

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 15, 1995

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today to present a petition on behalf of the people from the Richmond community of Saskatchewan and also from the area of Hilda, Alberta. I'll read the prayer:

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

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

And I'm happy to table these on behalf of the folks from out in my constituency, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased as well to present a petition to the Assembly and reading of the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to allocate adequate funding dedicated 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 Highway No. 1, rather than allocating these funds toward capital construction projects in the province.

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

This petition is signed by individuals from the Maple Creek, Consul, and Walsh, Alberta areas. I so present.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I also have a petition pertaining to the same subject. I will read the prayer:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And these are also from the Maple Creek, Calgary . . . even up as far as Calgary, Mr. Speaker, so there's quite a lot of interest in this project. I will now table.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions from citizens of Saskatchewan today and I'll simply read the prayer:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I have citizens from Maple Creek; Consul, Saskatchewan; Regina, Saskatchewan; Medicine Hat, Alberta; Calgary, Alberta; users of No. 1 Highway from all over, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My petition reads this way:

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

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

Today they're from Golden Prairie, Maple Creek, Saskatoon, Tompkins, Consul, and Walsh, Alberta.

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 oppose changes to federal legislation regarding firearm ownership.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Roy: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to

introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, 21 grade 7, 8, and 9 students from the community of Prud'homme. They are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, here today. They are accompanied by their teacher and I believe principal, Mr. Stephen Kemp, as well chaperons Terry Maton, Lyn Maton, and Gilbert Leray, a very good friend of mine.

Mr. Speaker, they're here today to partake in the functioning of the House. They're going to be in for question period and then I'm going to meet with them after to answer any questions they may have about the proceedings they've witnessed here today.

I want to tell you that I truly appreciate them being here today, and as well I appreciate the community of Prud'homme in particular because of its rich cultural diversity.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all the members of the House to welcome our special guests here. and a very heartfelt welcome to you. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, 18 women who are seated in the west gallery. They are spouses and a part of the Saskatchewan public works conference that's being held in Regina on March 14 to 17. The Saskatchewan public works association is a non-profit organization that's involved in the areas of public works, administration, operation, and maintenance.

And there will be approximately 220 delegates at the conference who are representatives from urban municipalities throughout Saskatchewan, so the women that are here this afternoon will be from throughout the province. And their spouses were perhaps city or town councillors, administrators, engineers, or town foremen.

I'm hoping that while the husbands are at work, they have finally a chance to relax and a bit of a chance to play and that they enjoy their afternoon with us during question period and the tour that will follow.

I would like to ask all members to join with me in welcoming the women who are part of the spouses program for the Saskatchewan public works conference.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Bedford Road Collegiate Renovations

Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to extend my congratulations to Bedford Road Collegiate in Saskatoon on the completion of its renovation project. Ceremonies to celebrate the school's \$6.5 million reconstruction were held yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, the completion of this project is not only significant for the staff and students at Bedford Road Collegiate, but it is also important to our Hon. Premier and to me. We were in the same home classroom at Bedford Road in the '50s, dare I say, and there are very many fond memories of being educated at this school and making many lifelong friends.

At that time I can remember when the ceiling of the physics lab fell in, but fortunately there were no students in the classroom when this happened.

I join with the Premier in giving credit to Bedford Road Collegiate for providing us and other classmates with a thorough academic program, inspirational teachers, and exposure to a wide variety of cultural, athletic, and social activities.

I think it is appropriate to recognize this high school during Education Week in Saskatchewan and I couldn't say it any better than the Premier did when he indicated that the renovation to Bedford Road has produced a school that preserves the best of the old while offering the benefits of the new.

Congratulations and best wishes to the staff and students of Bedford Road Collegiate. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Lumsden 90th Birthday

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is a very special day in my home town. March 15, 1995 is the 90th birthday of the town of Lumsden. Last night, Mr. Speaker, we had a birthday party to celebrate the anniversary of the town's incorporation.

By 1905, Mr. Speaker, Lumsden — once known as Happy Valley — was well established and a flourishing trade centre for the surrounding area. There were four grain elevators and a flour mill and a full complement of businesses. Between 1901 and 1911 the town grew rapidly as an agricultural service centre with a population increase of 418 per cent. You know in those days it was much easier for people to shop in Lumsden than to make the long trip to Regina.

1905 to 1911 were boom years in Lumsden. Horseless carriages were gaining in popularity; passenger and freight trains — at least four a day — stopped at our train station; and people were complaining even then about streets, drainage, and sidewalks. In 1911 an electric power plant was built to put in street lighting and beef was 9 cents a pound.

Last night we celebrated our birthday with the community choir, the Lumsden grade 10 drama troupe, and the Lumsden community adult band providing the entertainment. It's my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to play flute in the band. We also welcomed three honoured guests representing the three levels of government. The mayor of Lumsden, Mr. Duane Klippenstine,

received greetings and . . .

The Speaker: — I'm sorry but the member's time is up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Award of Teaching Excellence

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a moment today in recognition of Education Week and the work and dedication of teachers across our province and their commitment to a vital educational program in teaching our young people. As the Prime Minister recently said at a major awards presentation he made, teachers like the ones we honour today play a vital role in students' academic achievement and in shaping overall attitudes, career choices, and commitment to lifelong learning.

And in that respect, I'd like to congratulate Mr. Howard Baker of the Kennedy-Langbank High School, a high school of just under 100 students, for the prestigious award he received. He received the award of teaching excellence in science, technology, and mathematics, at a ceremony in honour of national level recipients. And I want to acknowledge Mr. Baker for that. It's because of his hard work and his dedication that we have had a couple of students who have received major awards in the area in the past couple of years.

One has placed . . . they've placed in the top 10 of Saskatchewan senior mathematics contests, while another won a provincial physics award. Not bad, it says, for a school of under 100 people. And at this time we certainly want to acknowledge the work of teachers and as well individuals like Mr. Baker and their commitment to education in the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Lumsden 90th Birthday

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with my colleague, the member from Regina North West, in congratulating the town of Lumsden on its 90th birthday which they celebrate today.

In most towns in the world where they count their anniversaries by the century, a 90th birthday is not something to notice. Compared to other places, Saskatchewan is in its infancy. But if our province and our towns are young now, they will not always be, and now is the time to begin placing our markers, time to acknowledge our past so our move into the future will be confident. To illustrate my point, last night I was pleased to take part in the 90th anniversary celebration of the town of Lumsden in my constituency.

The program was sponsored by the Lumsden Historical Society and by the Lumsden Parks and Recreation Board. It included performances by the Lumsden community choir, the grade 10 students of Lumsden High School and the Lumsden community adult band.

If you will not be too surprised at a non-partisan comment, Mr. Speaker, it was just confirmed that the Lumsden band featured an excellent flute player who looked suspiciously like the member from Regina North West.

Lumsden is a vibrant, growing community with much to be proud of in its brief history. Its next 90 years will, I am sure, fulfil the promise of its first. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ides of March

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is the ides of March. Ides is a pre-Latin Etruscan word meaning divided. In the Roman calendar, the months were divided into halves and the ides of March means the middle. It was on this day in 44 BC (before Christ) that Julius Caesar was assassinated in the Legislative Assembly of his day — the Roman Senate. Hence the famous phrase, "beware the ides of March."

Any application of this prophecy to us today, Mr. Speaker? Can ancient times speak to us? Well remember the leader of the bloody palace coup — Cassius. We might also remember Caesar's line about Cassius:

Let me have men about me that are fat . . . yond' Cassius
has a lean and hungry look; he thinks too much: such
men are dangerous.

Well I look around this legislature for lean and hungry men and I don't see any relevancy here, Mr. Speaker. Most people assume Caesar's last words were the ones that Shakespeare wrote: "et tu Brute!" In fact, he said in classical Greek, Kai su teknon. Loosely translated, that means, you'll get yours, bud. That sounds like a warning to all politicians, both fat and lean, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Accreditation Award to Rosetown-Lucky Lake Health Centres

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, today I'm proud to announce that in my constituency of Rosetown-Elrose, two health care facilities, the Rosetown Health Centre and the Lucky Lake Health Centre have both sought and received a three-year accreditation award from the Canadian Council of Health Accreditation.

I want to congratulate both facilities and Midwest Health District for having met this series of very strict standards laid out by the CCHFA (Canadian Council on Health Facilities Accreditation). These standards were evaluated by an independent team consisting of a registered nurse and a physician.

As Midwest Health District CEO (chief executive officer) Doug Ball said, it is because of the hard work and commitment of all

staff that we have achieved this very high standard.

Linda Wasko-Lacey, director of facilities and emergency services, said that receiving this award was like being named a five-star hotel.

Midwest Health District was the first district to be established in Saskatchewan and its success in Lucky Lake and Rosetown demonstrates the achievement of the goals we aimed for in launching health care reform in Saskatchewan. What we had hoped for and planned for and worked for has now been achieved.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Greg Illerbrun Receives Wildlife Conservation Award

Mr. Penner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize an individual from Swift Current who has made a significant contribution in the area of wildlife conservation. Greg Illerbrun was presented with the Gordon Lund Memorial Conservation Award at the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation's annual meeting in Regina in February. This award is presented to the person who makes the highest contribution to conservation in the province.

Mr. Illerbrun, who is president of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, has a list of accomplishments. He established a working relationship with the Saskatchewan stock growers, enabling the remaining critical Crown lands to be enshrined in The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act.

The Wawota wildlife group, which nominated Mr. Illerbrun, cited his persistence and dedication in handling the difficult question of a wildlife diversification unit.

Mr. Speaker, there are some things which sometimes are taken for granted, but without the efforts of individuals like Mr. Illerbrun, those things that we enjoy today may not be there for the future.

I want to personally thank Mr. Illerbrun for his dedication and the excellent work he has done in the area of wildlife conservation. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Rail Strike

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, it appears that your government has out-flip-flopped the Liberal leader, and that's a difficult role to follow. Your Minister of Agriculture on March 13 in questioning about the rail dispute said that it simply wasn't appropriate to back to back-to-work legislation; there

had to be a better way to solve it.

The next day the Minister of Economic Development told this Assembly basically the same thing, that he preferred other methods of settlement — the same day, Premier, that you were at the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) saying that back-to-work legislation should be brought in sooner than later. Matter of fact, you said, there is no use waiting. Well welcome to the real world, Mr. Premier.

I'm wondering if you could repeat your flip-flop for the Assembly, just to make sure that you're not doing your usual tap dance — you know, one thing for the farm folk and another for your union leader friends. Would you do that, sir?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Thunder Creek for that question. The position of the provincial government has been clear throughout the piece. We obviously favour a negotiated settlement in any industrial dispute because that is a settlement which is likely to have the longest lasting benefit for the parties, and in this particular case, for the country. I might also add that the transportation system is under enough stress as it is, given the decision by the Liberals to do away with the Crow rate.

But speaking specifically to the issue that the member raises, if there is no settlement possible, if the parties have reached an impasse — which appears to be the case — then the public interest is what is paramount. And the public interest in this case means that the grains should move.

It means therefore that the federal government must take its responsibility and take the appropriate action in this regard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Premier, I'm not surprised by that answer. And after the attack that you and your government have brought on rural Saskatchewan, rural families over the last three and a half years, when you turn around and attack the federal Liberals, it sort of rings hollow, just like those ships waiting at the terminal in Vancouver, Mr. Premier.

I mean the feds and the reds have been a real dynamite combination for rural Saskatchewan. And I think that's what people are telling you all across this province. They certainly did at SARM yesterday.

If you truly believe that it's now time to act, will you agree to a rule 42 emergency debate in this Legislative Assembly to support the passage of Bill C-262, a private member's Bill introduced into the House of Commons by Reform MP (Member of Parliament), Ray Speaker?

Are you prepared to stand and deliver, Mr. Premier, on behalf of rural Saskatchewan for a change? Are you willing to do that, sir?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, first of all, there is no rule 42 motion before us, as the hon. member obviously knows, and he's asking me to give an answer on a "what if" situation. If this motion is presented, I'll have to make my choice, as all the members of the House will make the choice.

But I would say to the hon. member, if he would divorce himself from politics for just a moment in this regard, I've given an answer which I think is the correct one. I think he would support it in substance; at least I get the feeling that this is the case. I don't know about the position of the Liberal Party. The Saskatchewan Liberal Party seems to be very much singing the Hallelujah Chorus of the federal Liberal Party.

I repeat my answer: if a negotiated settlement cannot be arrived at, and that certainly seems to be the case — in fact it indicates now, according to a Canadian Press bulletin which I have just received on my desk, that as of Wednesday, March 15, at 1 p.m. I think it is, there is a lock-out conducted by management. Obviously there's a very big impasse here — it is incumbent upon the federal Liberal government and the Liberals to act in the public interest, and that means if necessary to bring back-to-work legislation in order to solve the dispute.

