation in which a public employee attempts to promote a private or personal interest which results, or appears to result, in a gain or an advantage by virtue of his position in the public service. End quote.

Now, Mr. Minister, when Falcon was contacted on Friday, they denied that this individual even worked for them. And yet you know full well that to be the case.

Mr. Minister, whether any impropriety occurred or not, there are thousands of farm families in this province who have had their confidential information accessible by this individual, who then works for a private bill-collecting agency, whether they want to acknowledge it or not. And what we want from you is what action you've taken on this issue; are you not just going to sweep it under the rug, sir?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Obviously, Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member opposite. We should investigate this carefully. He's made a very serious allegation and I hope, when we do get to the bottom of this, that there is some grounds for his allegation and he's not just playing politics with somebody's name.

But we certainly are going to investigate this very thoroughly. You asked me what I've done. We took a very quick, preliminary look at it, did not find any wrongdoing or misuse of information.

We certainly are going to continue until we investigate this very, very thoroughly. And if indeed there was inappropriate action taken, or if information was misused, then we will take very strong appropriate action.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's not for ministerial statements that I rise, but it is to ask leave to introduce guests. Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you a group of English as second language students, eight of them seated in the Speaker's gallery, who are with us here today and were here for question period.

I know that all members recognize this program as being part of the SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) program here in the province. And I want to wish the students a warm welcome to the Assembly, and look forward to meeting with them — or the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden — shortly after we complete our task here in the House. So we look forward to meeting with you. I'm sure all members would want to welcome the students here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mrs. Bergman: — To introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to introduce to you and through you to the

members of the Assembly, a colleague who sat in the House from 1956 to 1967 — behind the bar, Mr. Wilf Gardiner, who was the minister of Public Works in the Thatcher government from 1964 to 1967.

And I ask all members to join me in welcoming our colleague today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 50 — An Act to amend The Expropriation Act and The Expropriation Procedure Act (Land and Chattels)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Expropriation Act and The Expropriation Procedure Act (Land and Chattels).

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

Bill No. 51 — An Act to amend The Student Assistance and Student Aid Fund Act, 1985

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that a Bill to amend The Student Assistance and Student Aid Fund Act, 1985 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

Bill No. 52 — An Act to amend The Teachers' Federation Act

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Teachers' Federation Act be now introduced and read a first time.

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

PRIORITY OF DEBATE

Disposition of Federal Legislation

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to rule 17 to move a motion of urgent . . . before orders of the day, to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity. I wrote to you as pursuant to the rules, Mr. Speaker, earlier today to inform you that I wish to move a motion in the Assembly this afternoon respecting the disposition of the federal legislation designed to resolve the current impasse between labour and management which is reflected in rail transportation.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this is a very urgent matter, and I ask you to rule on it now.

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

Mr. Neudorf: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What's the member's point of order?

Mr. Neudorf: — I'd like to speak to the rule 17 motion as the member has brought it up.

The Speaker: — As members full know, under the new rules the member gives notice and then the Speaker will decide whether or not it is in order.

I wish to inform the members that the request for priority of debate under rule 17 was received in the Clerk's office at 11:43 a.m. today. Revised rules for discussing matters of urgent public importance were adopted by this Assembly on March 1, 1994. This notice has not met the time requirements for filing the notice pursuant to rule 17.2.

Also under rule 17.2, the notice is required to contain a statement why the matter is of urgent public importance. In this case, I find the member has not attempted to make his case in his written notice as required under the rule, but rather appears to be simply giving notice of his intention to request leave to proceed with the motion.

I therefore find that the notice does not fulfil the requirements for priority of debate under rule 17.

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And then, Mr. Speaker, with leave of the Assembly and pursuant to rule 42, I would like to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity. And that is a motion that would address the labour-management dispute that we have before us with regards to the federal government's dealing with that dispute.

Mr. Speaker, the motion goes like this:

That this Assembly urge all federal members of parliament to cooperate in reaching an immediate conclusion to the current labour-management dispute. And we demand that the federal government immediately begin work on a national transportation policy which would protect our producers on products by ensuring that Saskatchewan maintains its reputation as a reliable supplier of export products.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Leave granted.

MOTION UNDER RULE 42

National Transportation Policy Urged

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the leave of the Assembly to be able to rise and speak on this issue today.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, it is a very important issue that we face before us. And that is, in the whole terms of moving products to port and ensuring that Saskatchewan producers are able to maintain their livelihoods and ensure that the

Saskatchewan economy is to survive, that we must address any crises that might come before us.

And as you know, Mr. Speaker, the process on this side of the House — and I believe very, very strongly in — is the negotiation process, the collective bargaining process. But there are times, Mr. Speaker, when those processes do not succeed. And, Mr. Speaker, this is one of those times. And when they do not succeed, it is incumbent upon governments to ensure that the nation as a whole does not suffer any consequences that might be negative to the economy.

Mr. Speaker, the whole transportation issue has become quite controversial the last few weeks and that you will know that the federal government moved to destroy the age-old tradition of the Crow benefit and the transportation policy in this country. They did it, Mr. Speaker, first of all, without any thought as to how the payment should be made. Secondly, they did it without any transportation . . . without any thought as to how the transportation industry in this country should be organized.

We need and we have been calling for on this side of the House from Saskatchewan for years a national transportation policy that will address the needs and concerns of not only the people in the transportation industry, but also those people who produce the products, who process the products, and who market the products abroad.

Without a national transportation policy, Mr. Speaker, a policy that would outline transportation corridors, an organization of the industry from the ship's hold right back to the primary producer no matter how many steps that would take . . . It is important that we do that, Mr. Speaker. Because without that, the consequence can be what we're seeing today.

And the result of what we're seeing today, the potential, the strike, lockout situation is that Canada might lose its advantage in the world markets with regards to the very valuable and high quality products that we produce. Whether it be potash, Mr. Speaker, whether it be uranium or grain or any other product, it is important that the federal government maintain its responsibility.

Now a national transportation policy, Mr. Speaker, is something that I have no idea why the federal government is not pursuing. We see strikes, lockouts, labour disputes across this country from time to time. Although for the most part they're negotiated settlements, but from time to time we see impasses.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, with a national transportation policy where everybody knows where they fit in the scheme of things and the importance and how they're . . . what their job is in terms of getting our products to market and how important that job is, could go a long way to alleviating these types of disputes.

We must maintain the collective bargaining process; it is essential. But with a more organized system, Mr. Speaker, I think that we could see these processes go along much more smoothly.

So, Mr. Speaker, I call upon and we call upon all the federal members of parliament to immediately cooperate and find a conclusion to the current labour-management dispute, because this is that important. We call upon the federal government to not only begin work but to consult all the other provinces, to have input from every province in Canada, with regards to a national transportation policy.

We have to have input, not only from the provinces but beyond that as well. We have to have input from the rail system, from the trucking industry, from the ports, from the producers and the manufacturers and all those others who are so important to the system.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen in the past few days what I would call a very, very weak Minister of Agriculture in Canada, where we see the federal minister, Mr. Speaker, not standing up for the farmers of western Canada with regards to the inadequacy of the buy-out of the Crow benefit.

Now the federal Liberal government wanted to destroy the . . . or tried to put the nail in the coffin of prairie farmers by taking away, eliminating, the Crow benefit, using GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) as the excuse. I would wonder why, Mr. Speaker, they would not challenge the U.S. (United States) government to eliminate the export enhancement program.

Why does the export enhancement program have nothing to do with the GATT negotiations, or very little? Or why doesn't it have to be cancelled if the Liberal government is claiming that the GATT process forced them to cancel the Crow benefit?

These types of moves, Mr. Speaker, simply do not fall in favour of Saskatchewan farmers. And secondly, when they destroyed the Crow benefit, when they took it away, the farmers of Saskatchewan were left in the lurch with regards to any organization of how that were to be paid out.

And this is all part of the transportation system, Mr. Speaker, for the future. If we don't have these organizations in transportation, we're going to lose. So we have western farmers . . . I had a call the other day from a farmer who said, I want to lease land. He said, do I include . . . I want to include the fact that the federal Minister of Agriculture says that the landowner only is going to get the payment of the Crow benefit, the pay-out of the Crow benefit. And he says, I want to include that into my lease, my bid for the lease. But, he says, I have other people, other farmers around me who are much older than I am, much more established than I am, who are saying they're not going to take that into account. So I, as a young farmer, am being discriminated against.

And Mr. Goodale in Ottawa and the Liberals have not put forward a plan whereby this young farmer can make an informed decision or compete with an established farmer to rent land. Is that the kind of scenario that we need in Saskatchewan?

We see the federal minister putting forward a policy saying the landowners are going to be paid, and then getting down on his knees and begging the banks and other financial institutions

into flowing that payment through to the renters. He gets down on his knees to provincial governments and say, well maybe provincial government should enact some legislation to make this payment flow through to renters.

Well what kind of an organization, Mr. Speaker, in the industry, in the whole industry, do we have with a person that is not competent enough to put out a plan of action to reinforce his political policy, his public policy?

I mean it may be great politics, he may think it's great politics, but, Mr. Speaker, mark my words, this is going to backfire on Mr. Goodale.

I've seen a number of issues come up at the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) meeting, the transportation issues and how it affects producers of Saskatchewan, from the young person trying to establish a lease and establish what grains to grow so that he knows what his transportation rates . . . and before he knows what his transportation rate is, as the case is right now, people making seeding plans without knowing what the rate might be after July 31.

Mr. Speaker, this minister, federal Minister of Agriculture from Saskatchewan, has sorely let down the people of this province — sorely. That is why we have to in this House, again bring forward — and I would hope that the members from the Liberal Party would hang around and vote this time — bring forward a motion to encourage all those members of parliament in Ottawa to come to a conclusion and stop the lock/strike-out position with the rail unions so that we can get our products moving again.

(1430)

And more importantly, or as importantly, or maybe more importantly than that, Mr. Speaker, to have the federal government, have this House, with hopefully the Liberal members voting this time, encouraging the federal party, the federal Liberal government, to put forward at least a framework or start the process to put forward a framework for a national transportation policy that will ensure the prairie farmers, potash producers and other producers and manufacturers can maintain their position in the world markets.

Mr. Speaker, I wish we didn't have to do this. But as I said at the SARM meeting the other day up in Saskatoon that I attended, question after question after question of Mr. Goodale was put forward on his ability to organize this portfolio and to influence the transportation industry to help organize the agriculture industry to maintain our position in the world markets.

Why would the people have to stand up and ask the questions? They asked the questions because he was unable, he was not able, incompetent, not able to do his job. And I think Saskatchewan farmers are finally seeing that.

I want to repeat, using GATT — and this really irks me — using GATT as an excuse to take away the Crow benefit which

is an integral part of our transportation system, Mr. Speaker; not saying a word, actually not really telling the truth, because GATT doesn't say we have to take away the Crow benefit.

GATT said we had to make our programs green. Did the Americans use GATT to take away EEP (export enhancement program)? If the federal Government of Canada, federal Liberal government puts forward a policy to pay \$1.6 billion out to the farm landowners to compensate them for the decrease in land price . . . because that's his argument. Because he didn't put forward a flow-through, although after that he tried to start making up . . . trying to talk other people into it.

Where's the compensation, Mr. Speaker? Where is Mr. Goodale when it comes to compensation for the damage that the export enhancement program has placed upon the farm families of Saskatchewan? Where was Mr. Goodale when the subsidy, the EEP subsidy on barley, was more than half of the export price of barley? Where was he?

Was he fighting for Saskatchewan farmers? Did they work on the program on behalf of Saskatchewan farmers? I think not. I think all Mr. Goodale did was use GATT as an excuse to cut yet more support for Saskatchewan farm families, and indeed the whole Saskatchewan economy — a federal minister from Saskatchewan who should know better and should have more heart than to do something like that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know other colleagues want to join in this debate, so I will take my place. But I would urge all members of this House, all members of this House to support this motion. Because it is important that we have unanimous support.

Now I don't know if the Liberal members are going to vote on this or not. They've missed all the other votes when it comes to their federal counterparts. But I encourage them to stand in your place . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well you can wipe your brow, Madam Leader of the Liberal Party, but it's true; you walked out.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I think the member knows that it's a standing tradition here in this House that you do not refer to a member not being present or absent in this House. The member is not to refer to the presence or absentee of a member in this House.

Mr. Upshall: — Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I did know that and I just got a little incensed by the actions of the Liberal leader. So I apologize for that.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to move that this Assembly, seconded by the member from Melville:

That this Assembly urge all federal members of parliament to cooperate in reaching an immediate conclusion to the current labour-management dispute; and we demand that the federal government immediately begin work on a national transportation policy which would protect our producers and products by ensuring that Saskatchewan maintains its reputation as a reliable supplier of export products.

I so move.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Carlson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I'm able to enter this debate. I talked about the . . . last week on the emergency debate on the labour problems and labour disputes at the west coast, and I talked about the importance of having a transportation system that functions 300, 365 days a year.

But today, Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a few minutes talking a little bit about what's happening in my own community in Melville. It is a railroad terminal. And my friends and my neighbours, and in fact my brother, have been out on the picket line. And a big percentage of these individuals are also farmers. These are my farm neighbours and my friends. What they're telling me, what they told me yesterday, is that there's no transportation policy; something has been taken away and there's nothing there to replace it.

And I also heard stories about how in the last 6, 7, 8 years, there's no repairs being done on the tracks and on the cars. They're just being run and run and run and nobody's inspecting them, nobody's repairing them. And we all know what's been happening.

There's been quite a few costly derailments in the last little while. And when I talk to the employees in Melville and I say, what seems to be going on, they say, well that's simple; I mean nothing gets fixed any more.

And, Mr. Speaker, as a farmer in the fall when you're getting ready to harvest and if you don't go through your combine and check all the chains and the bearings and the belts and repair them prior to harvest and replace them, I can guarantee you're going to be doing it during harvest, and you're going to have problems. That's the way the Canadian National Railway has been operating in the last few years. They have not been repairing; they've just been patchwork.

Short of employees; overtime, overtime, overtime. No plan as far as replacing employees. I mean when I hired out on the railroad, Mr. Speaker, in 1971, I worked till 1977. And when I resigned in 1977 I had as many people in front of me in seniority as I had behind me. And if I was in that workplace today, I would have very few behind me. Everybody behind me has been weeded out. So you're looking at a lot of employees with a tremendous amount of service, and they still want to try and do some more cutting but they don't know where to start.

About four or five years ago, my niece got hired out and she worked for a couple summers while she was going to university. She got her degree, she worked till Christmas time, and she had some health problems so she was off for a couple of months. And now that she had her degree she thought maybe she would resign — 23-years-old, Mr. Speaker. She thought she maybe would resign. But she thought she'd see what would happen.

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Well lo and behold, in March she didn't get a letter from the company that if she would resign she'd get a \$65,000 buy-out. A 23-year-old employee. A \$65,000 buy-out; \$45,000 into an RRSP (registered retirement savings plan).

And now they've got no employees. Now they're wondering where they're going to go. And they blame the workers. And the workers are not necessarily always the ones that should take the brunt of this because it's management that made the decision on buying out young employees, employees that had a future in the company. And what did they do? They bought them out.

And then they went to the older employees in the same contract and said, we've got this idea of a furlough board. Well what the furlough board means, Mr. Speaker, is you can sit at home when you're not needed, do nothing, and get 80 per cent of your wages. Eighty per cent of your wages to sit at home. That was the company's proposal; that wasn't the union's proposal. And then they wonder why there's a problem.

It's been a problem with CN (Canadian National) management for a millennium — that they don't know how to run a railroad. And it's showing up, year in and year out.

And the answer is not necessarily to say, oh bingo, let's get everything back to work and everything will be happy again. Sure, the symptoms will go away, our products will move, and we all would applaud that. But we've got to get to the bottom of the problem about relationship between the railroad and the workers.

It would be just like if you had a horse in a barn, and it had a broken barn door and the horse keeps getting out all the time. You've got two choices: you can fix the barn door or shoot the horse. If you shoot the horse, the horse isn't getting out of the barn door any more, but you still have a broken barn door and you're not going to have a horse. But if you tie the horse up, take some time to fix the barn door, you'll have something that's functioning again.

And that's the problem that's been happening over the years in transportation — the railroad, the dock workers — is that there's been no concise plan put forward whereby there's a long-term relationship between the workers and between management where there's not going to be problems, because there's always knee-jerk reactions to situations that arise overnight. And no long commitment, no plan.

And that's what's been lacking in this country. When we see the Crow gone, of course farmers are wondering, where's our product going to go? The railroad workers and farmers, my neighbours, are saying, well I don't know where my product's going to go; and as an employee of the railroad, I don't where my job is going to go. Because I don't know where my product's going to go, which direction it's going to go.

Will I have a job in transportation or won't I have a job in transportation? If I don't have a job in transportation, how's my product going to get to work that I do as a farmer when I'm not working on the railroad?

And that is the key to the question today. It's not whether they should be legislated back or whether they shouldn't be legislated back. What we need is a long-term plan in transportation that's going to function and function smooth, so that farmers and workers and companies that move the grain will have their product moved through the system smoothly, efficiently, and on time so that everybody gets the most out of the system.

And, Mr. Speaker, until we achieve that, nothing's going to change. Like I said before, nothing will change — we'll always have work stoppages and slow-downs and problems within the system. And that's why it's encompassing that the companies, the unions, and the government set aside sort of all their differences, and they have to come out with a plan.

And I guess it boils down to the federal government having to take leadership in this area. Somebody has to take the leadership. So that, Mr. Speaker, is why I wanted to rise today to speak on the importance of the resolution. I feel that as a member from Melville, where it is a railroad terminal, a farming area, a major farming area in the province, and like I said before, with friends and neighbours farming and working on the railroad, people that I know well, I felt that I had to speak out today on this.

And I think it's — like I said before — it's very, very important because we need to have an efficient system. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to close my remarks and thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to get into this debate today, but somewhat confused from listening to the remarks from the member from Humboldt and the member from Melville. In fact it's of no surprise to anyone who's been following the problems with grain handling disputes, the fact that the member from Humboldt would try and actually remove themselves from some of the problems that their cousins in Ottawa are creating for the farmers of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and that's in fact why they brought in a softly worded motion today. And in fact at the end of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will move an amendment to the motion which will, I think, more clearly focus on what the problem really is, Mr. Speaker.

In fact when I look at today's *Leader-Post*, Tuesday, March 21, now the member from Humboldt and the member from Melville were both trying to lay the blame of this dispute at the feet of the federal government, but in fact that's not where it is at all. In fact the headline says: "Foes slow Grit rail bill". And foes — well let's talk about who those foes are, Mr. Speaker. Let me quote from the first couple of paragraphs:

A rail strike that has derailed commuters and paralysed grain shipments could last until late this week or into next week after the Bloc Quebecois and NDP (the cousins of those people across) sidetracked a back-to-work bill Monday.

(1445)

And this, Mr. Speaker, is a Bill that means so much to this province and so much to the working people — the farmers, the people in rural Saskatchewan.

And it goes on:

The Liberal government's attempt to fast-track the legislation was blocked when the BQ and NDP refused to waive the usual 48-hour notice and allow the bill to be introduced.

So, Mr. Speaker, clearly it's the federal government that's trying to move on behalf of the farmers of Saskatchewan and bring this to some sort of a conclusion so that we don't put the agri-business of Saskatchewan and the farmers in Saskatchewan in a position where they can't move their product.

And you know when I hear the rhetoric from the member from Humboldt . . . You know it's obvious that the fact the problem the grain shipments are being held up has nothing to do with the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food and for the federal government. However we do know that the member from Humboldt is playing some petty politics. In fact in his silly game of politics, on one hand he's trying to protect the unions who they hope will come out and help them at election time, and on the other hand he's hoping that they can do this in such a fashion as to perhaps not put seats like his own into jeopardy. Well I'm telling him, he might as well do the right thing for the farmers of Saskatchewan because your seat's gone anyway.

Mr. Speaker, actually we've had a few calls today already on this issue. And you know what they're saying? There's a lot of concern out there in Canada, but in Saskatchewan, rural Saskatchewan, that perhaps what's really happening is a bit of a trade-off. Now the people find it so strange that in fact the NDP and Bloc Québécois would join forces in halting up this very, very important legislation which means so much to the farmers of this province.

But in fact, what they're curious about is perhaps there was a deal struck where — and I'm not the one saying that there has been; I'm just telling what we're hearing, and the concerns of the people — that there's been a deal struck that perhaps if the Bloc Québécois will support the NDP's protection of the unions in the province or in Canada, that perhaps the . . . on the other hand, the New Democrats are going to help the Bloc Québécois in, in fact, destroying Canada.

I can only hope that's not the case, but it makes one wonder when we see such stuff coming from the member from Humboldt and the member from Melville. They are not standing up in their places to defend the farmers as they would like to have people believe.

In fact when we talk about the problems that are coming up — it seems like day after day after day now — that farmers are facing moving the grain from their farm gate until it's loaded on the vessel and shipped to other countries, do you know, Mr. Speaker, that it goes through some 20-odd labour contracts? Twenty contracts that have to be dealt in one form or another

before the farmers of this province and the farmers of Canada can be assured that they can go out and on their own become what in this House we keep saying they have to be — the best they can be in the agri-food business.