Bill 42 . . . or rule 42 debate may or may not be desirable; that's for the members to state. But as Premier and as the Leader of the Government, I've stated our position and I hope that you agree with it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Premier, it is time to stand. That strike grows by the hour. Yesterday the Liberal members of this House walked out rather than vote on the very topic that you and I are discussing today. So don't you walk out on the people in rural Saskatchewan. Have more courage than the Grits showed yesterday, Mr. Premier.

If we bring in a Bill . . . or bring in a motion to support a Bill before the House of Commons to end this strike, will you support it? Will your caucus support it? And we send a message down to Ottawa for a change that we stand together, rather than this wishy-washy stance of you and your ministers. Will you do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from Thunder Creek can stay in question period for ever and attribute whatever descriptions he wants to my answer, but I think the answer is very clear. I shall repeat it again.

If there is an impasse, and there appears to be an impasse, it is the responsibility of the federal government to act in the public interest. No private interest, whether it's the railway's interest or the trade unions' interests, should supersede the public interest. It is in the public interest of Saskatchewan farmers of the

western Canadian region, in fact I would say of all of Canada, for this to be settled as expeditiously as possible, as quickly as possible. And if it can't be done by settlement — it seems like it can't be — then it should be done by legislation.

Now the hon. member says, will you do it by a resolution in this House which would endorse support for a Bill in the House of Commons introduced by some Reform Party member? I haven't seen that Reform Party member's Bill. I doubt that the member from Thunder Creek either has. Maybe he has. I have not. I would want to render, at least, my judgement after I've had an opportunity to see what's in the form and the nature of the Bill.

But leave the detail of the Bill aside; the position of the Government of Saskatchewan is the grain must move. It's not only grain. It's the other commodities of western Canada must move — potash. We're an exporting province. That's the public interest. That's the national interest. And it's the job of the federal Liberals and the provincial Liberals to get on with getting this thing resolved quickly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Crown Corporation Construction Agreement

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the minister responsible for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan), and while it is not as immediately pressing as the issue of the strike, it is nevertheless, Minister, an important one. Mr. Minister, 80 per cent of the construction workers in Saskatchewan do not belong to a union. Yet you have implemented a policy that discriminates against all of those workers. Mr. Minister, if you don't have a union card, you are now prohibited from applying for three-quarters of the jobs on Crown construction sites. That's discrimination, pure and simple.

In some situations, employers may actually have to lay off the existing workers in order to fill union quotas. Those quotas are quotas that you, in your government, have imposed, Mr. Minister. Your union-preference tendering policy will prevent non-unionized workers from applying for most Crown construction jobs. Why are you discriminating against non-union workers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows very well that there's no discrimination here. The policy that is in place here is no different than the policy that was in place for the Shand project, the policy that was in place for the NewGrade upgrader, policy that has been in place in the private sector on a Cameco project. And in fact very recently another private sector company signed almost exactly the same kind of agreement with a Communications, Energy and Paperworkers unit, so this is not something that's breaking new ground.

It in fact does, Mr. Speaker, in answer to the member opposite,

if he would look at the facts of the way the policy works, provides a level playing-field for everybody. It's going to provide an opportunity where all of the tenders of the Crown corporations above a certain amount — depending on where they are — will be now on free and open tendering based on the lowest bid and the capability of doing the work.

I see nothing wrong with that, Mr. Speaker. That's for the first time where we have a policy that is that clear, where the lowest qualified bidder is going to be the person who's going to . . . or the construction outfit that's going to do the work, and that is eminently fair, Mr. Speaker, and even-handed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Minister, the operative word there is “almost the same”. And that's how you always sidestep the reality and the truth, by throwing a rider in.

Mr. Minister, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code is designed to protect Saskatchewan people against discrimination in the workplace. In fact your government fought to ensure sexual orientation was included so employers could not discriminate on that basis, yet now you are implementing a policy that not only allows discrimination, it imposes discrimination.

Mr. Minister, employers are not allowed to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, religion, colour, sex, sexual orientation, family status, marital status, disability, age, nationality, ancestry, place of origin, or receipt of public assistance. Yet discrimination based on union membership is now being promoted by your government.

Mr. Minister, aren't you violating the Human Rights Code through this discriminatory policy that you've placed?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — The answer, Mr. Speaker, simply is no. There is no discrimination here. In fact it provides more fairness than there has ever been in this construction field for many, many years.

Mr. Speaker, it will allow all contractors, both union and non-union, to bid for the contracts, and lowest qualified bidder will get the work. It will award contracts on the basis of lowest qualified bidder. It will ensure that all workers are treated equally and fairly.

And, Mr. Speaker, most important of all, or at least just as important, everybody in Saskatchewan will get . . . who is a worker in the construction field will get first shot at the work, and it will maximize the number of Saskatchewan people who are working the projects. And that's also important, Mr. Speaker.

This is a good policy. We didn't invent it. It's been existing in Saskatchewan in other situations before, including the private

sector, and across Canada and in other provinces, and is here today because it has been proven to be able to work very well. And it will prove that it will work well here in Saskatchewan as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Minister, obviously you are misleading us again a little bit here because you say the lowest bidder, and there can be no such thing in this whole process. You've automatically attached 21 cents per hour work to every project that there is, and the taxpayers paying their utility bills are the ones that are going to have to pay for that.

Mr. Minister, the opposition caucus believes that this is a discriminatory policy and we're going to see just how effective your Human Rights Commission is in protecting workers against discrimination. Earlier today I sent a letter to the Human Rights Commission. I asked for a ruling on whether this policy is discriminatory under section 16(1) of the Human Rights Code which prohibits discrimination in the workplace.

Mr. Minister, we're going to see which is stronger, your government's commitment to fight discrimination or your government's commitment to pay off the unions. I suspect it's the latter. Mr. Minister, would you admit that your union-preference policy clearly violates the spirit of the Human Rights Code by discriminating against non-union workers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Well I suppose, Mr. Speaker, one could say that since the member has taken it upon himself to ask the Human Rights Commission that question that one should not comment further on the issue.

But I want to say very clearly, Mr. Speaker, that the policy that is in place, that was announced some time ago, is a policy that will provide equal work for everybody in Saskatchewan; it's going to be a policy that is going to award contracts on the basis of lowest qualified bidder — nobody can argue about that, Mr. Speaker — and is going to be fair to all workers whether they are unionized or whether they are not unionized. And that has not always been the case under the former administration which indeed did show discrimination from their own particular philosophical perspective.

That's not the way that this government operates. We make sure that everybody is treated equally and this policy helps to assure that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Care Workers Survey

Mrs. Bergman: — Mr. Speaker, it is hard to understand why the government thinks everything is fine in health care. Things are not fine, Mr. Speaker.

The CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) series, vital signs, is getting to the real story on health care. Last year, the Regina District reluctantly commissioned a study of health care workers' responses to reforms. I would like to table some of those survey results in the House today, Mr. Speaker.

Over 2,500 health care workers responded and the results show that nurses, doctors, and front-line workers were not consulted in Regina, and there is similar evidence around the province.

My question to the Minister of Health: will the minister admit that this government has failed miserably in consulting with health care workers during this period of reform?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's question and I appreciate her concern for health workers. The report that she lays on the Table today, of course, was conducted a year ago, and it was commissioned and it's been begun by the Regina District Board who are also concerned about the morale of health workers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I'm concerned about in this House today is the Liberal caucus coming into this House almost on a daily basis and misleading the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I want to illustrate if you'll give me but a moment.

On March 7, Tuesday, March 7, the Leader of the Liberal caucus came into this House and said, and I quote from *Hansard*:

I'd like to table today financial statements for Midwest and Living Sky health districts for the last fiscal year. They show operating deficits for both boards of over \$100,000 each. These deficits mean lay-offs, and they mean cuts to services.

That's the statement of the Liberal leader.

Mr. Speaker, because of her misinformation in this House and across the province of Saskatchewan, compounded by news releases to the same, the Midwest Board has had to memo every one of their staff members with this memo, and let me quote it, Mr. Speaker:

The district did not have a cash deficit for the year ending March 31, 1994. The district in fact had a cash surplus of \$439,000.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this quote, listen to this quote:

It is quite evident that those responsible for the release of this information were wanting to create a smokescreen and did not look at the details of the report.

Mr. Speaker, will they stand up and apologize for the leader and apologize for their conduct.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Bergman: — Mr. Speaker, this minister is handling my questions in the same way that he has handled the health care workers around the province.

Mr. Speaker, this morning on CBC AM . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order.

Mrs. Bergman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning on CBC AM Dr. Suresh Kasset expressed his frustration with this widespread lack of consultation. He said: it has been 18 months and we have not seen a board member. His district board chairman in Rolling Hills explained that, we have been so busy with office space, furniture, and employees, we just didn't have time.

Mr. Speaker, the survey done last year in Regina pointed to the same lack of concern. One employee in the document I tabled today called the health district the largest rolling arm of government with absolutely no vision.

My question to the Minister of Health: what kind of plan is it that has district boards putting decisions about offices and furniture ahead of dialogue with doctors and nurses?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the member quotes radio programing this morning. She obviously does not quote other doctors who were featured on that radio programing talking about the very good working relationship they're having with their district board. She doesn't want to quote that, Mr. Speaker.

She lays today an important survey that was done of Regina district health workers, an effort initiated by the Regina District Board because, I believe, we're all concerned about health workers across our province.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that this member now has to stand when the member from Shaunavon and his leader has stood consistently in this House over the last few days misleading the people of Saskatchewan. The Liberal leader comes in here, Leader of the Third Party comes in here and attempts to mislead — and if the member would be quiet from his seat and listen he might stop this misleading — the Liberal leader comes into the House and tries to mislead the public about waiting-lists. She was wrong. He comes into the House, they make a claim that the Midwest Board is running a huge deficit; it's absolutely wrong.

I think that that member from Shaunavon, who shouts from his seat continually, should stand up on his feet and apologize.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Bergman: — Mr. Speaker, health workers are not being consulted, and in many cases they are afraid to speak their mind. The task force that administered the survey stated today that fear of expressing opinions and anxiety over change has

contributed to low morale in the organization.

Mr. Speaker, the minister and his predecessor say they value and listen to the input of the people who deliver health care services. But these employees are afraid to speak up. Why has the minister created a system that creates fear and not consultation?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, and again I would remind members that the survey work that the member is referring to here today was conducted last year. And I know there have been efforts made in the local community to improve those relationships. And I know some of them have been significantly done.

The Speaker: — Order, order. If the member from Shaunavon has a question, I would wish that he'd ask his caucus to permit him to ask his question. The Minister of Health is on his feet.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The member from Shaunavon doesn't want to stand in this House today. The member from Shaunavon doesn't want to stand in this House because the last time he stood in this House he misled the people of our province. And I fear that every time he does stand he misleads the people, as does his leader.

And I want to say to the member from Regina who raises the serious questions today about health care workers, this has been a traumatic period for health care workers, for people involved in health care. We've gone through a significant restructuring. Mr. Speaker, in this process we have worked with health care unions and with health care workers at every level. I submit that I have spoken to literally hundreds if not thousands of health care workers, both individually and in large groups. It has not been easy, Mr. Speaker, but they have been part of the process and a great help in the process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Correctional Centres Work Programs

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the new Minister of Justice.

Mr. Minister, could you explain your government's policy regarding the type of work done by inmates at provincial correctional centres? Do you believe, for example, that correctional centres should compete, should compete for work that would normally be done by private sector businesses and private sector workers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, this is not a new issue nor is it a new program. Virtually since the time prisons have been established by society some centuries ago, prison officials have sought to find work for prison inmates which will assist in rehabilitating them. Society has an interest in rehabilitating prisoners and work which they do is a part of that

rehabilitation. If what they do is useful and can be sold, it (a) gives the prisoners a sense of self-worth and gives them a small amount of money with which to re-establish themselves — and I repeat, a small amount of money.

Every effort is made by prison officials to avoid entering into unfair competition with private businesses. Every effort is made, and these policies haven't changed from the times when your government was in office. Every effort is made to avoid competition which is unfair. But society does have an interest in seeing these people rehabilitated and useful work is a part of that rehabilitation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Minister, we do not have any objection to getting these people to do some constructive work. But at the same time it is paramount that it be not intrusive in business.

Now, Mr. Minister, I'm going to give you an example of what happens when that policy is not followed. For many years the Warman Home Centre has built grain bin floors for a company called Flaman Sales, which all members in rural Saskatchewan are familiar with. This year, the Warman Home Centre lost that contract, Mr. Minister. Flaman purchased their entire stock of floors from the Saskatoon Correctional Centre who are using inmate labour.