And you people are just going to stand there, play politics . . . and labour contract after labour contract — they can do this some 20 times, Mr. Speaker, and this isn't fair to the farmers of Saskatchewan that they would play these kind of games.

But you know, one thing that is going to be a bit of a surprise, I think, if the members opposite would pick up today's *Leader-Post* and take a look at what the farm groups are saying. In fact I heard on the radio today where the president of Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, Leroy Larsen, was making comments that perhaps, you know, these labour disputes are in fact going to put our reputation as a reliable supplier of commodities at risk throughout the world at a time when we really can't afford . . . we're talking about diversification. We're talking about farmers taking a risk, trying to move themselves into other products and other commodities.

What they can't stand, Mr. Speaker, is to have forces that are outside of their control — labour disputes — affect the shipments of their product, stop their income so that they don't have a chance, especially now when we're only a few weeks away from spring seeding in the south-west part of the province.

And look at what you're doing. People are out there. They have to have this product moved to port. They're buying fertilizer. They're buying seed. They're repairing equipment. And you know what you're doing, you and your cousins in Ottawa? You're putting it all at risk. And I say shame on you — shame on you.

Let's see what a few other people are saying, Mr. Speaker. In fact here's a quote from Jim Feeny of CN Rail.

"We felt the only way this thing would be quickly resolved was through legislation. If (the Bill) is delayed, it will cause further impact on customers . . ."

"(The delay) will impose more hardship and will cost customers more."

Exactly what I was saying here, Mr. Speaker, yet I don't hear those members speaking on behalf of the farmers. What they would rather do is lay blame on somebody's feet when all they really and truly have to do is phone up their federal cousins, Mr. Speaker, and they should be able to do that because a handful of them or the majority of the federal party . . . if it is called a party; I have no idea what the status of the federal New Democrats is today. But if they would just pick up the phone and tell them how important this means to the farmers out here.

You know it's . . . I'm sure that there are times when it's best for them to perhaps promote the unions — closer to election times — for the federal guys. But don't you see how you're . . . You know you're not only playing foolish politics, but you're putting the farmers at risk just before an election here in the province.

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And I think that's going to come around and haunt you soon.

Let's see what other people say. Here is Patty Rosher of the Canadian Wheat Board in Winnipeg:

Farmers can't ship grain this week because last week's product is still backed up, said Patty Rosher of the Canadian Wheat Board in Winnipeg. Delays will cost the grain industry millions, she added.

They're going to cost millions, she added. Now here again we go. You know the members opposite talk about the lack of support through transportation subsidies, lack of financial support through the federal budget. And yet time after time after time . . . it doesn't matter if we're talking GRIP contracts which they broke through retroactive legislation against the farmers, but what they did, Mr. Speaker, was they left — I think it was — some \$300 million from the federal government, they left it on the table because they refused to put their own up because they don't have faith of the agri-business here, right here in Saskatchewan; should be ashamed.

Let's see what others have to say.

The largest handler of Prairie grain is already feeling the pinch.

At the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Vancouver terminal, grain handlers loaded two ships Monday, but the facility has only enough grain to load vessels for a couple more days.

I could go on and on and on of quotes from some of the people involved in the agri-food business, but you know it even goes beyond that, Mr. Speaker.

When we're talking about potash, how's that going to affect the shipments of potash which, you know, for the jobs of this province, for the finances, the taxation they bring in, from the movement of potash in this province, and they're also putting that at risk.

They're not prepared to fight for those jobs up in the potash mines, because they feel that it's appropriate for the federal cousins, the NDP in Ottawa, to carry on with such behaviour, making deals behind people's backs, just for their own political achievements.

You know, and we have Ford Canada. I guess they've closed down one plant already and looking at perhaps closing more down. We have steel. That's affecting IPSCO right here in Regina. I don't think the members opposite realize the impact of what they're doing when they allow their federal counterparts . . . and they know them well; I mean they're all from the same ridings right here in the province. But they're not willing to take a stand for the right people in this province, the ones that aren't trying to make a go of it off somebody else's back, but are out there fighting for themselves on their own farms. And where are you people? Nowhere to be seen again.

In fact it was yesterday that the federal New Democrat, Bill Blaikie from Winnipeg Transcona, spoke strongly against

Lucienne Robillard's back-to-work legislation in the debate yesterday. Well it's one thing for Bill Blaikie to stand up, protect the unions and not really care what happens in this province, but I'll tell you it's quite another when members across are not going to stand up and fight for the farmers.

Well I'll tell you, within months you're going to have to go to the polls and you're going to have explain some of your actions.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move an amendment to the motion by:

Removing all the words after "that" and substituting them with the following:

this Assembly urge the Premier to immediately communicate with his federal colleagues in the New Democrat Party an urgent message imploring the federal NDP to cease their obstruction of federal back-to-work legislation that would force an end to the current rail strike and enable Saskatchewan farmers to get their grain to port.

I so move, seconded by the member from Regina North West, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Upshall: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What's your point of order?

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you read carefully the first motion and that: "That this Assembly urge all members of the federal parliament . . ." I believe that covers every member of every party, and which is covered I believe in the member's amendment.

So I would ask you to look carefully to see that the motion is in order or not, on that basis. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I've listened to the member's point of order but I find the amendment in order, and debate will continue on the amendment and the main motion.

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very happy to enter into this debate because not only do we have to cooperate in reaching an immediate conclusion to the federal labour-management dispute which impacts greatly on Saskatchewan farm families, the federal government also has to put its mind to a national transportation policy.

Mr. Speaker, you will likely know that by axing the Crow, federal Liberals left Saskatchewan producers in a very precarious position. Federal Finance minister Mr. Martin said he'd deliver almost \$7 of spending cuts for every \$1 of new tax revenue over the next three years. This saving is at farmers' expense and does not follow any long-term debt management plan. And beyond that, it is totally unfair to Saskatchewan as a region.

Between 1995 and '96 and 1997-98, annual federal government department spending will drop by 1.4 billion in transportation

and 450 million in agriculture. This is also at farmers' expense because program and service cuts will directly affect farmers and their families.

Farmers need to get farmers' produce to port . . . the farmers' need — pardon me — to get their produce to port hasn't diminished. In fact it's increased because the farmers in Saskatchewan have been able to diversify their crop base to stay in farming.

(1500)

Eliminating the WGTA (Western Grain Transportation Act) subsidy saves the federal government approximately 2.6 billion over the next five years. Farmers will now have to pay double the present freight rate. This is going to be a complete change in our rural farm families. The average producer's freight rate in 1994-95 is \$14 a tonne. This will more than double to about \$31 a tonne.

Here's how much it will cost people in my constituency to deliver their produce, just to show you the impact of not having some sort of a policy when you're making cuts: Cut Knife, present rate, \$14.72 a tonne . . .

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

Mr. McPherson: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker

The Speaker: — Point of order.

Mr. McPherson: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to have you rule on whether the member that is speaking to the motion or the amended motion is even anywhere remotely close to the topic.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I have listened very carefully and I find the member is on the topic.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I definitely am on the topic.

I will continue showing the impact of the transportation policies and how they will impact people in my constituency. In Cut Knife, presently it costs \$14.72 to deliver the grain, the freight rate, and it's going up to \$31.07; Delmas, \$14.27, it is going to cost \$29.83; Lashburn, \$14.04, it is going up to \$29.18; Lloydminster, 13.82 up to 28.58; Maidstone — my home town — \$14.04 up to \$29.18; Marsden, \$14.94 up to \$31.73; Neilburg, \$14.94 up to \$31.73; Paynton, \$14.27 presently, it will go up to \$29.83; Waseca, \$14.04, and now it is going to go up to \$29.18. This is the implication of what is happening to us.

The second phase of the federal government's changes to transportation policy next year will also revise the way the Canadian Wheat Board obtains revenue for movements through the St. Lawrence Seaway, further increasing freight rate for delivery points in most of Saskatchewan. What I do understand, Mr. Speaker, is that this change will completely redraw the map of Saskatchewan.

And I don't think that the member for Shaunavon or the member from Regina North West realize that. These two developments result in an approximate loss of 320 million a year in net farm income in Saskatchewan — a drop in income of about 50 per cent for farm families. Any shortfall in grain prices will compound losses.

It is paramount that the federal government, in cooperation with provincial governments, must immediately develop a transportation policy that will assist producers, municipalities, rural communities, and truckers. We cannot continue this hit-and-miss attitude that sees strikes and lockouts.

Ottawa's changes to the regulatory system mean about 500 miles of light steel rail lines and another 3,000 miles of branch lines will be abandoned, affecting hundreds of Saskatchewan communities. Fast-tracking branch line abandonment means higher trucking and road maintenance costs.

It is urgent that the federal government do some work to establish a transportation plan. We have been left in the dark and this is unfair. I support the motion presented by the member from Humboldt. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I realize that you're very familiar with my constituency, and I'm glad you recognize it.

In 1897 Sir Wilfrid Laurier had a dream. The people of Canada had a dream. Their dream was a national transportation policy — a railway across the vast country of Canada from east to west. And that was completed. And then they realized that the Prairies had great potential for agriculture, great potential for producing great quality wheat and barley and oats and all kinds of great crops so that it could be exported to the people of the world.

And so there was a plan developed. And in that plan, the government of the day recognized the need . . . that farmers needed some help because they were a long ways from the port. And to get that good quality grain that we could produce in Canada to overseas markets and to other parts of the country, they would need to give the farmers something, because they just couldn't afford to ship that grain.

So what they did is they set up a Crow's Nest Pass Agreement. It was supposed to be in perpetuity. It was supposed to benefit the farmers of our country, to be able to ship this grain, this good quality grain to the rest of the world.

More than that, the railways were given land and mineral rights and other such goodies in lieu of . . . you know, putting this line across so that all Canadians could enjoy that benefit.

And then of course in 1984 that was changed. The government of the day decided that perpetuity didn't mean anything, would now be the WGTA rate. And then we had governments — Conservative and Liberal federal governments — chopping

away at it, year after year after year.

And finally now, in 1995 — February 27, a day that will go down in history, Mr. Speaker — it's gone, it's finished. Perpetuity agreements with the farm people of our province and of western Canada — history, it's gone.

Why I mention that, Mr. Speaker, is that we need a transportation plan. I mean Mr. Laurier in 1897 had a plan, a transportation plan, a policy for the country of Canada. The government of today . . . this is 1995, Mr. Speaker, and they haven't got the ability to come up with a transportation plan or program or vision for the country of Canada. I can't believe that. If they would sit down and relax and ask the farmers of Saskatchewan to develop that plan and that policy, that vision, they would be more than happy to help.

But the federal government, no, it's a unilateral decision; it's based in Ottawa in a big white building, and that's where the decisions are made. No thought of the farmer in Saskatchewan. No thought of what it's going to mean to the farmers of Saskatchewan.

The producers are confused. They're out there; they were getting ready to seed or they were planning what they were going to seed on February 27. All of a sudden, the rules change. They have to change their plans, and all because there is no vision; nobody's telling the farmers exactly what the transportation system is going to look like. All they know is they have to pay it out of their own pocket now, and that's all they know. And that's not fair.

The elimination of the Crow was based on the assumption that there were going to be efficiencies in the system. There were going to be efficiencies in the system, Mr. Speaker, and so that would take the place of the cost to the farmer. And so even though the farmer now has to pay 30 or \$35 a tonne instead of the 14 he used to pay, well there's going to be efficiencies in the system and that would cover the difference.

Well the first efficiency they talk about, Mr. Speaker, is the elimination of branch lines in the province of Saskatchewan. And I guess the CN and CP (Canadian Pacific) are certainly going to appreciate that, Mr. Speaker, because that efficiency is going to go directly into their pockets. The producer's going to pay because he's going to have to haul his grain further distance. The municipality's going to have to pay because they're going to have road damage. The province is going to have to pay because their highways are going to be destroyed.

Well certainly they're efficiencies, savings to the CN and CP, put on the backs of the producers. I guess if that's what efficiencies are, it's a very strange efficiency to me, but it certainly will save the CN and CP some money; there is no question about that.

And that's the only part of the plan, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't go any further than that. It gives a break to the CN and CP, and that's it. The federal government hasn't looked at the port system. They haven't looked at the main line system. They haven't looked at the elevator system. There is no plan. There is no vision.

And this is why, Mr. Speaker, I support the motion from the member from Humboldt. What we need in this province is a transportation policy, a vision for the future so that our producers know where they're going.

Legislating workers back to work, Mr. Speaker, is just a band-aid I guess. Certainly it would be better to negotiate. And this is what we urge: parties to negotiate a proper settlement, workers and companies getting together and deciding what is the best benefit package and the best working conditions and the best salaries that both are in agreement with.

In a case right now of ordering workers back to work, we support that in the sense that we have to get our grain to market. We have to satisfy the countries that are ordering our good quality grain. They want our good quality grain, and we have to provide that service.

But this is just a band-aid, Mr. Speaker. There has to be real negotiations between the companies and the workers. They have to sit down and decide what is fair to both. And that's what we hope will happen.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that at the SARM convention just the other day, Mr. Goodale I believe mentioned that really gun control registration would actually only cost \$85 million. And that's quite interesting because if we took that \$85 million, Mr. Speaker, that would mean \$2 an acre to the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan to help them with their transportation concerns. It may mean that they could upgrade the transportation system with \$85 million that they're going to spend of registering guns in Canada.

So this is where we see, you know, there's no vision. They spend money on one hand on something else. They allow the farmers to pay the whole bill. It's sort of scattered all over the place. Nobody knows what's happening.

And I want to close, Mr. Speaker, in support of the motion from the member from Humboldt.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to enter this debate in support of the main motion and in opposition to the amendment.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, it saddens me that we have to have this debate today in these chambers. It saddens me, Mr. Speaker, that we have a federal government in Ottawa who fails to put into place any long-term plans for our transportation industry. It strikes me as being quite strange, Mr. Speaker, that 27 per cent of our goods that are moved by transportation are moved through the rail system, and yet there's no long-term plan to maintain a credible, solid, secure transportation system to meet our country's economic needs.

As we know, Mr. Speaker, the lifeblood and mainstay of any economy is its ability to export and its ability to have its products at export position in a timely fashion that will ensure

the reputation of efficiency will be something that will draw the importers of the world to come back and buy the products from a nation, not only the first time but on return trips.

(1515)

And that, Mr. Speaker, should be the bottom line foundation of building a strong economy — the ability to transport quality goods to export positions to meet the time frame in which purchasers wish to take delivery of the products so it meets their ability to maintain their economies.

And it saddens me, Mr. Speaker, that we have a federal government that fails to recognize the tremendous impact that they are going to have as a result of their decisions in regards to our transportation system in this country.

As we know, Mr. Speaker, agriculture and the agricultural products produced, particularly the prairie provinces and more particularly here in Saskatchewan, plays a very important part and makes up a high percentage of our export products. As a colleague of mine has already mentioned, Mr. Speaker, the production of the quality of products that we produce in Saskatchewan here in particular, even with increased value added opportunities here and even with increased value added opportunities both in grain and livestock production, etc., etc., we still have a large percentage of our product that will be exported. And we must maintain a quality export system, transportation system, to ensure those exports get to market on time.

And if you look at other very successful countries who have been able to, over a period of years build up a strong, successful economy, those countries have all endeavoured to ensure that they have a transportation system that will provide the opportunity to move their products to market in a very timely and meaningful fashion. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, with the last federal budget, we see a demise to the Crow benefit that has benefited Saskatchewan farm producers for a number of years.

And having had the opportunity of being in my constituency on the past number of weekends — and I've used that opportunity to speak to many farmers there — the vast majority of them realize that yes, perhaps there has to be some changes to the Crow rate benefit.

They would like to see these changes be progressive changes and changes that would benefit them over the long haul. And at the same time, Mr. Speaker, they recognize the financial situation, the financial stress that this great country of ours is in, and those same farmers want to do their share in addressing that financial stress.

But what really burdens them, Mr. Speaker, and troubles them deeply is the unfairness, the simple unfairness of the act of the federal government which has eliminated their subsidy, their program, in one fatal swoop of the pen, that will come to an end on midnight of August 1, while other jurisdictions within our country have had a phase-out period. The eastern dairy industry is seeing only a 30 per cent reduction in their subsidies, but they're seeing that phased in over two years.

What farmers in my constituency have been saying, Mr. Speaker, is that a federal government that had any concern, and quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, any plan for the future, would have approached this in a fair and reputable way by suggesting that they could have phased out the Crow rate benefit to Saskatchewan farmers over a reasonable period of time — three years or five years, something along that line — that would have gave our farm population the ability to adjust to meet the changing times.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that hasn't happened. So we end up now with, quite frankly, a lot of confusion in the minds of our farmers across Saskatchewan. Confusion because they right now, Mr. Speaker, in a traditional manner and method of farming, they're putting together their plans for this spring's cropping operation. And now as they see the freight rates changing, and changing very dramatically, they are left a little at a loss as to what crops they can produce and what they should be producing.

Because quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, farmers today have to look at crops that will produce high quality and low quantity. And in our particular area where my constituency is located, Mr. Speaker, we have to deal with climatic conditions that are not conducive to growing many of these crops that are of high quality and low quantity.

So we leave our farmers, Mr. Speaker, in a situation where they are very hard-pressed to make the decisions in response to the changes in the Crow rate and the changes in the transportation system that is inevitable, and find themselves in rather an awkward position — because as many farmers and I as a farmer can attest to, when you set up a crop rotation on your farm, you don't set it up just basically for one year; it's basically a five-year project. And as you use up each year in this five-year project, you add another one on to the end. So you have basically a five-year cropping plan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, for a lot of us farmers in my constituency of Pelly, we're seeing this plan being impacted upon extremely negatively because a lot of the crops that we produced in the past are no longer going to be economically viable to produce in the future. And, Mr. Speaker, having from now until August 1 to make the necessary changes, to make the diversification in our operation, in our cropping plans, to meet the impact of the federal budget and the impact of the elimination of the Crow benefit and the impact of what is going to be a changing transportation system, there is a lot of confusion in our farmers' minds.

But what even bothers me a little more, Mr. Speaker, is that as a result of this, we are seeing a very negative impact upon a lot of the diversification attempts that farmers have made in the past few years. As you are well aware, that agriculture has been struggling through some tough economic times; and as a result of that, farmers have rallied to the challenge and may have explored new and innovative ways of diversifying their operation either as individuals or as communities to meet the changing economic financial pressures.

But, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing a wild card being played here now that nobody had counted on four or five years ago, and that is the complete elimination of the Crow benefit. With that, Mr. Speaker, it has had a very negative impact. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, in some cases a death knell sentence to some of the new industries that we have created in this province to answer the challenges of the changing financial picture of agriculture. And that, Mr. Speaker, is very distressing.

But what has also happened here, Mr. Speaker, is that I get a sense that many of our farmers' spirits are broken. I've spent the last couple of weekends in a lot of coffee shops and targeted my opportunity to talk to the people, to farmers. And there seems to be a bit of a defeated attitude, I guess you could say.

They seem to have given up because it looks like every time a farmer turns around and makes a decision, makes a decision based on not just this year but based on a future, the federal Liberal government tromps on that idea. It has gotten many of our farmers very disillusioned, to the point where I think we're going to experience some difficulty in attracting young farmers to the land and attracting young farmers to agriculture as a way of life.

Very saddening, Mr. Speaker, when you think of a federal government who has this responsibility to all Canadians, to all of Canada, and yes, has to deal with change and changing times, but who has vested in them by the people of this country the responsibility to do the best they can for each and every Canadian citizen and to do their part to ensure that there is a strong economy and a strong economy that will allow for future expansion and future growth.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to conclude my remarks by saying how disappointed I am and how disappointed farmers across my constituency are in the federal government's action in two parts. One, the elimination of the Crow benefit; but number two, not having the willingness to establish a strong, sustainable transportation system in our country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Amendment negatived.

The Speaker: — Order, order. The debate will continue on the main motion.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the conclusion of my remarks I'll be moving an amendment to the main motion before us.

Mr. Speaker, there are currently between 21,000 and 22,000 workers at CN Rail out of a workforce of 27,000 that are either locked out, on strike, or laid off due to the work stoppage. If you bring the Canadian Pacific Rail workers into the mix, the total increases by an additional 7,000. This situation is seriously affecting Saskatchewan producers and our province's agricultural industry, and economy as a whole. Farmers cannot ship grain, Mr. Speaker.

Last week's product has not moved. The work stoppages are costing the grain industry millions of dollars. As elected members of the province of Saskatchewan, we cannot allow disruptions to continue. Farmers cannot afford any more blows to their industry, Mr. Speaker, and neither can our provincial economy.

Members of parliament must not be allowed to delay important back-to-work legislation that's before them. As we debate this motion, back-to-work legislation for rail workers is being delayed by elected members of parliament. And they're being . . . it's being delayed by Saskatchewan MPs, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan MPs are blocking this legislation.