Mr. Minister, the manager of Warman Home Centre says: it's hard enough to compete in today's market with the economy the way it is without competing with the government charging nothing for labour and picking up the tab for everything else.

Mr. Minister, why are correctional centres taking jobs away from small businesses like the Warman Home Centre?

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to tell the member opposite that the policy hasn't changed nor has the practice changed from a few short years ago when you were minister of Social Services. The same officials, the same policy, and the same practice.

Every effort is made, and I believe they're successful, in not undercutting, in not price cutting. They attempt to have their prices as competitive but society has an interest in seeing these people do useful work, and this policy hasn't changed from the time when you administered it.

Mr. Neudorf: — But, Mr. Minister, the impact has changed. That's what I'm concerned about today. The impact has changed. We did the same thing with SARCAN but we chose an area that was not intrusive in the market-place, Mr. Minister. The way your government operates, the next thing you know you'll be unionizing those inmates and guaranteeing them 75 per cent of the jobs on Crown construction. That's what I'm afraid of. Mr. Minister. We agree that inmates must do useful work. However, you should not be using this captive labour pool that you have by taking away jobs from Saskatchewan workers.

The manager of the Warman Home Centre says: it's no small wonder that this province has trouble attracting businesses. Not only do they charge us taxes but they find a way to take business away from us unfairly. Only a government would get away with that. Or should I say, only our government. Unquote.

Mr. Minister, what are you prepared to do to rectify this situation? Will you ensure that correctional centres are not taking on contracts that directly compete with the private business community? Will you do that, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker. hon. members opposite do really see bogymen under every bed when they believe we're going to unionize the inmates in the prison. I want to say to the member opposite that it's true it's a captive audience, and also seems to me it's a captured audience. At least it has been when this government was in office. I remember when members opposite were in office, they had a bit of problem with people walking out uninvited, walking out of the jails. At least now, they're there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order, order. Why is the member from Moosomin on his feet?

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, with leave, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity of introducing to you and through you, a gentleman who's joined us this afternoon, sitting in your gallery, Mr. Dale Johanson. He's a dairy farmer from the Kipling area, a very active producer in the area.

And I think the members would like to join me in welcoming Dale to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McPherson: — With leave, for the introduction of guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly, two distinguished guests in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Phillip Baynes, president and CEO of the Nuclear Energy Institute of Washington, D.C. (District of Columbia); and Mr. Walter Keys, chairman of the Canadian Nuclear Society.

Mr. Baynes is visiting Saskatchewan as a guest of the Canadian Nuclear Society and he is speaking to groups throughout Saskatchewan. I had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, along with other members, to attend a luncheon today where Mr. Baynes spoke most convincingly for the need for world energy policies . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. The member knows full well that he can't go into detailed debate. He introduces his guest to the members and welcomes them here.

Mr. McPherson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I then would like to say that because the United States is Saskatchewan's largest uranium customer, I would then ask that all members welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — With leave, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Shaunavon in welcoming our guests to the legislature. I was unavailable to attend the meeting today. Two of my staff members attended to the meeting.

And I want to say to the gentlemen, welcome them to the legislature on behalf of all government members. They certainly are an important part of our industry, and we welcome them here today. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MOTION UNDER RULE 42

Grain Handlers' Strike

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before orders of the day, with leave of the Assembly, I would like to ask permission to engage in a debate under rule 42, Mr. Speaker, regarding the grain handlers' strike and the lockout of Canadian National Railways and Canadian Pacific Railways, and how this situation will affect Saskatchewan producers and our province's agriculture industry and the economy as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, the motion reads as follows, with your permission:

That this Assembly join together in urging the federal government to expediently pass private members' Bill C-262, which has been introduced into the House of Commons, which will protect the viability of Saskatchewan's agriculture and potash industry, as well as the provincial economy as a whole, as well as providing fair and equitable solutions for all parties involved; and further, that the verbatims of this debate

be forwarded to the Prime Minister and the federal Labour minister, Lucienne Robillard, for immediate attention and consideration.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

The Speaker: — Does the member have leave?

An Hon. Member: — On a point of order.

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

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that this is a very serious issue, and also in light of the fact that the motion being put forward here relates to a private members' Bill in the House of Commons as opposed to a government Bill — it's not that we're opposed to debating the issue in the House — and therefore I don't want to refuse leave, but what I would ask is that we take a five-minute recess to negotiate the wording of a motion between the opposition parties as well as the government, that would strengthen the wording of the motion to make sure that we are relating it to the House here as opposed to a private members' Bill in Ottawa, which would actually strengthen the purpose and intent. And then after the debate, forward it on to the House of Commons.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, if I could respond to the House Leader's point of order. The intention of the opposition is to bring forward to the people of this province and to the federal government a very, very serious issue that is descending upon the people of Saskatchewan in whole and the farmers in particular.

So if the only way, as I interpret it, that the opposition will be allowed to have the freedom to debate this issue is by compromising on the words, Mr. Speaker, I am quite willing to take a five-minute recess and pursue the matter further.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I think, by leave of the Assembly, if leave is granted to do this, to take a five-minute recess — is leave granted?

Leave granted.

The Speaker: — We'll take a five-minute recess.

The Assembly recessed for a period of time.

The Speaker: — Will the members come to order. This House will reconvene.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By leave of the Assembly, I would ask permission to engage in a debate under rule 42, Mr. Speaker, regarding the grain handlers' strike and lockout of the Canadian National Railways and the Canadian Pacific Railways, and how this situation will affect Saskatchewan producers and our province's agricultural industry and economy as a whole. And the motion reads, Mr. Speaker, moved by myself and seconded by the member for

Humboldt:

That this Assembly urge the federal government to demonstrate national leadership in an effort to facilitate a negotiated settlement between employees and employers involved in the transportation industry; where the public interest is threatened, the federal government move to end this dispute by legislating a process which will result in a fair and equitable solution for both employers and employees and which will protect the viability of Saskatchewan's agriculture industry, potash industry and the Canadian transportation system.

So move, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order. I have to assume that the member . . . that this motion takes the place of the one you previously asked permission by leave. Does the member have leave?

Leave granted.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan producers have paid a dear price over the years for disruptions in the movement of grain caused by work stoppage; in fact 14 times these work stoppages have happened in the last 29 years.

This morning grain and potash movement out at the west coast abruptly stopped when a lockout strike of longshoremen foremen closed terminals in Vancouver and Prince Rupert. Already agricultural groups, producers, and elevator companies are frustrated by the grain shipment delays caused by the railway strike.

But the situation in Vancouver and Prince Rupert adds greatly to their concerns. Mr. Speaker, our grain handling and transportation systems are already straining to meet strong export sales commitments. This disruption will result in lost sales and increased demurrage bills for farmers. And we all know farmers cannot afford to take any more blows from their industry, Mr. Speaker, and neither can the provincial economy.

The federal government must act and must act now to deal with this situation. A private members' Bill has been introduced into the House of Commons, Bill C-262, Mr. Speaker, which would deal fairly with all parties, and we are supportive of that piece of legislation brought in by a Reform MP from Alberta, Mr. Ray Speaker. We are very supportive of that piece of legislation.

The Bill, in those cases where in negotiated settlement could not be reached, would institute a binding arbitration process including final offer selection. This addition would mean that a strike could be averted, and the parties could continue to pursue collective bargaining without crippling the grains industry.

Mr. Speaker, this is an extremely important piece of legislation that is needed immediately to promote the industry, the

agricultural industry, and the transportation system across this country.

If the parties can't . . . there's no time to waste on this either, Mr. Speaker. It's costing literally millions of dollars. I heard on *Canada AM* this morning, Mr. Speaker, it's costing the Port of Vancouver something in the magnitude of a million dollars a year, and that is just the Port of Vancouver. It has nothing to do with the grain industry across this country. The amount of costs to the agricultural producers probably is in the tens of millions of dollars on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker. And it's mounting up quickly.

If the parties can't settle this dispute within days, the economic impact to our province will be devastating. Saskatchewan producers have paid millions and millions of dollars over the years as a result of being held hostage. At this time, we believe stopping this will . . . Saskatchewan will bear the brunt of this labour disruption, Mr. Speaker.

The agriculture sector isn't the only industry in our province to suffer as a result of such labour disputes. In the case of the potash industry, most of our province's potash head offices are in Saskatchewan; offshore throughout the Neptune Bulk Terminals in Vancouver, and those shipments are currently being tied up as well.

Of grave concern is the delivery of about 500,000 tonnes of potash destined for China, about half of which is already loaded but not shipped. Depending on how long the labour dispute ties up the port, we could be bearing much higher costs and lost sales which again will result in a severe impact on the economy of Saskatchewan.

After all, Mr. Speaker, when countries sign agreements to buy commodities such as potash, they examine everything, from the quality of the goods to the disruptions in delivery. And there are window clauses within these contracts that will allow countries to break the agreement if need be, Mr. Speaker. And that's an important thing to keep in mind — that the contracts that the Canadian Wheat Board is making with other jurisdictions, other countries, as well as the potash industry, generally speaking have those kinds of agreements within them. If you can't supply over a certain period of time, the country is let out of that agreement. We simply can't afford that. We're in a very, very competitive industry in agriculture and the potash industries with other producers around the world. We can't afford to let sales go uncommitted, Mr. Speaker.

And don't think that China and other countries won't exercise their right to use the window clauses, because they need the potash. They need the potash for their farmers in China just as much as we need the sales for our potash producers in Saskatchewan. We cannot afford to let this happen.

Bud Knudtson of the Saskatchewan Potash Producers Association Inc. says . . . stated in today's *Leader-Post*, and I quote:

. . . a plan to build a \$40-million US export terminal in Portland, Ore. for handling Saskatchewan potash "is really the result of . . . (situations like this labour dispute)".

And I think that pretty much tells all, that our transportation system is in some degree of chaos at the moment as a result of these strikes, Mr. Speaker. There needs to be a legislated solution to this, and the sooner the better, Mr. Speaker. We cannot afford as a country, and particularly as a province, to let this thing go on at all.

The Minister of Labour the other day, I understand in the legislature here, commented that not one dime of impact should happen to the Saskatchewan farmers or the Saskatchewan potash producers of Saskatchewan as a whole. And he is right in that regard — he is right in that regard. And we are concerned when the Minister of Agriculture says that in this province that he's not in favour of legislating them back to work, only as a last resort.

Well we do not support that, Mr. Speaker. We believe that the potash producers and the farmers of this province need a legislated solution to this, and right now they need that solution, Mr. Speaker. We're in a period in the year when grain transportation forms a critical part of the farmers' planning for their upcoming crop prospects, Mr. Speaker. They are looking at all avenues right now. All of the things relative to transportation — delivery, prices, all of those kinds of things — are on the minds of agriculture producers across this province.

Last evening I was in Melville and had the occasion, Mr. Speaker, to talk to a number of farmers. And they were extremely concerned about this labour disruption, this labour problem right now — very, very concerned — because they recognize immediately the impact, where grain cars are sitting on the sidings across this province, waiting to be loaded, but they can't be loaded because the grain isn't going to be moving on the rail lines. And we again, Mr. Speaker, simply can't allow this to happen.

Canadian Wheat Board spokesman Bob Roehle, I think it is, said mounting labour problems damage Canada's reputation, Mr. Speaker, and we can't afford to lose any buyers in such a competitive trading world. And that's the reality.

As you all know, in agriculture what happens is you make commitments to people to sell them grain at a certain price plus the delivery of that product, Mr. Speaker. And you can't sit back and wait for these kinds of things to play out on their own. You have to have a reliable transportation system.

And there will be increasing pressure on our transportation system now, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the Crow changes to western grain transportation. There will be considerable pressure for movement to the lowest cost shipping alternative.

And if that means the United States of America is one of those alternatives, the Mississippi system or other systems, rail lines

leading out to Portland and other ports in the United States, that will be the kind of pressure. If you're going to change the Crow benefit, Mr. Speaker, you're also going to put pressure on the Canadian system to be competitive against the American system, because all farmers and all commodity groups are going to be looking for the lowest cost alternative when it comes to shipping their product in the future, Mr. Speaker.

And as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, I think the piece of legislation that was introduced in the House of Commons the other day by Mr. Ray Speaker, a Reform MP from Lethbridge Alberta . . . he introduced the Bill C-262 into the House of Commons and we are supportive of that because of the impact of it.

This Bill would stop Saskatchewan producers from being the can that is kicked about between opposing sides of labour disputes. Bill C-262 is fair to everyone. It will provide for a formalized and permanent method of dealing with the all-but-too-frequent labour disputes which cripple the grains industry.