Vic Althouse from the Mackenzie constituency; Chris Axworthy from Saskatoon-Clark's Crossing; Simon DeJong from Regina-Qu'Appelle; John Solomon, who used to sit in this very Assembly, Mr. Speaker, from Regina-Lumsden; Len Taylor from The Battlefords-Meadow Lake. All NDP MPs right now, Mr. Speaker, are responsible, partly responsible, for holding up this legislation. They sided with the Quebec separatists.

If you can imagine that, Mr. Speaker, NDP MPs from Saskatchewan sided with Quebec separatists to block this important legislation, placing the economy of Saskatchewan in some degree of jeopardy, Mr. Speaker; placing the incomes of farm families all across this province at jeopardy. And the NDP people across the way from us, their federal cousins are supporting . . . pardon me, in delaying that legislation in Ottawa today.

It's hard to believe that the NDP caucus consisting of eight members would willingly engage in obstructionist tactics that so adversely affect the western Canadian economy, Mr. Speaker. Five members in the NDP caucus are from Saskatchewan, two from British Columbia, and one from the Yukon, Mr. Speaker, joined with one out of Manitoba, I believe. NDP forces along with the Bloc members from Quebec supporting the separatists in Quebec and stopping this legislation. Can you imagine that? And NDP MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) in this legislature have the audacity to stand up and say that they support Saskatchewan farm families, Mr. Speaker.

They stand in their place and say they are supportive of it, and at the same time their federal cousins in Ottawa are voting to stop the legislation, Mr. Speaker. Could you imagine that? The farm families of this province are outraged at the antics of the MPs, the NDP MPs, in Ottawa these days.

The strike is not only affecting agriculture, the agricultural industry, it also impacts on coal, potash, the auto industry, and the tourism industry.

IPSCO is currently — IPSCO here right in Regina — is currently sitting on about 563 lay-off notices, giving consideration to laying off people right here in Regina as a result of the rail . . . the transportation breakdown of the system, Mr. Speaker.

If this dispute is not settled soon, the economic impact on our

province will be devastating. Saskatchewan producers have paid millions and millions of dollars over the years as a result of being held hostage. And it's time we stopped bearing the brunt of it in this province, Mr. Speaker.

I recall, last week in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, that a Reform MP from Alberta, I believe his name is Mr. Ray Speaker, brought forward legislation that would make it, the transportation system, the grain handling system, an essential service and therefore outlawing strikes in the system. And we support that, Mr. Speaker. We are of the belief that it should be considered an essential service and no longer be able to be struck by people that want to see the industry stop, Mr. Speaker.

(1530)

When countries sign agreements to buy commodities, they examine every facet of that purchase, from the quality of goods to the disruptions in delivery, Mr. Speaker. There are window clauses, as they are called, within these contracts that will allow countries to break the agreement if need be. Don't think for one moment that these countries will hesitate to exercise their right to use the window clauses. Because they will not purchase a commodity if it is not needed.

We cannot afford to let this happen, Mr. Speaker. The members of parliament holding up the transport of these goods, important commodities, must not let this happen. The Canadian Wheat Board . . . recently a spokesman for them has said, mounting labour problems damage Canada's reputation. And, Mr. Speaker, we can't afford to lose any buyers in such a competitive trading world that we all operate in, in the grain industry and in industries other than grain — coal and potash and uranium and commodities like that are internationally traded commodities, Mr. Speaker. Very, very competitive environment that agriculture particularly faces in the world markets these days.

As we see, the Canadian Wheat Board in the last PRO, the projected return outlook, is suggesting that the price of grain all across western Canada is going to be dropping in the next crop year. Coupled with the changes in the Crow benefit, I suggest to the farmers of Saskatchewan that we are down probably in the \$2 to \$2.50 a bushel range once again — back down to where we are very, very hard-strapped as agricultural producers to make a living, Mr. Speaker. That's what's going to be facing the Saskatchewan farmers — a double whammy; in fact, a triple whammy, from the Liberals in Ottawa and the NDP here in Saskatchewan.

The first thing: the NDP stripped the GRIP contract back in 1991, placing a lot of farmers in peril. Number one thing that the NDP here in Regina did.

The second thing, Mr. Speaker, when it came time for this budget and the discussions surrounding this budget, they took another \$188 million of farmer premiums and directed them towards the GRIP . . . the GRIP surplus was directed towards the General Revenue Fund, Mr. Speaker. The second thing that they did.

The third thing, now we see their federal cousins in Ottawa blocking legislation to bring back the workers to get the transportation system in this country going again. That's the third thing that they've done. And then they stand in this Assembly and say they're supportive of agriculture and supportive of Saskatchewan farmers.

And the federal Liberals at the same time, and their provincial counterparts here as well, they stand in the Assembly and say that they're supportive of agriculture. And what do we see from the provincial Liberals, Mr. Speaker? What do we see from the provincial Liberals, Mr. Speaker?

We see them saying that the budget was regionally fair; their Liberal leader standing in the Assembly . . . just outside the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and saying that the budget was regionally fair. And then the very next day, coming into this legislature and voting in favour of a motion that we brought in condemning the federal government.

The NDP House Leader recalls that. And everyone else does in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And I'm hopeful that farm families across this province will remember it as well.

And I suspect they will, Mr. Speaker. They'll remember the federal NDP, the provincial NDP, the provincial Liberals, and the federal Liberals, all standing against Saskatchewan farm families, Mr. Speaker — all standing against them.

And I hear the member from Shaunavon chirping from his seat, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But the farm families from across this province know that that member first of all started out on that side of the House, first of all started out as an NDP, crossed the floor, crossed the floor, Mr. Speaker, now sits as a Liberal MLA. And, Mr. Speaker, they recognize more than ever that the NDP and the Liberals are exactly the same when it comes to agriculture. They're opposed to the farm families of this province, Mr. Speaker. And the things that are happening in Ottawa today just demonstrate that clearer and clearer, Mr. Speaker, that the Liberal-NDP coalition is back in force once again, fighting against the farm families of this province, Mr. Speaker. Who are they representing?

Mr. Speaker, one thing that you should also keep in mind, why didn't the federal Liberals last week, why did they not bring in, in conjunction with their legislation legislating the grain workers back, also legislation at that time forcing the workers, the rail workers across this country, back to work at the same time? They could have done that. They could have brought it in at the same time. They could have done that, and they should have done that, Mr. Speaker.

We see in this Assembly, Saskatchewan NDP MLAs and their federal counterparts, the MPs, represented their respective areas for so long that they have lost sight of what truly is happening in this strike, Mr. Speaker. And the MLA for Shaunavon continues to chirp from his seat because he knows what we are saying is indeed correct. And the voters of Shaunavon next time around, next election, I suggest to them, Mr. Speaker, the farm families across this province, the farm families in Shaunavon will never forget — never forget — the way that MLA crossed

the floor, betrayed them and every other person in that riding, first of all, betrayed the people of Shaunavon and now are betraying the farm families of this province as well, Mr. Speaker. That's what he's doing; he's betraying the farm families across this province.

Who are they representing? Who are they representing, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I believe they are representing the only people that they ever supported, this NDP government, and that's the union leaders of this country. The union leaders of this country are more important than the farm families of this province, just as the electoral future of the member from Shaunavon is more important to him about principles, more important to him about convictions, more important to him than the farm families of this province. That's unfortunately what we see from the MLA from Shaunavon, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we can only ask: why is it that the federal NDP members are so opposed to this? Why is it? And at the same time their provincial cousins here in Regina speak so favourably against Saskatchewan . . . or in favour of Saskatchewan farm families.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the NDP in Ottawa, the NDP in Saskatchewan, the Liberals in Ottawa, and the Liberals in Saskatchewan will not be forgotten in this debate, Mr. Speaker, because the farm families recognize who is opposing it. They recognize who is destroying agriculture in this country, Mr. Speaker: the Liberals and the federal NDP and the provincial NDP. That's who's doing it, Mr. Speaker. And along with it, along with it, to cap it all off, the Quebec separatists join with them — to cap it all off the Quebec separatists, Mr. Speaker, the Quebec separatists, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move the following amendment to the main motion:

That all words after “the Assembly” be deleted and the following be substituted therefor:

join together in demanding the NDP and Bloc Québécois coalition currently delaying passage of back-to-work legislation for rail workers, immediately cease their obstructionist tactics that are adversely affecting the grain industry in western Canada,

and that further, that this Assembly show their allegiance to Saskatchewan farm families by forwarding a transcript of the debate on this motion to the Prime Minister, the federal minister, Lucienne Robillard, and the NDP leader, Audrey McLaughlin and the Bloc Québécois leader, Lucien Bouchard.

Mr. Speaker, I move that amendment to the main motion, moved by myself, the member from Kindersley, seconded by the member from Maple Creek.

The Deputy Speaker: — I find the amendment in order, so the debate will continue concurrent on the motion and the amendment.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to stand in my place today at a point in time in the afternoon when we're finally getting this debate on track. It was important that we bring this amendment forward in order to get the right direction and the right spin on this very important issue.

We have watched, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the other parties in this Assembly have determined to play politics with peoples' lives rather than to deal with the issue squarely on the merit of the issue itself — the merit of the issue of course being the effects of a rail strike on other peoples' lives. In this case of course, it more at home reflects the impact on Saskatchewan agriculture. But in reality, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this issue goes far, far beyond a few people just in Saskatchewan. And while we are important in terms of our industry in agriculture, we are few in numbers in the world around us.

But the numbers are magnified and growing larger, and all of a sudden we see a nation paralysed by a rail strike becoming deeply concerned about an issue that they should have dealt with last week. Now that the big unions have taken on the rail companies and the rail companies have taken them on back, we find Ford Company being reported as scheduling to shut down their plants. All of sudden, a lot of workers are being faced with unemployment, and suddenly it becomes a very important issue to the world.

Isn't that amazing, that finally it hits home that when the big unions take on the railroads and the railroads take on the unions, it's not just Saskatchewan farmers any more that are going to pay the price alone; now it's the workers — the very workers the unions claim to represent — who are going to lose their jobs in all of those spin-off affected areas.

We've heard about IPSCO, we've heard about Ford, we've heard about all kinds of people in other industries and other job-related areas that will now suffer the impact of this utter foolishness that should have been corrected last week.

Isn't it interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the NDP government asked for and legislated . . . and supported the legislated process of bringing longshoremen back to work. They did that; last week they supported that.

But at the same time, could they not have had the insight to know that the railroad workers would also come on strike? Obviously they had to know that. The federal government knew it, the NDP knew it, everybody knew that it was just going to pass down the line, so why not include everybody in that first legislated package and legislate all workers to work and declare this an essential service and have it over with and done with?