In light of the seriousness of this situation, the potentially devastating effect of this labour dispute, I believe all members in this Assembly should support urging the federal government to take immediate steps to support Bill C-262.

Mr. Speaker, this is of such critical importance to the farmers of Saskatchewan, all commodity groups that ship product out of this province, that I would urge all members to support our motion this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and I will move the motion at this time.

The motion is moved by myself, the member from Kindersley, seconded by the member from Humboldt:

That this Assembly urge the federal government to demonstrate national leadership in an effort to facilitate a negotiated settlement between employees and employers involved in the transportation industry; where the public interest is threatened, the federal government move to end the dispute by legislating a process which will result in a fair and equitable solution for both employers and employees and which will protect the viability of Saskatchewan's agriculture industry, the potash industry, and the Canadian transportation system.

Mr. Speaker, so moved.

(1445)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to join in this debate today, Mr. Speaker, on this very, very important issue. We have a problem, and that problem is that the port authority has chosen to lock out the workers on the west coast which in turn will affect the shipments of grain and potash in particular out of that port.

And we all understand the processes which the unions and management go through to try to come to a negotiated settlement and that type of process is preferred I think, by most people. Negotiated settlements are, for the most part, the norm. We hear through the media and through other sources all the settlements that aren't negotiated because those are the ones that we seem to be interested in although the proportion are very low. Most of the contracts go by signed, negotiated, and signed, and nobody really knows anything about it.

In this particular case it's different. We know about it because it's directly affecting our lives, directly affecting the economic framework in which we in Saskatchewan work within. And when things like that happen, Mr. Speaker, and you can see where there apparently is no hope now — although we don't like giving up hope, there appears to be little hope, I should say, of a negotiated settlement — then something has to be done. Something has to be done to ensure that livelihoods of men and women on the Prairies who work in the potash and grain industries are maintained.

Now I want to say as well, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to forget about the lives and earning power and stability of those people who were working at the west coast because that's important as well. I don't want to diminish that because they have to raise their families and put food on the table and pay their mortgages just like the rest of us do. And I don't want it to get into a we or they issue.

However at this point in time, if there appears to be no hope of a settlement and that will result in the tremendous economic pressure on the Saskatchewan economy and all its people, then we have to take more drastic moves. And this is nothing new. I mean we've had other strike/lockout situations in the province, in the country. And at some point in time, if nothing moves, the government then has to take the opportunity, through their power, to possibly legislate the continuance of the workforce.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is not an easy situation. I don't take it lightly, standing up in the House and asking to force anyone to be put in a position where they can't negotiate a contract in the normal process.

In Saskatchewan we have a billion dollar industry between grain and potash — billions of dollars. In my area I think I have four or five potash mines in my constituency. And I understand — I understand — what it does for those areas. I also understand the industry who has come through a bit of a parallel with the grain industry. Come through tough, tough times, Mr. Speaker, where they had to have lay-offs, some lengthy lay-offs in the industry. Prices were low.

But now things are starting to turn around a bit. They're starting to turn around. There's optimism in the industry. In fact one of the mines that I live by probably won't have a shut-down this year except for a scheduled maintenance shut-down, which is the first time in many, many years that that's happened.

And some of the other mines are reducing their shut-downs

depending on what sales position they're in. But the industry's on the move. We can't allow something that may be dragged out a long time to affect this industry that's just getting back on its feet.

The same thing with agriculture. When we've come through many, many years of long, low prices, disasters, insects, droughts, now we see the firming up of the industry or the prices. We're seeing the sales move in . . . move up slightly. We see the net return to farmers increasing. We can't allow a prolonged lockout or strike to end or to put the brakes on this recovery that we're experiencing.

And I want to just expand a little bit again today, Mr. Speaker, what I talked about yesterday. In the position that we're in as farmers — I'll set potash aside for a bit — the farm community out there has been told by the federal Liberal government that there will no longer, after the end of this crop year, be a subsidy known as the Crow benefit. That'll be gone.

The Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Goodale, was unable . . . and I hope was unable, only unable and not unwilling. Although if I wanted to get a little grouchy, I would say possibly unwilling, but I couldn't conjure up the reason why he'd be unwilling to fight for more return to the farm economy.

Anyway, the Minister of Agriculture was not able to get proper compensation. Now I know as government we've had to do many cut-backs and so has the federal government. But proper compensation in terms of the value of the product, in terms of what the value of that product does for Canada — not just Saskatchewan — the value of the grain industry in Saskatchewan benefits every person in Canada because it's a product that we export out. Every dollar that we get . . . not every dollar, the large majority of dollars that come from the grain industry are all new dollars. They're coming in from other countries, and there's a tremendous value to that.

Unfortunately the federal minister, Mr. Goodale, was not able to provide the province of Saskatchewan and western Canada with proper compensation. If they wanted to change the rate, they can do that — they're a majority government in Ottawa, if they want to change the Crow benefit and wipe it out. And they've done that.

But for heaven's sakes, why wouldn't they do it fairly and think about the compensation factor in terms of what that industry does for the country? And when I look at the comparisons . . . and unfortunately what happens, Mr. Speaker, is you get into the debate about, well, you got less than somebody else got. But when something's unfair you have to get into that debate. And since 1991-92 to 1993-94 . . . or '94-95, federal cuts to agriculture in Quebec have been approximately 22 per cent; in Ontario about 30 per cent; and in Saskatchewan about 60 per cent.

And you tell me, Mr. Speaker, the value of the products, the value of the products in those other regions that come into this country — the disproportionate return. As I said, our grain is all

new dollars coming in. And I know Ontario and Quebec have some agricultural exports to the U.S. (United States), but relatively low; it's relatively small compared to our industry out here.

So we have the federal minister unable to secure our share, our equal share of the return after they did away with the Crow benefit. And so then we have a scenario that goes like this. The benefit's going to end at the end of this crop year. I, as a farmer, I think well I'd better try . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I think I'm going to have remind the member that we are on a different motion today. And I see nothing here that relates to the ending of the Crow rate. The gist of the debate is to end the strike or the lockout that is before us. And I think the member has to get back to the topic that is before us.

Mr. Upshall: — I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I should have told you where I was going, because I am coming to the point exactly of this lockout, and the process that we're going through. So if you'd please indulge with me . . . Okay, I'll briefly explain to you until you're comfortable with it.

The farmers want to ship their grain now, because the federal Liberal government took the Crow rate away. And now there's a lockout/strike position on the west coast that the minister again is not going to do anything about, or appears not going to do anything about. Therefore we have the motion. We're encouraging him to do that. And I'm just trying to give the results of if he doesn't . . . if something isn't done, what happens? I mean I hope that satisfies you.

The Speaker: — I want to remind the member that there is nothing in the rules that says that he can't relate to other factors, but he can't go on in detail on other, unrelated factors. He must get back to the gist of the debate or the motion that's before us. And relating to other factors and bringing it in to the motion that's before us, there's nothing wrong with that. But you can't go on in detail on another matter that is peripherally related to this.

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, the importance of keeping the grain moving is obvious, because this Assembly has agreed to a motion that we can debate to send down to the federal House.

And I don't want to do anything that would maybe undermine the importance of the debate. I'm getting my words on the record because I think it's very important.

The reason we're here today is the inability of the federal Liberal Agriculture minister to handle his portfolio on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. Because he obviously needs some encouragement — and I don't know what he's scared of . . .

An Hon. Member: — A reminder.

Mr. Upshall: — Maybe my colleague is right, that's the word

— a reminder of what his job is. His job as federal Agriculture minister is to represent the needs of all agriculture producers in Canada.

I think we should remind Mr. Goodale of where he comes from; and he comes from Saskatchewan. On two occasions now — this is the second occasion in a short time — he is dealing a blow to the farmers of Saskatchewan. Farmers want to move their grain because he took away the Crow benefit, wiped it out. They want to get it in before the end of the crop year because they'll receive that benefit up until the end of the crop year, July 31.

Now he's letting the lockout continue at a time when it looks like there can't be a negotiated settlement. Not responding again to the needs of Saskatchewan farmers who have to move that grain because he's put them in the position of having to move it because he's ending the Crow benefit. This minister, Mr. Speaker, must be reminded of his roots. And I would ask that the Liberal caucus in this province . . .

An Hon. Member: — Be part of the solution.

Mr. Upshall: — Be part of the solution. Exactly.

We'll see, Mr. Speaker, what side of this little fence they may come upon. They have an opportunity here.

Mr. Speaker, our side of the House has tried to do a number of things to prevent this in the past, starting a number of weeks ago. Writing letters not just to the port strike or lockout but to the potential work stoppage to the railroads.

We've written the CN (Canadian National), the CP (Canadian Pacific). We've written the unions; we've written the port authority. And this has been going on for a number of weeks now to encourage them.

In fact, I believe Minister Goodale had a letter written, sent to him, encouraging all these people — reminding them, I guess, first, of the importance of this industry, the importance of this to our grain industry, and encouraging them to settle as quickly as possible.

Obviously, some things don't work in the way you want it. And here we are today.

But we have consulted. I heard the member from Morse yesterday say that they had consulted. And I would encourage the Liberal members here today to — as we did yesterday — agree to table our consultations to show . . . (inaudible) . . . And if you had any consultations on paper, we'd sure be encouraged if you would table them for us today or tomorrow to show that you are actually onside with the farmers and the rural people of Saskatchewan and the potash industry. But I leave that up to you. And if you're on your feet during this debate, I would ask maybe that you respond to that offer.

(1500)

So, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of factors that come into this. But I want to end by saying this. Saskatchewan has come through many, many years . . . a number of years of turbulent times. We are now on the verge of going up dramatically as far as economic development. We've had a number of announcements. We cannot allow anything to be stopped because of decisions by some people to not negotiate, decisions by some people to play their political games or whatever.

We have to ensure the movement of our grain and of our potash. These two industries are very, very important to this province.

I would simply ask the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture, think about what you're doing. Think about the effect that this will have if it's a prolonged strike or lockout situation. Think of the effect, as I said, of the value of the products that come out of Saskatchewan that go overseas and bring new dollars in here. Give some consideration to that. Revisit your position on the unfairness of the cuts across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture to do their duty. Mr. Goodale has a duty and a responsibility to this province. Keep our grain and potash moving. Encourage all those involved to get back to the table. Do whatever they have to do to end this. It's not a nice situation. It's not an easy situation, but when it comes to this point where we have today, we have to take fairly dramatic action. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to enter this debate today. And when I listened to the remarks from the member of Humboldt, I think if you were to strip away all the rhetoric that he had and get right to the nub of the issue, I think I would have to say I agree with some of the stuff he's saying. And in fact the motion itself, I would have to say I'm proud today to stand in this House, proud today to stand here on behalf of the Liberal Party and say that for once it shows how a united front can work well, how we can set politics aside. And for who? For the farmers and for the agriculture industry in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So I just want to make it very clear that we stand in support of the motion as it is, or in fact any amendments that stay within the framework of the motion itself, or stay in the spirit of the motion.

And I think with this united front, Mr. Speaker . . . well it shows not only the federal government but in fact it shows the people of Saskatchewan, the people of Canada in fact, how when we set politics aside and work for the betterment of the people of our province and Canada as a whole; it shows this is really where the minds of the people are at, Mr. Speaker.

This is the kind of responsible work that they want the legislators to do for them. And I won't get into too much of the

debate on the issues because I'm sure it will be brought up several times yet today, but that's not to say we don't agree.

There is no room at this present time in Saskatchewan, given the fact that farmers are going through a great deal of change . . . And don't be confused of what's happening here. It's not that they're opposed to change. In fact farmers, by and large, are leading most of the changes happening in this province.

And I know the members opposite will likely get into some of the transportation subsidy talk here today, but in fact their own polls are showing that they themselves are lagging in where the farmers are going and they want to be very careful, I think, they want to be very careful on some of the positions they take.

But in speaking to the motion itself, it's very clear — it gets right to the point — that in fact there is no room for any strikes, there is no room for anyone to hold up the grain industry of this province, and we agree entirely with that.

This is probably a time in this province when we can't afford to have our farmers handcuffed with others' problems. And so, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the Liberal opposition unequivocally supports this united stand and we support the motion, and amendments, Mr. Speaker, that stay in the spirit of the motion.

We have other commitments yet today, Mr. Speaker, and of course can't be here later in the House when this vote will be taken, but rest assured we support it. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support this motion. I will be moving a minor amendment at the end of my speech.

Mr. Speaker, the rail strikes and port strikes affect all of Saskatchewan. We are, as many have pointed out, a land-locked province thousands of miles from the ocean. We export something like 80 per cent of what we produce in this province.

We depend on a reliable national transportation system. And when that comes to a halt, it hurts all of the industry in the province of Saskatchewan. I will concentrate my remarks on the area of agriculture, which of course is probably the most affected by it.

I think this is a very serious issue. It's very nice to see the House all setting aside politics. One wonders at the sincerity of the member from Shaunavon when he sets aside politics.

We saw on the Crow issue where on budget night the Liberal Party was in favour of the budget and said it was fair; the next day they voted in favour of a motion condemning the federal government. This morning the member from Shaunavon in a scrum is saying, well we're not sure whether we're going to lobby the federal government; we want to see where the cards fall.

So possibly we'll see that flip-flop happening again on this

issue. It wouldn't surprise me at all. But at least for the time being we have all the members of the House on sides for this and I think that should send a strong message.

This is very devastating to Saskatchewan farmers if it carries on to any length of time. No stoppage in grain flow is acceptable. It's going to begin to hurt immediately. It comes on the heels of the federal budget which eliminates the Crow benefit, has thrown Saskatchewan agriculture for a real loop.

Farmers don't know whether they're getting any of the 1.6 billion or who's getting it. They're not sure of what kind of a railroad structure will be here in a very short period of time. They're anticipating abandonment of rail lines. They're trying to make decisions as to what to seed. With the transportation strike tying up valuable time and money for producers, this will be very unacceptable; it is unacceptable to our producers.

With the change of the Crow benefit, if grain is not being able to be delivered now, we're soon into the season where there's a ban on roads. If they don't get the grain delivered by July 31, they pay a much higher freight rate, so that makes it even more important to get the grain flowing and to keep it moving.

Certainly there's an immediate need. We have said in the House and we continue to say that back-to-work legislation is not the preferred alternative to settle a dispute, but if there is no other alternative then certainly for something as important as national transportation and the public interest we will have . . . we would have no choice but to support it, if indeed there is no other more reasonable solution.

I think what we're seeing is more of the Liberal government's inability to deal with problems, to procrastinate, not to have a plan. We're seeing hacking and slashing in the budget without a plan. We see at the end . . . no balanced budget at the end of it. We see cuts to the Crow rate — not cuts, elimination of the Crown benefit — changes to the transportation system without any real plan in place as to what is going to replace it.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's very critical not only that we have grain moving again in the short term, but that we have a national transportation policy that works for Saskatchewan, and that policy includes labour relations, some kind of contracts that ensure that there's some continuity of grain flowing.

To have back-to-work legislation will certainly solve the short-term problem. But if the federal Liberal government doesn't deal with the long-run issues of how to get contracts that work, to get peace in the system, to get turnaround times and efficiencies and so on built into the system, then it will be a short-term solution. And, Mr. Speaker, no country — as we've said before and we said in the Crow debate — no country should be without a national transportation policy.

I don't believe that you can treat the rail system in this country as just another industry that can go off and settle things by itself. It is very much part of the Canadian fabric. It's very much part of our economic well-being in this country. And certainly

for provinces like Saskatchewan, a national rail system that runs well and runs efficiently and is not interrupted by labour disputes that ruin our reputation in international markets and create cash-flow problems for farmers, is not acceptable that we do not have that sort of system in place.

We urge the Liberal government not only to get the grain flowing in the short term, but to come up with a plan for a national transportation policy that works for Saskatchewan. That, I think, is very crucial to the well-being of the farmers, and our farmers are not going to rest comfortably until they see a plan.

Our farmers have always been innovative. We have, in Saskatchewan, been leading the charge in diversification and value added. We're prepared to change but we need to see a plan. We need to have a federal government that's at the controls, that understands western agriculture and understands that we need a national transportation policy, and that's prepared to work with us to create a plan that sees grain flowing smoothly in the future and flowing profitably from Saskatchewan.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I support the motion. I would like to move an amendment, seconded by the member from Pelly:

That the words "and as a last resort" be added immediately after the words "the transportation industry" as it appears in line 3 of the motion.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to enter into this debate. I'm just a little saddened that we have to have this debate. Without a doubt, Mr. Speaker, that the lack of substantial leadership from the federal Liberal government in regards to the movement of grain from the Prairies here in regards to the labour disputes within the rail system and particularly at the Port of Vancouver certainly continues to contribute to what I think many people in Canada and particularly farmers in Saskatchewan are knowing — that the Liberal government is once again using the prairie provinces as a whipping-boy in their lack of concern for the financial abilities of Saskatchewan farmers to maintain their operations.

It goes without saying, Mr. Speaker, that the rail system is a very vital system to the prairie economy, particularly in agriculture, because I think it goes without saying that the prairie producers that produce the grain products here in Saskatchewan that are shipped both east and west through our major outlets to the salt water transportation system of our oceans . . . the bulk of that transportation and the products carried by our rail system is prairie grain. That grain destined for export throughout the world.

And in light of recent changes to the Crow benefit as brought down in the federal budget recently, there is certainly going to be greater pressures by farmers to deliver their grain within this crop year so that the farmers can take advantage of the present subsidized freight rates as the Crow benefit exists in this crop

year. And I think, Mr. Speaker, in regards to this, is absolutely essential that there be as little or no slow-down in the movement of our grain from the Prairies through our export system.

(1515)

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I think the pressure and responsibility definitely is on the federal government to ensure that there is a steady and a systematically handled grain system here in Canada and that there is no slow-down in the process of moving our grain from the Prairies to export position.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I think the onus is certainly on the federal government, particularly the federal Agriculture minister and the federal transportation minister, to ensure that everything is done to arrive at a negotiated settlement of the labour disputes that are affecting the rail system and the port systems.

And I would like to see, Mr. Speaker, that the federal government live up to their responsibility and not just pay lip-service to this thing, but really get involved and ensure that the parties involved sit down to the negotiating table and burn the midnight oil and arrive at a negotiated settlement as soon as possible.

The impact of not having this settlement would be simply tremendous on the entire Canadian economy, but in particular on the economies of the prairie provinces. And we cannot, we cannot allow this to happen, particularly since farmers are really in a squeeze here now in more ways than one, Mr. Speaker, as we know that we are entering into our spring season, and the final delivery date for grain in this crop year is July 31.

But it's not quite that wide open, Mr. Speaker. As a result of the spring season, road bans, both on the municipal roads and on our highway systems, will come into effect as the spring thaw takes a bit of hold of our province. And when that happens, those road bans then restrict the farmers' ability to deliver grain to the elevator system. That then in turn, Mr. Speaker, tightens up the time frame in which the farmers have to deliver their product to the elevators and within the grain system.

And in light of that, Mr. Speaker, what we do not need at this time is some bottleneck in the system that will infringe upon the farmers' ability to move their product, the product they produced last year in last year's crop season — move that product to market.

As many of us who are farmers are aware that a lot of the rural elevator systems have been, throughout the winter, congested with grain for a various number of reasons, but in particular a shortage of cars and a shortage of rolling stock to move the grain out. But as that unfolds and starts to open up now in the spring season and some elevator space is starting to become available within the system, we certainly do not need a dispute, a labour dispute, that will slow down the movement of grain at the ports, through our ports.

And with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, we must realize that if there is a slow-down of movement of grain because of labour disputes and couple that with a road ban going on our grid road systems and our highway systems, not allowing the farmers the ability to deliver their grain, then it will really make it a very tight time frame in which farmers will have to deliver that grain, and then will result in congested elevator systems, and once again forcing farmers to hold their grain and not be able to take advantage of the subsidy system that's in place right now.

Normally, Mr. Speaker, with the continuance of the Crow rate benefit, farmers would have been able to deliver into the next crop year and still receive the same subsidy payments that they've received in the past. But as you and I both know, Mr. Speaker, come August 1 that whole picture changes, changes quite dramatically for farmers in my area in particular.

I had the opportunity of stopping in at the Sask Wheat Pool elevator in Hyas last week and talking to Jim Southerville, the . . . Sommerville rather, the agent there. And he tells me that as a result of the Crow rate benefit, there's going to be a substantial increase in the freight rate cost to farmers in the Hyas-Norquay area. According to his figures, based on July 1, 1994 freight rates, that there will be an increase of about 42 cents a bushel to farmers in their cost . . . in the extra cost of freight for moving their grain.

So with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, you can realize why farmers would be extremely interested in getting their grain into the system now, in this crop year. Because 42 cents a bushel is a lot of dollars to a farmer out there. Forty-two cents a bushel is more than double what the farmer is paying for his share of the freight rate costs right now.

As it stands in Hyas, Mr. Speaker, the farmer delivering grain, a bushel of wheat from that point, from that delivery point, pays 33 cents, and the Crow benefit has been another equivalent of 42 cents, bringing the entire freight cost up to about 72 cents a bushel from the Hyas point.

But with the Crow rate benefit being done away with, in rather a savage fashion by the federal Liberal government, we're seeing that increase of 42 cents to the farmer come August 1, 1995.

Well with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, we can't help but understand why farmers would be very excited and very determined and very desirable for them to move all their product that they have in storage in their bins right now into that system so that they can take advantage of the dwindling number of days in our freight subsidy program.

It becomes more . . . more necessary, I guess, Mr. Speaker, for the federal government to own up to its responsibility and get involved in ensuring the fact that we do have a smooth system of moving grain through our elevator systems, through our transportations systems, and into our port system. More important now than ever, Mr. Speaker, so that farmers can take advantage of that subsidy while it's still there.

And this only comes in light, Mr. Speaker, of the fact that Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan agriculture has gone through some very tough financial times in the last several years. And in my area in particular, probably the most stressful times for farmers and for the agricultural industry there has been over the last four years, having the unfortunate circumstances of experiencing three consecutive extremely wet falls and wet summers, resulting in farmers harvesting in that area certainly reduced quality of grains, and in some places, reduced quantities. Last year the quality was much improved, but the quantities were certainly down.

I had the opportunity here some month and a half ago to visit with the RM (rural municipality) of St. Philips and met with the council there. And what they were able to demonstrate to me was the fact that within the boundaries of the RM of St. Philips, the wheat yields averaged 15 bushels an acre. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is very dramatic, particularly in an area where the normal wheat yields would run 40-45 bushels. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, they were able to demonstrate to me that the canola yields in the RM of St. Philips were also down quite dramatically, more along the lines of 3 to 4 bushels an acre, and again, Mr. Speaker, in an agriculture area where the average canola crop would be some place between 22 and 27 bushels an acre.

So though, Mr. Speaker, the prices certainly have looked better and the quality was better, but with the yields down, the farmers in that area are still very, very dramatically impacted. That is why, Mr. Speaker, those farmers there would really dearly love to be ensured the ability to deliver their product, what little they have, in through a very efficient system that would handle their product through the elevator system, through the transportation system, through the port system, and out to export.

That, Mr. Speaker, is basically what farmers in my constituency are looking for and have been desiring for some time. What they do not want is a blockage in this system that will have a very negative impact upon their ability to deliver their product and result in further financial losses.

As we all know, they are struggling. They are struggling to deal with their financial commitments in light of factors that are beyond their control: environmental factors, weather factors, things that they cannot do anything about.

But what really frustrates them, Mr. Speaker, is that there are things such as the federal government's inability, or at least perhaps lack of desire, to ensure that there is that system available to farmers to deliver their product that we can do something about. That we can assure the fact that those farmers will have that ability to deliver their product in a very efficient system that will ensure them a speedy return on their products that they sell, and that they will be able to continue to maintain a very viable agricultural operation.

It saddens me, Mr. Speaker, to think that we elected a federal government a year and a half, couple of years ago, that made a commitment to maintain a very worthy and efficient . . . and to

ensure that we had the ability to deliver our product as farmers to the market-place.

But soon after becoming government, they sort of forget about their commitments that they made during the election campaign and have a tendency to focus their attention on the rail system all right, but not with intentions of improving it and making it more efficient and more effective to serve the customers out there, to serve those farmers in rural Saskatchewan. But they have rather focused their attention on rail line abandonment. And that will come as a result of the budgetary changes that they have made to the Crow rate benefit and to the very suggestion of putting the CN on the auction block.

That, Mr. Speaker, is certainly opposite from what we as farmers were led to believe, during the last federal election, was the goal of a federal Liberal government. It simply speaks to me, Mr. Speaker, as a tradition that the Liberal Party has held for a long time and is being enhanced by the provincial Liberals here in Saskatchewan, of flip-flopping on the issues.

And they seem to be a party that has all the ability to criticize but has no plan for the future. And that's been very well demonstrated, Mr. Speaker, in their inability to handle the transportation crisis that's arising here in our country today.