No. They determined, here's how we can play some politics going into some elections. We'll legislate part of them back to work, make ourselves look like good guys. All the farmers will say, yes, those guys are really on our side; boy did they ever go to work on those fellows, put them back to work.

(1545)

But then of course comes a little bit of the hitch from the

provincial perspective. We've got Moose Jaw, a big railroad town, a big union town, and we have to make it appear that we're not just defending farmers and not defending big unions, so we'll split the issue, and we will vote one week on putting the longshoremen back to work, and we'll support that because they're way, way out there in the west coast. But now this week, we will support the big unions at home and we'll say we can't legislate these fellows back to work, because they want to vote in Moose Jaw.

And the politics of the day and the election that is coming up become far more important than anything that has to do with the economy of our country and the jobs for our people. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the sad note of the business that we, in these assemblies, are involved with. The saddest, saddest kind of approach to life is when politicians start to play politics with other people's lives, and an election becomes more important than helping people to make an honest living in this country. And it's happened time and time before, and it's happening again today.

And Saskatchewan of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'll end up paying once again. They will end up paying as they always do because we are the land-locked area of this country and we always end up paying the biggest shot when it comes to taking the lumps for everybody else's foolishness in this country.

And it appears that the NDP in Saskatchewan want to support their federal counterparts now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. For political reasons? Yes of course, and only for that reason, not for what's best for our province. Because the federal NDP and the Bloc, now the separatists from Quebec, the Bloc Québécois . . . some people in western Saskatchewan refer to them just simply as the Bloc; I don't know if they think they're square or what, but it's certainly not a complimentary term out west any longer. And the reason, of course, that people are unhappy with this group down east is very clear: they refuse to waive a 48-hour notice that would allow back-to-work legislation to be introduced in Ottawa. A very simple little thing that they can do to stop everything in this country from progressing.

And why would they do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The reason they would do that, of course, is plain, simple politics again. The news media put it right the other day. How does the Bloc and the NDP end up finding themselves in bed together in Ottawa? Well for those of you that don't know, the pure, simple fact of life is that people in the political science world describe the philosophies as being fundamentally the same. They are both social democrat parties determined to uphold the philosophies of the left. And that is the reason that they now find themselves in bed together, playing politics jointly. Because the Bloc Québécois and the federal NDP are both left-wing parties and they have to play some politics in Ottawa to try to bolster their collective interests in the political world around them.

And they really don't care who gets hurt as a result of it, and that is the sad thing in our political system. Here we have the Bloc Québécois, a left-wing party in Quebec, that has exactly the same philosophy as the government in Ontario that is about to become dust; exactly the same political philosophy as the party in British Columbia that is already considered to be

fragmenting and becoming totally blown away; and also the same philosophy as the Government of Saskatchewan that finds it politically expedient today to support the union movement rather than the people who are going to be hurt by this disastrous strike.

So what do the people in the NDP hope to accomplish by doing this, by aligning themselves with the Bloc? That's the question we have to ask ourselves, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What is the gain for them? Let's analyse this thing a little bit. Making the unions happy maybe at the expense of western grain producers? For sure — for sure that is what is happening. There is no question about it, that this is what is going on — making the union bosses happy, to once again try to solicit their support for the upcoming election.

Presently there are 22,000 striking and locked-out rail workers. And every day this action continues, our province pays the price. And we're not just talking about farmers this time around; we're talking about every worker in every spin-off industry that's affected by this strike. Eventually they will all end up on unemployment insurance, and after it runs out, you know where you go from there. I don't suspect it'll go that far or for that many days, weeks, or months. But who knows, with the carrying-on that's happening in this province and in this country.

And the members opposite sit here today and debate away the whole day to play politics, rather than coming up with one solid resolution, like our amendment, which solidly puts it on the doorstep of everybody concerned, rather than to support these initiatives that once and for all would put an end to this nonsense. They play politics and we debate away the day instead of sending the message clearly to Ottawa — get on with the business and get these people back to work.

The federal Labour minister said she had not a choice but to bring back-to-work legislation because of the effects of the strike on grain shipments, auto parts, and thousands of rail passengers.

And she's right, Mr. Deputy Speaker. She doesn't have a choice. This country is clearly in financial difficulty. We're not going to go bankrupt tomorrow; I'm not going to try to sell that message. But we have serious financial problems. As any farmer in Saskatchewan can tell you, a lot of debt is a serious problem. Every person who has bought a house or has mortgaged a car or has bought anything on time, as most people do at some point in their life, will tell you that this is a very serious matter and must be taken seriously.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, knowing that this country is in a vulnerable position and cannot afford a disruption to its entire economic base, then the government in Ottawa does have no other choice but to get these people back to work.

The rail system in this country is clearly too important to the nation as a whole, but more specifically, to the land-locked part of this country that we live in.

Elected members are chosen to represent the people who voted

for them; to represent the best interests of their province. And if the NDP government in Saskatchewan were taking that commitment seriously, they would be demanding that their federal counterparts support back-to-work legislation.

Instead of handing to the federal NDP Party a support for their actions, they would be writing them a letter, phoning them up on the telephone, and sending them wires by telegraph, telling them to smarten up and support back-to-work legislation that would get rid of this problem once and for all.

And not only that; they would go that step further and say to their federal counterparts, get in tune with the people of Saskatchewan and of the country and declare this to be an essential service and let's put this whole matter to bed once and for all.

The truth of the matter is, 14 times in 29 years is not a good record. It is a bad record, and a record that's got to be corrected and cannot be allowed to continue.

The federal NDP, Bill Blaikie, called the Bill an attack on workers. And further, that, quote:

"When working people are involved, all of a sudden the full force of the law is brought upon them."

That's in today's *Star-Phoenix*, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now just what is that supposed to mean? It seems that the only group the NDP classify as workers are union workers. What about the working farmers in our province? What about the workers all across this country that are unable to perform their jobs because of this strike and the lockout? Mr. Blaikie's comments are extremely short-sighted, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and reflective of how much emphasis the NDP places on agriculture, which in plain, simple terms is zero.

We have absolutely seen nothing from this administration that supports agriculture in any way, shape, or form. In fact all they have done in recent past three years is to take everything they can from rural Saskatchewan and take everything out of farmers they can possibly squeeze that's left there to be squeezed out of them.

The federal NDP must have received flak from their union pals after passing back-to-work legislation for the longshoremen. That must be what's happened, Mr. Speaker, and we believe that this is probably showing in the actions of what's happening this week.

Once again, all of the things that this government has done that are so unfair to the working people of Saskatchewan through their labour laws have already been forgotten by the labour leaders because they never get enough. No matter how much you give them, you will never satisfy them. These labour leaders are so greedy and power hungry that if they ruled the world, they would want to take a space ship and take over Mars as well. You will never satisfy them, and giving them more and more and more will never, ever satisfy them.

The proof is here today. The proof is here this session of the legislature. You have given these unions almost the entire province. You now have union government control of Saskatchewan through the back door of legislation by the NDP. And they're not satisfied with that. Now they're attacking the federal end of it and forcing the federal NDP to block back-to-work legislation that would help to keep this province and this country from being financially bankrupted.

In the *Star-Phoenix* today, Mr. Speaker, it states that:

The national rail shut-down, if allowed to drag on for a full week, could rob the economy of \$3 billion to \$5 billion . . .

This estimate is from the Canadian Manufacturers' Association.

Now here is a group that we hadn't even heard of last week. Last week we heard about farmers' problems, agricultural problems. We heard about the potential of food not coming in to the ports, perishable foods rotting on the docks perhaps, and that got everybody excited because nobody wants to pay \$10 for a head of lettuce. Now we had consumers that were worried.

But this week we've got manufacturers that are facing the reality of what's going on in the world of a rail strike. Now we've got hundreds of thousands of people — not union leaders — people, the workers in this country, who are going to be without jobs. And let's face it, Mr. Speaker, most of the people in our world are workers, unless they work at living off of other workers. We've got far too much of that in Saskatchewan.

We can't afford to lose one dollar in this province, Mr. Speaker, not one dollar. If the national economy is jeopardized and potentially jeopardized, then the reality is that the Saskatchewan economy is a far more fragile one because we are dependent on so many fewer things than the national economy is.

And agriculture of course is a big part of that. And it kind of, in a way, makes me happy that there are more people who are going to be affected by these strikes now because at least that will help to bring them into the fold of those who will not tolerate this kind of situation. As a group of people, the agricultural sector, the food producers of this country often stand alone trying to make a living and trying to make their point. But now all of a sudden the whole world around them is being affected too. And that is good because at least there will be some more pressure to help the farmers in their bid and their cry to have these railroads put back to work and these transportation situations corrected.

According to StatsCan, rail accounts for 27 per cent, Mr. Speaker, of all the transportation. Now I believe that that is a Canadian figure. Now the StatsCan analysis says that rail shut-downs will have a tremendous secondary effect on our economy. And there again we now have a national group saying exactly what we've been talking about; the spin-off effects are growing. It is now a national problem with economic effects for the whole nation and for everybody. And when they talk about that, they're talking about every taxpayer in this country is going to end up paying the price somehow.

Robert Fairholm from the economic think-tank, DRI (Data Resources Incorporated) Canada, I quote here: "There's a chain reaction and domino effect all through the economy." And that's in the *Star-Phoenix*, I guess, of March 21, 1995.

Here again, Mr. Speaker, we've got people who make it their business to study and analyse what the effects of certain things are on the world around us, and they are telling us that we are in a domino effect. And the first domino was kicked down last week and the rest are starting to tumble in order.

Prairie Pools Inc., representing the grain shippers, estimate that \$85 million a week in grain shipments are being held up by the shut-down. That, Mr. Speaker, is a tragedy of enormous proportion for Saskatchewan because not only are we losing that kind of money . . . 85 millions of dollars a week of grain that's not moving.

Now we hear little rumbles and rumours about the Americans picking up our markets and filling them up for us. And once those markets are filled and those markets are gone, how do we get them back? When our buyers out there in the world say, last year we ordered grain from Canada but we had to go to the United States and get grain from them to fill the order . . . the Canadians couldn't do it. Our reputation as being able to supply what we sell is down the tubes, and we will suffer for years and years to come because of that attitude out in the world of consumers.

(1600)

Not so important that we point fingers at each other and blame one another about who's at fault. What is more important here today is that we solve the problem, and we can talk the politics later. This is far too important an issue, not only for the farmers of Saskatchewan but now for the country of Canada, to be talked about in terms of pointing fingers. We must first solve the problem, get the message to Ottawa, get the message to the Bloc Québécois, get the message to the federal NDP. Tell them to get their act together and support the country instead of trying to support their own political cause.