They have the inability to face up with reality and to act as a federal government should in ensuring the fact that farmers will be able to move their product down the rail system into port position in a manner that will be acceptable to all. And when I say that, Mr. Speaker, I mean all those very important rail workers, all very important dock workers who — quite frankly, Mr. Speaker — have families to feed, need to have job security, need to have the income, need to have their ability to maintain a quality life. And we don't object to that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think the onus here is on the federal government to make sure that all the parties involved sit down to a negotiating table and hammer out an agreement. Now I'm not sure of my figures here, Mr. Speaker, but I believe a couple of days ago I seen a clip on the news which indicated that the dock workers and grain handlers on the west coast have been working now some 23 months without a contract.

And if that is the case, Mr. Speaker, then I think the responsibility of the federal government is long overdue to ensure that both the management of the dock system and the workers sat down at a negotiating table and hammered out an agreement without creating any disruption in the transportation of our products through our rail system. That, Mr. Speaker, has to ultimately be the responsibility of the federal government.

(1530)

My memory serves me correct, Mr. Speaker, I believe that there has been some 14 different work stoppages over the last 20 years in regards to our dock workers and in regards to our transportation system. And that, Mr. Speaker, does not speak well for our ability as a nation to make our trade commitments

internationally. It doesn't offer security to those people who are purchasing products from Canada, the security of knowledge that they're going to be able to receive that product on time.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this just further shows the inability or the lack of desire for the federal government to own up to its responsibility to ensure that we do have a very efficient and effective system of moving our product to market and to export.

And it saddens me, Mr. Speaker, to think that we have a federal government that should understand the vastness of this country and should understand the need to have a very efficient transportation system here — efficient and effective.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that many people in western Canada, many people in Saskatchewan in particular — and I'll get back to my farmer friends once again, Mr. Speaker — did hold out some hope that with the last federal election and the cleaning of the House, so to speak, of the Conservative government that was in power at that time and a Liberal government elected, that perhaps, perhaps we would see some of these issues identified and a positive resolve to them.

But once again, Mr. Speaker, I think what we're seeing . . . that not happen. We're seeing a federal government that is shirking its responsibility to Saskatchewan farmers in particular, to western Canada as a whole.

And it becomes quite evident when you look at some of the headlines in the *Leader-Post* and the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* of, I believe, just today where a poll was taken by the *Leader-Star Services* and I believe the poll was carried out by *Can West Opinions* research. And the poll sampling was in Saskatchewan of about 1,500 Saskatchewan residents, and it was taken between March 6 and 13. And that poll indicated that 85 per cent of the people polled felt that western Canada was very hard hit with the federal budget, western Canada as a whole, but Saskatchewan in particular.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as we all know that the main industry in Saskatchewan here is agriculture, and with 85 per cent of the people being polled felt that they were . . . western Canada was badly treated and Saskatchewan in particular was badly treated by the federal government. Saskatchewan farmers I would say, rank right in that same 85 per cent, suggesting that Saskatchewan farmers were singled out to carry the brunt of the federal government's desire to balance their deficit and get their deficit problems under control.

But what really, really saddens us here, Mr. Speaker, is despite their window-dressing efforts in their budget and taking their deficit reduction strategy out on the backs of Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan farmers in particular, they haven't really addressed the deficit. And that saddens us all, Mr. Speaker, because we see Saskatchewan farmers losing 100 per cent of their subsidy program while other jurisdictions in this fine country of ours do not share the same level of reduction in their subsidy programs.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan farmers have been singled out to really carry the brunt of the federal attack on the deficit at the expense of the Saskatchewan farmer.

And further to that, Mr. Speaker, we see then the Saskatchewan farmer's inability to deliver his product to the market-place because of the fact that the federal government has failed to live up to its responsibility in ensuring that the rail system is efficient enough to ensure that our product gets moved to market without any disputes that will bottleneck the system and force us into a situation where we can't benefit from the subsidy program while it still exists.

Mr. Speaker, it's sad to see those things happen. It's sad because what's at stake here is agriculture as we've known it. We've known agriculture in this province as basically a family farm operation. But as the time have evolved here, Mr. Speaker, and with the assistance of the lack of Liberal support, and Liberal schemes such as eliminating the Crow benefit, and the lack of Liberals' willingness to ensure that we have a grain handling system that will move the farmers' product to market in a most efficient manner, we see the future of the family farm at stake.

And my fear is, Mr. Speaker, that if you and I and all our colleagues here in the legislature were able to go into a time capsule and appear again in this province in 10 years from now, I'm afraid we would not recognize agriculture because it will change very dramatically in the next 5 to 10 years.

And that saddens me, Mr. Speaker, because what's at stake here is a long tradition of agriculture and a heritage in this province. But what's also at stake here is the future abilities for our young people who are growing up on the farm today, their ability to maintain their goal of being involved in agriculture and being a part of this great industry that we've all enjoyed.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, what we're seeing here today is a desire by the federal Liberal government to drive a stake through the heart of farmers all across Saskatchewan because they want to destroy agriculture as we've known it. They want to destroy the family farm structure as we've known it and to evolve something else — a system which, Mr. Speaker, I do not think will be very friendly to individuals, a system that I do not think will be very humanistic to individuals, and a system, Mr. Speaker, that I don't think will allow younger farmers to portray their opportunities in agriculture.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make it very clear that I intend to support the amendment, and I'll support the motion when it comes to the vote. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's amazing how many people in this Assembly get those creeks mixed up, isn't it?

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me today to rise because for the last three days in this House I've been trying to get people to

arrive at this conclusion, both in question period and in debate. And I think our party has felt for some time that the system is badly out of whack when you can have 14 major work stoppages in the last 29 years that have really affected the grain industry in a major way. And it seems that if it isn't somebody in the Port of Vancouver, it's somebody in the St. Lawrence Seaway, or it's someone involved in the rail industry, or it's someone involved with longshoremen or grain handlers at the terminals. I mean it goes on and on and on. And we have to deal with it in a very imperfect way.

And usually at the end of the day, because it's federal legislation that governs the railway system or governs ports or governs other federal entities, we have to have legislation brought into the Parliament of Canada to solve a problem that's been brewing for, in this case, 18 months. And it's kind of disappointing when I see members of the government finally, today, agreeing that there was something needing to be done, willing to agree to a debate . . . that have to put in that little amendment, that little amendment that panders once again to special interest groups.

That isn't the solution, Mr. Speaker. That isn't the solution — prolonging what we have done for the last 29 years, in other words, saying that every time we have a labour dispute involving the grains industry or bulk commodities in this country, we got to go to the Parliament of Canada and come up with a piece of legislation to sort it out because it doesn't sort it out. It doesn't sort it out for the grain company, the railway, the people working. It doesn't sort it out. It's obviously the collective bargaining process in dealing with these areas is flawed, and it is badly flawed.

And I think if we'd all wake up to the situation and say we aren't going to put up with half measures, then that means that parties like the New Democrats, parties like the Liberals have to wake up and smell the coffee and quit pandering to special interest groups who perpetuate a bad system.

You know, Mr. Speaker, you look around the world, and our competitors don't go through this. They don't do this 14 times in the last 29 years. They simply move in and take our markets away. Every time one of these things happen, every time there's a line up of ships out in Vancouver harbour sitting there empty with the farmer in the province paying demurrage on it, somebody else moves in takes away our market. Now I don't know how any member of this Legislative Assembly, especially rural ones — and I've just heard two of them speak on this amendment — would want to perpetuate a system that means that that will happen again and again and again. It's nonsense, absolute nonsense. What we need to do is look and see what our competitors do to make sure this doesn't happen, and they obviously have systems in place to make sure it doesn't happen.

And that's why the Minister of Agriculture has been so reluctant. Why, even this morning at 11 o'clock he was asked: when is this going to happen? He said, well maybe in a couple of days we'll see. You know we've got to let the process work through; we don't want to offend anybody in the union

movement.

Well I don't want to offend anybody in the union movement either, Mr. Speaker, but reality says there has to be a better system. There has to be a better system . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . the member from Humboldt thinks that I've got my priorities mixed up, Mr. Speaker. Well I don't think I do. I'm a farmer. This is the 25th crop that I'll sow this spring — 25 years that I've had a permit book — and I am sick and tired of not being able to grow a crop and market it as I should be able to because somebody else is always messing around in the mix.

And it's high time that it's stopped. You cannot plan, in today's 1995 environment with the kind of money that you have to handle and generate, knowing full well that at any given moment all these different players in the system can pull the plug on you. And I don't know how any member of this Legislative Assembly growing up in this province would want to put up with that kind of nonsense over and over again.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly happy that members of this Assembly of all parties have agreed that we have to show a united front to Ralph Goodale and the federal Liberal government. What they have done to western Canadian agriculture in the last few months is simply unacceptable, inexcusable, and should be condemned because it simply makes it more difficult for people in western Canada to do what they do best.

But you know what? I'm afraid Mr. Goodale is going to be let off the hook because we are not asking for fundamental change in the way that we conduct this business. See, Mr. Goodale can walk into the House of Commons, and he can stand up with the Liberal majority and he can vote for this legislation and say, lookit boys, I fixed the problem. We did what we had to do.

Well he fixed it momentarily just like he's trying to do with his way of changing the method of payment. It's momentarily alleviating the pain. But this Assembly should not let him off that hook. You should say to him, we don't accept the status quo; we don't accept this way of settling labour disputes involving the transportation system.

What we expect out of you, Mr. Goodale, and what we expect out of you, Mr. Young, and what we expect out of you, Mr. Robillard, is that you put a national transportation policy together that is not full of holes, that will make sense, that is sustainable, and will move western Canadian products to market on an ongoing basis, without being brought to a complete halt every time somebody in a special interest group gets their nose out of joint.

And that goes for the people that operate the terminals. That goes for the people that run the railroads, and it goes for the unions of this country who think by putting farmers to the wall they are going to receive some type of monetary gain. And, Mr. Speaker, that's an unacceptable system.

(1545)

And that's why I'm disappointed . . . that members of the government would not recognize the opportunity to put it in front of Goodale and Young and Robillard and say this type of fix is not acceptable any more. What this province needs in the face of the Crow change and in the face of massive rail line abandonment is a national transportation policy that doesn't need a band-aid put on it every six months. That's what this Assembly should send to Ottawa, and then they would have to listen . . . not an amended motion that makes us look weak-kneed. And that's exactly what the Minister of Agriculture did when he brought that amendment in here. It says that we accept the status quo, that we're weak-kneed, that we'll take the quick fix, and we'll let you off the hook, Mr. Goodale, when Mr. Goodale should not be off the hook for the next month or two months or two years for what he has done to the province of Saskatchewan.

And that's exactly what has happened. So, members of this Assembly, recognize what you do when you send this type of a motion to Ottawa. You let them off the hook because the real working job that needs to be done will not get done. And if you are simply going to succumb to some kind of short-term fix offered to you by special interest groups, it never will become a reality.

If we are going to have a transportation system and a rail network in this country that is sustainable, that has competition involved in it, that allows western Canada to grow on the strength of its products, its produce, and its manufacturing capability, then there has to be a system put in place that doesn't allow this to happen 14 more times in the next 29 years. It is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I felt this was a good motion the way that it was presented because it clearly said to Mr. Goodale and the federal Liberals, we don't accept your short-term band-aid solutions any more to the problems that face western Canada. Stand up and be accountable. I'm just sad to say that this simply weakens our hand, not strengthens it. And, Mr. Speaker, I would have preferred to put Mr. Goodale's feet to the fire and make him work with us in solving our problems rather than letting him get off with a band-aid solution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to make a short intervention in this debate this afternoon. I consider this to be an important debate, not only in regard to Saskatchewan's commodities such as grain and potash but also, and more importantly I think in the long term, the integrity of our Canadian transportation system.

And as the member who has just spoken has pointed out, there's been some 14 different disputes which have caused some hardship on the Saskatchewan economy. And I think that in itself speaks loudly that there's something wrong with our transportation system in that these disputes occur like this, and we end up looking at all the avenues that are available through the collective bargaining process and in many cases back-to-work legislation to get the products from Saskatchewan moving.

Although it's important to our economy, I want to put some blame squarely where it belongs, Mr. Speaker, and that's on the back of the Liberal Party who is represented here in the legislature by the three members opposite, and the federal government which really has the ultimate responsibility for dealing with these important issues that affect our Saskatchewan economy so dearly. The Liberals in their presentation this afternoon said that they wholeheartedly support this resolution going forward to the federal government from this House. But the words are hollow, Mr. Speaker. The words are shallow because there's no action taken by the federal government or by the Liberal opposition here in this legislature to put in place a longer-term transportation policy which will ensure the integrity of our transportation system.

I would want to say, Mr. Speaker, that there's been a development this afternoon. And I'm sorry I didn't catch all the debate here. But the federal government has in fact given notice this afternoon that in 48 hours from now, which will be Friday afternoon on March 17, there will be an introduction of back-to-work legislation aimed at the west coast ports. So in some respects our debate here is not as relevant as what it may have been if the federal government had not taken this action.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the federal government has neglected to use other avenues available to them. And I think that they have overlooked some of the conciliation, some of the mediation, and as a final step in the collective bargaining process, to have some arbitration take place, and — at the same time while the arbitration takes place — to have the workers and the employers continue to move the products that are produced in provinces like Saskatchewan, whether it be potash or timber or the grains that are produced by our Saskatchewan farmers.

And I criticize the federal government for not taking the steps that are necessary for, one, ensuring the integrity of our transportation system; and secondly, to not find mechanisms by which to resolve a dispute before they have to come to the drastic point of ordering back-to-work legislation on the floor of the House of Commons.

Now we don't have all the details, as I mentioned. And the member from Morse asked whether or not it was just the west coast ports. I don't have a clear understanding of it at this time, whether it's going to affect the rails plus the ports or not. And I think it's symptomatic of the lack of understanding that the Liberal government in Ottawa has of the very seriousness of this situation.

We do have a situation where the longshoremen, for example, have actually offered to move the grain and continue to work on grain during the dispute, but as a bargaining chip, the British Columbia marine employers association have chosen to lock those employees out.

So this isn't something that can be laid squarely on the backs of the working people who make the grain move. The guilt should also — and maybe even more importantly so — fall on the

backs of some of the employers who choose to lock out employees who actually offer to move the grain through the ports out in British Columbia.

So we have to be very clear on that that this is a complicated issue; it's not easy to identify and tag blame on it. But what we do in Saskatchewan . . . is that we react to a situation that can have a devastating effect on our economy here in Saskatchewan because of being an exporting province. We rely so heavily on the transportation systems and the goodwill of those companies to move our products to the ports and therefore to their ultimate markets. I would also want to think a little bit about the employers' association, especially the British Columbia marine employers' association, of using us as a pawn in terms of the disputes that they run into with some of their employees from time to time.

Now I know that has to do with the ports in particular, but there's also the issue of the movement of grain and the pending disputes that are there between the employees and the rail companies. As I've mentioned earlier in question period yesterday, there are basically five unions involved with the rail transportation system. Three of those unions have reached tentative agreements with the employer; one is in dispute; another one is sort of on notice.

So I think that there's movement there, and we should have faith in the collective bargaining process to make sure that these disputes can be resolved by every means possible before the federal government exacerbates a situation which has long-term implications in putting into place a transportation system that will serve Canadians' needs.

Now the point of the longer term solutions that we have to look at is in regard to grain companies, Canpotex and others who are looking at ways of moving their products, not through the Canadian transportation system, but through the transportation system out of the United States of America. I think if it comes to that point, Mr. Speaker, we'll see a devastation on the Canadian economy that makes any of these issues we're debating here today actually pale.

We have to have a transportation system whereby the confrontational attitude is taken away, and part of some of the debates that I've heard in the House of Commons, sometimes in this legislature, enhance the confrontational approach. We need to get away from that.

Just recently there was a meeting of WESTAC (Western Transportation Advisory Council), a group encompassing labour and farmers and employers, and they had called for a national transportation policy. Now I don't know why, but the employers in that group seem to be a little bit less enthusiastic than anyone else. But I think it's in all of the interests, whether it be a farmer or a potash producer or a labourer or an employer. We have to sit down at the table and figure out how the transportation system best serves the needs, not only of Saskatchewan and our products that we want to move to market, but for the Canadian economy as a whole.

March 15, 1995

With specific regard to grain handling, labour has actually offered to set up an industry sectoral council to minimize the opportunity for the disputes like the one that we're talking about today or the ones we're talking about today, as well as the 14 that the member from Thunder Creek had referred to that have happened in the past. And I think that this is a good idea. It's a good starting point whereby instead of the confrontational approach through a dispute, we sit down around the table and work out what our transportation policy is.

Now I don't know where the Liberal opposition in this legislature stands on those issues, Mr. Speaker. They say they support the motion that's before the House today, that we're going to be passing on to the federal government to give them our guidance to try and come to a resolve. I don't know what kind of effect that will have on the federal government.

I would like to know what correspondence and what calls have happened from the Liberal Party in Saskatchewan to their cousins in Ottawa to make sure that they protect the integrity of our transportation system which is the longer-term problem that we face . . . and we do not accommodate as a group in this Assembly the enhancement of the longer-term issue unless we have the federal government onside with us. And part of that important part is the political connection through the Liberal opposition and those that govern in the national capital.

I think it's important to remember that still our transportation system, according to the Canadian Wheat Board, can still move our grain \$20 a tonne cheaper than what it can be moved into United States. And I think that figure's correct; they were talking about \$20 a tonne cheaper on the Canadian transportation system. Now it must be a terrible situation for some companies in Canada to be contemplating using U.S. transportation systems when it's still cheaper by \$20 a tonne to move our grain through the Canadian transportation system. And surely to goodness, through the work of our Legislative Assembly, having all parties onside with it and having the federal government onside, surely we can come up with a national transportation policy that protects the integrity of our transportation system.

And I assure you, Mr. Speaker, this cannot be done by a confrontational approach. We have to pigeon-hole those who are willing to sit down at the table and those that will come to the table to facilitate discussions on how we come to better resolving disputes that may arise, and through that, protecting the longer-term integrity to our transportation system.

I as Minister of Labour in the province of Saskatchewan am committed to doing what I can for the players in Saskatchewan to come to a table to reach such an accommodation. I think it's part of my role, it's part of the role of each member of this Legislative Assembly, to find ways in which we can facilitate that type of a strategy, that type of a policy that will in fact serve us well, whether we're a grain producer or whether we're a unionized employee or whether we're a company who is doing business that relies on the transportation system within our country.

Mr. Speaker, I understand the plight of producers, our grains and our potash production, as well as the manufactured goods that must move to our markets. It's not good enough to deal with these issues any longer on a piecemeal, ad hoc basis, as basically what we're doing. We react every time there's a dispute comes along.

(1600)

It seems to me that there is a need for a forum where the needs of the producers and the carriers and the organized employees can be discussed and understood and from which we can develop a unified and a mutually beneficial policy.

In the present case, there seems to be an impasse. And if that is so, we will have no choice but to support whatever it is ultimately that has to be done. I don't think we should ever have to come to that again. I'm not sure we should have to come to that situation in the present dispute that so many are involved in now.

And again, I think the member from Morse points out a good item as to what the legislation or what the motion is that's coming onto the floor of the House of Commons on Friday. I suspect it will show a lack of understanding and a lack of sensitivity to the major, major issues that affect us I think more so in western Canada than they would in central Canada. And I don't know that the Liberal opposition here in this legislature has passed on that clear understanding to their federal cousins in the other place.

Our preferred option, as the Premier has said and the Minister of Agriculture has said and I've said, is a negotiated settlement where there is a continuing window of opportunity for the parties to settle the dispute before the action has to be taken.

In fact I would hope that within the next 48 hours, from here until the time of the legislation coming back into the federal House, that every last effort will be made to resolve this dispute, or disputes, without having to have that action take place.

I think it's a concern of a sense of community almost, the Canadian community, that's incumbent upon all the players to sit down around the table and to try and work out these disputes that are on the public eye now, and to have that as a starting point to develop longer-term policy which will in fact protect the integrity of our transportation system, that will serve all of us and is vital to our economy, no matter whether we live in Saskatchewan or Pictou county, or whether we live in any spot throughout this country of ours.

So I'd encourage that to happen, that the disputes that are before us now get resolved within the next 48 hours. And if not resolved, to come to every last effort to get the parties back around the table, even if it's by an arbitrator or a mediator to come into place and have the parties sit down and work this out; not only with the view, as I've said earlier, of resolving these disputes, but starting the process for a longer-term

discussion and dialogue that is going to serve people in Saskatchewan in this particular case, because that's who we're concerned about, that's who we represent, within the Saskatchewan legislature.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that I've likely added what I want to, to the debate. I encourage support of the motion that we have here. But I do call on all people to be calm about this situation, to not exacerbate the tense feelings that are currently there between the unions and between the employers.

And that the federal government will make every effort possible — and I'll be communicating this to the federal minister of labour — to have the parties come back to the table, to have the discussion there, to resolve the dispute, go to arbitration if necessary, have the grain and the products move while that's going on. I think that the unions should agree to that. I'd be hopeful that the employers would agree to that.

And I'm hopeful that the federal government will listen to what it is we're trying to say to them. They cannot lack the sensitivity that they've shown so far to people who live in western Canada. The rail tied us together in the beginning, and the transportation system will tie us together in the future. I fear for my country and my province if we start shipping all of our products to United States of America.

I think that the federal minister of labour must call very clearly on the parties to get together at that table within the next 48 hours, let the products move over the system. But I think in order for the federal minister to be able to get the parties to the table, it has to be focused on the larger issue, and that's one of integrity of the transportation system which serves us all, whether we're employers or whether we're unionized employees or whether we're members of the legislature or the public at large.

And so in closing, Mr. Speaker, I ask the federal government to have understanding and tolerance, and to take action on this, to use the process that's there within the next 48 hours to make sure that we can be well served into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been listening patiently and with some degree of support for the words that have been spoken by our Minister of Labour and the members of the government.

It was our concern, Mr. Speaker, that we should raise this issue as an important part of dealing with how we respond to the serious lockouts that have been initiated by companies. The lockout by the railroads, the lockout by the terminals, and then the strike action by the employees.

It's caused us concern across the province for a number of reasons. And the member from Thunder Creek pointed out that it's time we put together a method that we fix this. This is the

14th time in 29 years that we've had a labour dispute. And it's very significant to the economic base of this province — very significant. Eighty per cent of all the products that we produce are exported in one way or another. Transportation and the movement of goods and services across this province are as important as any other function of transportation in any other country or province or state.

People have often told me about the Mississippi River system and its importance to the U.S. economy. Well, Mr. Speaker, we don't have a river system that flows the direction that we need to have, and we need to have a transportation system that will enhance the opportunity to deliver products and services to the people of Canada and also to provide for an economic base such as we have in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it's a concern of ours and it's led to us identifying a number of areas that we need to take a look at. The first area is in the movement of grain. The CP Rail has locked out about 3,200 workers. The workers went on strike and CP moved then to put a lockout notice on. The Canadian Auto Workers, because they didn't want to have any involvement in crossing picket lines, have initiated 4,000, have threatened to go on strike as of Thursday.

Those are all issues, Mr. Speaker, that really cause a concern to the people of Saskatchewan. And what they do, Mr. Speaker, is a number of things. And I want to outline some of them.

The problem has existed for a long, long time already, Mr. Speaker; 29 years, 14 disruptions in transportation to the people of Saskatchewan, have caused significant cost to the people of Saskatchewan. We have costs in holding shipping in ports in Vancouver, at Prince Rupert, and in Thunder Bay.

We have costs that relate directly to grain storage and handling and costs as it relates to farmers having to take out of their own pockets, Mr. Speaker, out of their own pockets and pay for those ships that are waiting off the port in Vancouver. We have to pay for that wait.

Every one of the people of the province of Saskatchewan — the 60,000 farmers — have to pay for those ships to wait while somebody has a strike. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a cost to the people of Saskatchewan.

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

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — With leave, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a delegation from Heilongjiang province in China. They're currently on a mission to Saskatchewan.

They have been here before and had a very successful trip and we're hoping that they will find things that are useful in Saskatchewan and that we will likewise be able to find economic opportunities to trade with Heilongjiang from China.

Please welcome them here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I would just have an opportunity to make some remarks to the guests.

It's a pleasure for me to welcome you here today. My family have been somewhat interested in a university in Hohhut, China, and my nephew teaches English at the agriculture college there and so . . . He's there right now and he's going to be coming back in June. So it's a pleasure for me to welcome you here as well.

MOTION UNDER RULE 42

Grain Handlers' Strike (continued)

Mr. Martens: — The issue that we're debating here today, Mr. Speaker, and to members of the Legislative Assembly, is the transportation system and the requirement to do something that is going to significantly enhance the opportunity to deliver supplies of the products that we produce in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as I was mentioning early, there's 60,000 farmers have had to pay for the ships to wait in Vancouver port over the years and we have had . . . the last 29 years we've had 14 of these kinds of costs to the people of Saskatchewan and to western Canada. It is very, very significant, Mr. Speaker, and it doesn't run in the millions of dollars, it runs in the hundreds of millions of dollars that we have paid to the shippers in order to maintain them. And it's called demurrage, Mr. Speaker, but it's cost every producer in the province of Saskatchewan a lot of money. And that, Mr. Speaker, is one of the costs that we have to consider.