It's a fact, Mr. Speaker, that grain farmers will be hit hard. The potash will be hit hard in our province. We're going into the spring season where people around the world are looking for inputs for their crops. This is the harvest time for the potash industry; this is the harvest time, metaphorically speaking, for all of the fertilizer companies. If the rails aren't there to do it, the trucks will have to try and do it.

Do you know how much more expensive it is to truck fertilizer a few thousand miles than it is to use the rail? Think about it. It's going to add hundreds of thousands of dollars to the input costs of those people who grow your food. And who in the end will pay for that? The consumer will end up having to pay again because the consumer is the person that has to eventually pay for the cost of producing food. And the railroad worker won't have a job.

We've got people in the pulp industry, people in the paper industry. We've got simple little things like sulphur that nobody

might even think about that need to be moved in our country as we head into this vital and crucial spring season. But then why would you pick any other time to go on strike, except when you can hurt the most possible people? That's always the theory behind striking. It's always the theory behind lockouts . . . is to try to force enough people into enough trouble so that you get your own way.

Both sides are guilty, and both sides are hurting the people of Saskatchewan and the people of Canada. And it hurts our pocketbooks, and it's going to hurt them for a long time to come because this sort of thing won't go away overnight. The impact, the repercussions, and the domino effect will continue for years to come. More in the next few weeks, in obvious terms, but our reputation in the world will be hurt for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen headlines all over this country: BQ (Bloc Québécois) derails back-to-work rail legislation; Bouchard urging both sides to negotiate a settlement. Well the clear fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that negotiations are not working. They have had a chance to work. And he is playing politics in Quebec for one reason and one reason only: to try to make it look like it would be better for them to separate from this very country that he's now destroying.

After he gets the country destroyed, it'll make pretty good sense for him to say to his people, let's vote to separate; we'll get the heck out of this country because it's a heck of a mess. Well of course it's going to be in a mess if he blocks everything that is being done to try to pull the country together and to keep our economy rolling. So I guess we've seen through what he's up to.

Where does that put the federal NDP? What advantage is there for the federal NDP to tearing the country apart? None whatsoever. These people are playing politics for a provincial election in Ontario and one that they can't get away from in Saskatchewan and another one where they are being blown away in British Columbia. Plain and simple politics, that can be their only motive. They have nothing else to gain. They're not in control of Quebec. They aren't advocating separatism, as far as I know. They are socialists and left-wingers, so they are trying to make politics at home with the unions.

Plain and simple — we have a rail strike that is costing our economy billions of dollars so that a handful of politicians can play politics in Saskatchewan, Ontario, British Columbia and, most disgustingly, in our national capital in Ottawa. Plain and pure politics, that's all it's about for these people.

So, Mr. Speaker, I plead with these people at this moment in time to shake your heads a little and think about what you're doing to the people in the world around you. Stop playing politics with other people's lives. Let these people get back to work as quickly as possible. Let's save our country and our province. Let's save our economy. Let's save our farmers from the embarrassment and the financial losses. Let's do this. Let's send this message clearly now and support this amendment so that we can get the job done.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to add a few words to the discussion on the resolution that we have before the Assembly today. It's, I believe, of serious concern to the people of Saskatchewan. And I just want to point out a few problems that I see on the horizon because of a lack of understanding and a lack of cooperation that the federal government is in today.

We see as an outline that last Tuesday we were in this Assembly, speaking about the strike and the implications that it would be to western Canadian farmers, potash workers, IPSCO, various other commodities moving through the rail network. And as the Minister responsible for Labour was speaking, he indicated that the Liberal government put before parliament a Bill having a request to put the union strikers back to work. And during his remarks I made the observation that was it only the longshoremen or did it include the rail workers. And then he made the observation. The member from North Battleford made the observation that he hoped it would be for both.

Well as it turns out, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't. And so today we have the people who are in strike position numbering in the neighbourhood of 29,000 people. We have a serious, serious problem in transportation in western Canada.

What is really striking, Mr. Speaker, in this whole discussion, is the way that groups of people have taken issue with the subject. And I just want to point out, as we have heard in the discussion here today, that quite a number of the members of the New Democratic Party in Ottawa have decided to filibuster the Bill before the House asking the House of Commons to put the people in the unions of the rail workers back to work.

They have deliberately decided that they're going to block the role of parliament until it is deferred and until it is deferred again. And that, Mr. Speaker, is in my view a detriment to the people of Saskatchewan; it's a detriment to the people of western Canada.

It's interesting to note some of people that pointed out that the cooperation between the federal NDP and the Quebec separatists are . . . they're both standing there as a way of blocking this Bill coming to the House of Commons. And I believe that there is a decision on the part of the NDP, because most of the separatists tend to be left of centre and most of them have the same philosophy that the NDP in Ottawa have, and therefore, I believe that the whole cooperation in blocking this Bill coming forward is coming from the cooperation between those two groups, those two political parties in Ottawa.

Now I believe that the federal Liberals made a mistake in not putting this Bill forward last Tuesday to include the railway workers. They made big mistake in not including it. And in the paper today we had an article that dealt with the Liberals bringing this Bill forward. And in the conclusion of those remarks, it indicated that there were between 21 and 22,000 people in CN lines who were going to be on strike. Add to that the 7,000 people who are either on strike or locked out from CP rail, and you have very nearly 30,000 people who are in a

position where they're not providing opportunities for transportation into the ports either in the east coast or the west coast.

We have had indication that IPSCO has given lay-off notices to over 500 people. We have people who are impacted in the elevator system who are going to have serious problems. And we could go on and on.

This is a labour-management dispute that has gone on for the last 18 months, Mr. Speaker. It has gone on for the last 18 months, Mr. Speaker. It has gone on for the last 18 months, and nobody is prepared to do anything about it. And who is going to suffer? Who is going to suffer? It's a lot of people in the system that are going to suffer. And I'm going to point that out later.

We have had a history of this, Mr. Speaker. We have had a history of this over the past 29 years; 14 times out of the last 29 years we have had exactly the same thing happen. And that's the reason why it irritates every shipper in western Canada, and it increasingly irritates these people because they consistently do it over and over and over again. It's time that there was a dispute-settling mechanism put in place that would resolve this issue and then put it aside so that we can all get along with doing our business.

It's been pointed out — and I think it's very significant — that there are 20 contracts between the producer in western Canada and the market, contracts that unions can stall and bicker and complain and walk out. And companies can lock these people out. And we are consistently, Mr. Speaker, consistently impacted in western Canada on each of these.

I want to point out a number of places where we need a national transportation policy that would put into perspective some of the losses that have been incurred by the people in western Canada.

First of all, we need some assurance in western Canada and some security that, number one, our producers are going to be protected. Mr. Speaker, on these 14 out of 29 times that the people in western Canada have been negatively impacted, farmers in western Canada have been most seriously impacted. Each time there's a work stoppage on the west coast, each time Saskatchewan farmers pay the demurrage. We pay it every time, and farmers in western Canada are sick and tired of it.

As I noticed in the paper also, Mr. Speaker, that a longshoreman, the highest paid longshoreman earns \$119,000 — Mr. Speaker, 119,000. The average longshoreman earns \$67,000 a year. Mr. Speaker, there isn't a farmer in the province of Saskatchewan that wouldn't mind having an average of \$69,000 a year come into his pocket as income so that he can have a support somewhere for his farm.

And that, Mr. Speaker, the problem is compounded each time these people go on strike, that the west coast, the ships who are scheduled to have their ships loaded, those people have to have payment in lieu of loss of time, payment in lieu of loss of shipping opportunities.

And who pays, Mr. Speaker? It's the people in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba who push the grain through to port, those are the people that have to pay for that lost time and lost opportunity that the shippers have in the port. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why western Canadian producers, whether it's IPSCO, whether it's potash, whether it's sulphur, whether it's grain, all of these people are totally frustrated by the fact that they always have to contend with these work stoppages.

The producers in the province of Saskatchewan are negatively impacted. The shippers . . . Who can coordinate, Mr. Speaker, who can coordinate any activity in the port with ships coming in when you've got 20 contracts and 20 unions — 20 separate unions — being affected and impacted by one walk-out? Because the unions have this policy that they won't cross another person's picket lines. So who's going to go and take the trains to Vancouver and who's going to unload the boats when you have all of these people impacted by union involvement?

(1615)

And so who's affected by, again, by the shippers not being able to move the product? The elevator companies in the province of Saskatchewan are impacted. The ships and people moving product from our ports to Korea, to China, to Japan, to ports all over the world — those people are also impacted negatively.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why there has to be some way, other than strike and lockout action, that is going to give an opportunity to do business in Canada.

Who else is impacted, Mr. Speaker? It's our customers. We are running the serious risk of our reliability going down the drain, when we have had 14 out of 29 stoppages in all of this discussion.

I want to point something out that also bothers people in western Canada, and that is that the offshore ports in the United States don't have nearly the trouble we have in western Canada and in British Columbia. We have way more problems in our west coast than they do in the shippers in Portland and in Seattle. I've often wondered, Mr. Speaker, at the reason for that. Does it have some significance that most of these unions are run by the Americans? Do we have an American agenda driving the Port of Vancouver? And I seriously believe that we have many of those kinds of things happening.

And what does it do, Mr. Speaker? The nationalism in the United States will drive a wedge in the shippers. And so who gets the benefit? Mr. Speaker, it will be the American workers. It will be the American grain farmers. It will be the American producers. It will be the American people who haul timber through the ports of Portland. All of those people will get the benefit of it, Mr. Speaker.

And who loses? We lose our customers. We lose an opportunity for markets. We lose all of these things because we cannot consistently supply our products to the international trade, and that is a very, very serious problem. And that's why the urgency required to get this piece of legislation into the House and

through the books is necessary for the people of Saskatchewan.

Those are the reasons, Mr. Speaker, that I will be supporting this amendment, so that the federal government can take seriously and the people in the House of Commons can take seriously the impact it has in Saskatchewan and to the people of Saskatchewan. That's the reason why I am supporting this amendment and the desire to send this resolution to Ottawa, so that the NDP, the separatists in Quebec, can clearly understand our position . . . and dealing with this in a positive way. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am going to support the amendment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knezacek: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak against the amendment and in support of the original motion put forth by my colleague, the member from Humboldt, and seconded by the member from Melville.

I realize that some speakers still wish to make some comments, so I'll try to keep my remarks brief. I'll take a few minutes though to express, on behalf of farmers in the Saltcoats constituency, their disgust and dismay on the federal government's actions with respect to the demise of the Crow benefits and the lack of a transportation policy or strategy to replace it, hence leading up to the problem that we have today.

Mr. Speaker, the economy of the Saltcoats constituency is a mixed economy based on agriculture which involves mixed farming operations, grain and cattle, and also potash production which is a key industrial component to the Saltcoats economy. As well we have a fair portion of manufacturing that goes on within the riding. So the effect of a halt to the transportation situation is far-reaching.

I want to add my support to the original resolution in urging the federal government to begin mending its ways and to expeditiously resolve the present transportation system loggerhead. It is the responsibility of the federal Agriculture minister, Ralph Goodale, and his colleagues in the federal government to see that the farmers' grain and other products continue to move to port. After all, as I indicated before, they are the government responsible for killing the Crow.

And what have they done to replace it? What is their plan? What is their new transportation policy? Absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker. And that is precisely the problem. They have no plan. They have no vision for transportation policy or transportation strategy. At best one could say that their policy is one of deregulation.

So what does this mean to Canadian agriculture, while companies and producers look south, exploring alternatives on the Mississippi and ports in the state of Oregon? What does this do to building Canada? What does this do for jobs? Absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker.

Farmers want to move their product before the Crow benefits are gone on July 31 of this year, before they have to pay twice or more for their transportation costs to move their grain. Let me give you some examples of the increased costs for shipping

points in some areas of my riding. For the farming communities of Atwater, Bangor, Dubuc, Esterhazy, Saltcoats, Stockholm, Zeneta, the freight rate goes from \$11.58 per tonne to \$22.24. For the communities of Bredenbury, Gerald, Langenburg, Yarbo, it goes from \$11.35 per tonne to \$21.59. And the community of MacNutt goes from \$12.03 to \$23.48.

What adds to the confusion and unrest felt by farmers with respect to the loss of the Crow benefits is the fact that no decision has been made by the federal Liberals on the pay-out of the Crow. We hear nothing from their provincial counterparts on that issue either. And perhaps that's okay because it would change on a daily basis anyway.

Once again we can see the strategy of the Liberals: to drive a wedge between the farming community, the producers, and the working people, the people who get the product to market. We see the Liberals destroying the Canadian dream of a national transportation system.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the lack or absence of a national transportation strategy is more than a betrayal; it has turned Sir John A. Macdonald's national dream into what will soon be a Canadian nightmare. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course I was up in this debate earlier on a different amendment, but speaking now to the amendment brought forward by the member from Kindersley and seconded by the member from Maple Creek, I find it interesting that so many of the government members would stand in their place and in fact continue with their political lines that they're not going to support what to everyone else is very obvious, Mr. Speaker. And that is the fact that it's their federal cousins in Ottawa, the federal New Democrats, as small as they are in number, are still up to their tricks.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, the way this has been unfolding in Ottawa, on March 19 the federal government gave notice of its intention to introduce legislation to get the trains moving again. And when the legislation was later introduced on March 20, it was opposed by both the Bloc Québécois and of course their allies and their federal counterparts, the federal New Democrats. But what I find interesting is that neither party, the Bloc Québécois or the federal New Democrats, were opposed to a similar move to legislate an end to the B.C. (British Columbia) longshoremen's strike, Mr. Speaker.

However, today at 3 o'clock Ottawa time, it was the federal New Democrats that were again able to block the legislation to put an end to this strike. And I want the Assembly to be aware of where the problem lies in the eyes of Ottawa. And in fact that's why I brought forward the amendment that I did earlier. However, you know, there's at least . . . you know, the New Democrats here of course feel that they must defend their union friends more so than defend their farmer — in fact they don't have farmer friends — defend the farmers of Saskatchewan.

But you know, not all union leaders see it that way. In fact at least one of the railway union leaders disagrees with this

obstruction by the federal New Democrats, Mr. Speaker. In fact Buzz Hargrove of the CAW, which represents many of the striking rail workers, said he told both the Bloc Québécois and the NDP that, and I quote: there is absolutely no advantage or reason for them to delay the legislation.

Now even your own union friends are warning you against some of your silly politics. And I would ask then that the House Leader of the New Democrats perhaps pick up the phone and call his New Democrat colleagues, most of which come from the province of Saskatchewan, to perhaps deal with this. And you know, owing to their obstructions, the Canadians now have the Bloc . . . or the Bloc Québécois and the NDP to thank for this needlessly long, strong strike that the Canadian Manufacturers' Association estimate could cost the Canadian economy between 3 and \$5 billion.

So that is why we're desperate on this side of the House to have you people do something that we feel is necessary and in fact convince your colleagues to sort of get onstream with the rest of Canada and the rest of the people in this province.

You know among those who have the Bloc and the NDP to thank for this unnecessary strike — and I want you to pay attention, the New Democrats opposite — there are 2,500 CAW members at Ford Canada's St. Thomas, Ontario plant who have been sent home because of a shortage of parts. You're affecting those people with your actions; 3,900 CAW members at Oakville and Windsor who will be working only half time this weekend for the very same reason. And I'm sure that those people, at election time when they go to vote in Ontario, are going to remember some of the New Democrat tricks from Ontario. In fact we'll make sure they are reminded of your tricks out here in Saskatchewan.

And then there's some 70,000 commuters in Montreal and Toronto that are facing long delays in getting to and from work. Also, Mr. Speaker, there are companies that are losing money, and in fact a few of them . . . half of Canada's coal exports are not moving due to the strike.

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

Mr. Neudorf: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What is the member's point of order?

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Shaunavon has already once spoken to the main motion; he is now speaking to the amendment. And the amendment very specifically says, that we immediately cease the obstructionist tactics — that's the NDP — that are adversely affecting the grain industry in western Canada. And that's the essence of this motion, and I have yet to hear. . . the member's mentioned the grain industry once in his remarks, so I would ask you to keep him on topic.

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member from Rosthern I think makes a very valid point of order. In fact I was just . . . Order. I think the member from Shaunavon knows the rules of this House. If he doesn't, you better learn them.

I think the member from Rosthern makes a very valid point. I was just going to get up on my feet and remind the member that he has already spoken to the main motion, and he must keep his comments to the amendment. If he wishes to do so, I will recognize the member from Shaunavon.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the member from Rosthern being concerned and assuring that we stick to the amendment, which I felt I was.

However, getting back to the grains industry, Mr. Speaker, and the companies that are being affected, the bulk export of commodities such as grain, sulphur, potash, are at a complete standstill. And in fact Canada's reputation as a reliable supplier is suffering. In fact we've been told it's costing us between 90 and \$100 million per week in the exporting of board and non-board grains due to this strike.

And that's why, I guess, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are very much in favour of the amended motion, to get right to the nub of the problem and have the New Democrats opposite for once stand in their place, stick up for the people of Saskatchewan, quit playing your politics — because, you know, I don't think the union people are with you anyways. Thank you.

(1630)

The division bells rang from 4:30 p.m. until 4:31 p.m.

Amendment negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Boyd	Swenson	Neudorf
Martens	Goohsen	D'Autremont
Toth	Britton	

The Speaker: — Order, order. I don't want to single out individual members, but if members simply can't take . . . when the Speaker says order, I will start singling people out again.

Yeas

Bergman	McPherson	Muirhead	— 11
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Nays

Thompson	MacKinnon	Tchorzewski
Lingenfelter	Anguish	Johnson
Kowalsky	Cunningham	Mitchell
Upshall	Hagel	Bradley
Lorje	Cline	Renaud
Murray	Trew	Draper
Langford	Scott	Lyons
Wormsbecker	Stanger	Knezacek
Carlson		

— 25

The division bells rang from 4:35 p.m. until 4:37 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Romanow	Van Mulligen	Thompson
Wiens	MacKinnon	Tchorzewski
Lingenfelter	Anguish	Johnson
Lautermilch	Kowalsky	Cunningham
Carson	Mitchell	Upshall
Hagel	Bradley	Lorje
Cline	Renaud	Murray
Hamilton	Trew	Draper
Whitmore	Langford	Scott
Wormsbecker	Stanger	Knezacek
Harper	Keeping	Jess
Carlson	Boyd	Swenson
Neudorf	Martens	Goohsen
D'Autremont	Toth	Britton
Haverstock	Bergman	McPherson
Muirhead		

— 46

Nays

— Nil

MOTIONS

Transmittal Motion

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

That the transcript of the debate and the motion just passed be transmitted to the federal Minister of Labour, the Minister of Agriculture, and the Prime Minister, by the Speaker.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE BILLS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 01 — An Act to amend An Act to incorporate the Briercrest Bible College

Preamble agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

(1645)

Bill No. 02 — An Act to amend An Act respecting Our Lady of the Prairies Foundation

Preamble agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 5 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 03 — An Act to provide for the incorporation of The Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Preamble agreed to.

Clause 1 to 22 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Bill No. 04 — An Act to amend An Act respecting Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, being an Act to amend and consolidate "An Act respecting Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, being an Act to amend and consolidate An Act to incorporate Saskatchewan Co-operative Wheat Producers Limited" and to enact certain provisions respecting Saskatchewan Wheat Pool

Preamble agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

Schedule

Clauses 1 to 24 inclusive agreed to.

The division bells rang from 4:56 p.m. until 5 p.m.

The committee agreed to report the Bill on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Romanow	Thompson	Wiens
MacKinnon	Tchorzewski	Lingenfelter
Anguish	Johnson	Lautermilch
Kowalsky	Cunningham	Carson
Mitchell	Upshall	Hagel
Bradley	Koenker	Lorje
Teichrob	Cline	Crofford
Renaud	Murray	Hamilton
Trew	Draper	Sonntag
Langford	Scott	Wormsbecker
Stanger	Knezacek	Harper
Keeping	Carlson	Boyd
Swenson	Neudorf	Martens
Goohsen	D'Autremont	Toth
Britton	Bergman	McPherson

— 45

Nays

Lyons

— 1

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 01 — An Act to amend An Act to incorporate the Briercrest Bible College

Mr. Swenson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 01, An Act to amend An Act to incorporate the Briercrest Bible College, be

now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

Bill No. 02 — An Act to amend An Act respecting Our Lady of the Prairies Foundation

Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 02, An Act to amend An Act respecting Our Lady of the Prairies Foundation, be now read the third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

Bill No. 03 — An Act to provide for the incorporation of The Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you. I move that Bill No. 03, An Act to amend An Act to provide for the incorporation of The Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, be now read the third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

Bill No. 04 — An Act to amend An Act respecting Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, being an Act to amend and consolidate "An Act respecting Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, being an Act to amend and consolidate An Act to incorporate Saskatchewan Co-operative Wheat Producers Limited" and to enact certain provisions respecting Saskatchewan Wheat Pool

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Speaker, I move that an Act to amend An Act respecting Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, being an Act to amend and consolidate "An Act respecting Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, being an Act to amend and consolidate an Act to incorporate Saskatchewan Co-operative Wheat Producers Limited" and to enact certain provisions respecting Saskatchewan Wheat Pool be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:08 p.m.