The second of these costs is an example we have in the Assembly here today, Mr. Speaker. We have supplies that we provide — potash — to the people all across the world, all across the world, and that is an important part of what we have to think about when we consider what strike action does off the coast of Vancouver and on the rails across Saskatchewan and the Prairies. We have to consider that as an important part.

That's why we raised this concern in relation to the development of what has happened in the last few weeks, Mr. Speaker. Our concern is that we will not be able to meet the requirements of shipping the commodities that we have in Saskatchewan.

One of the things that has bothered me over the years, Mr. Speaker, is the involvement that the longshoremen have had in dealing with how we deliver our products. Mr. Speaker, it has

always been a concern and many people in the province of Saskatchewan who are in agriculture have been concerned about the fact that most of the longshoremen earn more per hour than people in Saskatchewan do. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, those people have put at risk many of the farms in Saskatchewan by their actions in order to have more money for their jobs. And that has caused the people of Saskatchewan a lot of problems.

Another thing that we want to talk about today is the risks that are involved in what we do when we have a strike action and how it impacts into Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago we talked a little bit about IPSCO laying off employees or sending out lay-off notices to employees. The steel plants in Saskatchewan need to have the opportunity to deliver their products along the rail just like the grain producers.

Mr. Minister, the potash mines in Saskatchewan also need to have an opportunity to deliver their products across this province and into port in Vancouver and in Prince Rupert and in Thunder Bay. Mr. Speaker, the importance of this is that our customers are satisfied with the requirements that they have to meet. Mr. Speaker, we are providing these products to people who rely on them to have a certain destination and a designated time to deliver them. We put them at risk every time we have a labour dispute across this province or in a port in Vancouver or Prince Rupert. We put at risk that opportunity to be competitive. We put at risk the opportunity to be providing a good product to our consumers. And, Mr. Speaker, that impacts negatively across Saskatchewan. It is negative to the people that buy our products.

What kind of a reliability do we have as producers when the transportation system will clog and block all of the export opportunities that we have. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan need to have an opportunity to market their products.

(1615)

They deliver to China, they deliver to Korea, they deliver to the Pacific Rim, they deliver all over the world through the ports in Vancouver. And then if we have a slow-down in work or a stoppage in transportation or a stoppage in the ports, what do we get? The producers and the suppliers have to look for alternative ways to get there.

And what are we? We are captives of the system and we cannot avoid using it. So then what do we have to do? We have to sit and wait here. And we wait and we wait, and it costs us money. We wait some more and it costs us more money. And the people in Ottawa need to understand that we don't need a short-term fix for this; we need a long-term solution for the kinds of things that we are encountering on an annual basis almost, in terms of the conditions that are out there.

Mr. Speaker, there is serious implications in Saskatchewan for the kinds of things that are happening in this action and regarding this motion that we've put forward. It's our

contention, Mr. Speaker, that we urge the federal government to act as quickly as they can, not only to resolve the strike, but to resolve the problems as they relate to all of transportation.

Mr. Speaker, it is serious in Saskatchewan. It's this serious: if we for example do not get the grain to market this year, the volumes of grain, it will cost the farmers in Saskatchewan an additional \$20 a tonne to deliver that to port. It will cost the farmers an additional \$20, and if there is 100 million tonnes of grain that has to be moved to port; that will be very significant in dealing with what we have to do to get compensated for the losses that we have.

Mr. Speaker, it is very serious. We will set at risk some of our customers. We will set at risk our consumers. We will set at risk our producers. We will set at risk employers. And we will set at risk supplier of products, both as a service industry and as a supplier for raw products. Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of things that are at risk if we do not have a long-term, viable solution to the things that are happening in Saskatchewan and in the ports.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I want to just urge the federal government to take some clear-cut stands as to the way they're going to handle it. That it's important that we deal with it, and that is why we're asking this Assembly to vote in favour of dealing with this in a rational way. The federal Liberal government needs to be held accountable and responsible for actions taken because this is almost a national emergency, Mr. Speaker, and we need to have it addressed as quickly as we possibly can. And that's why we need to have this message taken to the Minister of Transport, Mr. Young, to the minister of labour, Mr. Robillard, and to the Minister of Agriculture who is from Saskatchewan who should recognize the urgency and to do something about it.

And so we want to have those people understand that we are sincere about how we tell them what is necessary to be done. And so I want to thank the Assembly for the opportunity to speak here today.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I as well would like to make a few comments on the motion before we have an opportunity to bring it to the floor for a vote. I'd just like to reiterate a number of the comments that have been made by members across this House and the number of party members . . . or I mean the number of the legislators in this province who have stood up in their place, taken their position in their place today in this Assembly to voice the concerns that are coming to their . . . being brought to their attention by people across the province and certainly by their constituents.

And, Mr. Speaker, it was my privilege to join with the Leader of the Opposition, as some . . . meeting folks in some of the coffee shops across the province yesterday afternoon and this morning, as well as attend a meeting last night. And needless to say, one of the major concerns that was brought to our attention was the tie-up of shipping across this province and in this country and certainly the lockout that was taking place at Vancouver.

But, Mr. Speaker, while we're discussing the impact it has on agricultural producers, by the strike and by this slow-down of moving of our product by the rail systems across Canada and across this province, it's important to note that agricultural . . . the working and the economic spin-off and the benefits of agriculture in this province don't just apply to the farming community. And as we saw yesterday right across . . . it's not just in small town Saskatchewan, I think. Sometimes we always relate it to some of our rural communities, but it in fact reflects right across the province and certainly in our larger centres.

And yesterday it was brought to our attention by a number of even business people who have felt a real slow-down on this, a slow-down in their businesses, in the buying power of the people coming through the doors. And I think what it reflects, Mr. Speaker, is the fear right across this province that a major slow-down in movement of grain through this . . . from our land-locked province to the ports is a major concern too. And people right across the province realize that.

In fact delegates from across this province who are representing rural municipalities are presently meeting in Saskatoon, and I believe have a couple resolutions that they will be debating, regarding this very issue.

Mr. Speaker, it's certainly pleasing to hear that the federal government is bringing forward legislation to deal with the longshoremen. But at the same time I trust . . . and I haven't had a chance to confer with anybody to have it confirmed that indeed this legislation is coming forward and that it is going to deal with the whole transportation system and with the slow-down of movement of product.

We're talking specifically of grain, but we also need to realize that the potash . . . Canpotex is facing a very serious problem in moving their product to market. IPSCO in fact, because of our labour legislation, gave notice because they were uncertain when a strike may come, and it certainly affects their ability to deliver their product — not only to bring steel in to process but also to deliver the finished product.

But even last night, I caught on the news where some of the major car manufacturers were beginning to look at alternatives. Because if this dispute drags on — and it's not just the terminal in Vancouver, but it's the rail system in general across Canada — then it affects them as well.

And I think what that says to us at the end of the day, and maybe that's where it comes home, the importance of legislating workers back to work and getting our rail system running at full speed, is the fact that when it starts hitting home in Ontario and the heartland, the manufacturing heartland of Ontario, unfortunately that's sometimes what it takes to get federal governments to begin to look seriously at the importance of the rail industry in this country.

And while it's very important to us in Saskatchewan and western Canada, eastern Canada a lot of times doesn't seem to really care. And what I just mentioned about the car

manufacturers, where it hits them directly in their industrial heartland, brings the importance of some of these issues that are very important to us . . .

And so I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is important that we as individuals do take the time to debate such issues and bring forward motions that we could send from this Legislative Assembly to the federal government, to the Prime Minister, to the Agriculture minister and the Transport minister just reiterating again the fact that this province needs their assistance. And that they can't just sit in Ottawa and sit back on their hands and say, well eventually this problem will resolve itself. It's really not bothering us here as we look at, say, Thunder Bay and east. It really doesn't have major impact on us. Out there in western Canada, I think they will find out a way to work around it.

But indeed, Mr. Speaker, this issue is a national issue. It's not just a provincial issue, it's not a Saskatchewan issue, or a Manitoba or an Alberta issue, this is a national issue. And it's important that the federal government recognize the responsibility that was placed on their shoulders by the electorate some months ago when they were elected to lead.

So, Mr. Speaker, while we stand in this Assembly and bring forward this motion encouraging the federal government to, indeed, to accept their responsibility — the responsibility placed on their shoulders — it's also important for us to bring out the fact that as individual legislators we have a responsibility to our constituents, as well, to stand and bring forward these points and let people know that we are indeed representing them and speaking out on their behalf.

And so therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to stand and just add a few words of support to many of the words that have already been brought forward in this Assembly. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, I am fully in support of the motion that has been presented to us this afternoon.

Mr. Carlson: — I think what we're witnessing here in the last few days is one of the major flip-flops in our country by our federal government. The Liberal government talked about doing some great things in Canada, and of course that was in the days of opposition. Now they're in government they flip-flop and they're not acting at all or talking about the things they're going to do, especially in transportation and in labour negotiations and in labour disputes.

When we heard of today about the amount of strikes and disruptions over the last 20-some years, obviously there is a problem. And, Mr. Speaker, I think there needs to be a real strong initiative taken to alleviate some of the tensions, because if you've got 14 disruptions in 20-some years, you got to know you got a problem. And I think it's encompassing across the federal government that they look at the situation as it is and try and come up with some ideas, some solutions, that will lessen the tensions.

And I think the fact that the Crow rate is gone is adding to the

uncertainty and to the farmers and to the railroad workers, and of course the people at the ports, because nobody seems to know where our grain's going to go or how it's going to get there. Everybody seems to be in a state of confusion. There's no plan.

The federal government has got no transportation policy, no plan to come out and say to people in western Canada, this has been taken away and this is what we're going to do now and this is what it's going to look like. We've got no idea.

So when you've got uncertainty, you've got people being worried about their security. And when you've got people worried about their security and where they're going to be in the next few years and where they're going to get their income from, naturally they're going to fight back. You would do it and I would do it. Anybody would do that — would take whatever it is that we have in our capacity to fight back when the future is so uncertain because there has been no plan articulated or laid out.

And I think that's the key, that's the key. No plan. No transportation plan, no policy. So we as farmers, railroaders . . . and I was a railroader myself for seven years. My brother's got 30-some years on the railroad working in Melville. And I know what it's like working on a railroad. And I've talked to my brother in the last little while about the possibility of CN being out on strike or a lockout, and he doesn't like that possibility any more than I do. But when you fear for your security you take what actions that you have at your disposal.

We all know in western Canada, in Saskatchewan, that our transportation system needs to work 365 days a year. It needs to work efficiently for 365 days a year in order to get our product out of the West, into the ports and into market, into place to go into the market-place. And anything that impedes that or cuts that period down from 365 days to 300 days or 325 days or less than 300 days, puts a stress on the system, puts a stress on farmers to be able to get their product to market.

And that's what this debate's all about today, is to put across to the federal government that this is a real crisis. We can't afford to lose any time at all in the system, and that's what it's all about. And until they get the grasp of that and fully realize that, that every minute counts as far as our transportation system, and they take a hands-on approach that will make things work smoothly . . . and I'm not talking necessarily about bang, back-to-work legislation, although I guess that's coming down. But we've had that for 20-some years and we just keep getting more problems and more problems and more disruptions.

We need a long-term solution. We need the workers and the management that's working together a little bit more. If you've got a hired person, somebody working for you, and there's friction between you and that person, they're probably not going to work as hard for you or do as good a job. So that's the key — is to get people working together, people feel like that they got a commonality. And I think that's when we're going to get some progress.

I want to end my comments, Mr. Speaker, by reiterating what I talked about in the first opening statement, was that the federal government is the one that this . . . it's in their ballpark now and they're the ones that have to take the initiative. And I call upon them to do whatever they have in their powers to do in the next 48 hours to come to a settlement whereby everybody will feel much better about as opposed to a confrontational settlement.

But I'm very supportive of the debate today and the resolution going on to the federal parliament. I think they need to know what we are thinking and what we are talking about in this province, and I'm very supportive of that. And I thank you for the opportunity to enter in the debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1630)

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to have the opportunity to speak today about such a critical issue, although I certainly can't be happy that we have found ourselves with this issue to talk about.

It shouldn't happen again in Saskatchewan and in western Canada. It's happened far too many times already that we have had strikes and lockouts that have hurt third-party innocent people in our country, and especially in the grain handling business. Certainly there are other aspects to the strikes and lockout that are being hurt and need to have consideration and need to have us recognize. But obviously with a farm background I'd have to target the hurt to the grain, cattle, and other livestock industries, the pork industry and all of the agricultural commodities.

Certainly our colleagues have made the point that the potash industry could very quickly be hurt, especially going into the spring season. Certainly our colleagues have made the point that those people waiting for a new car coming in from the ports or some other commodity being imported, those people are being inconvenienced, and perhaps in some ways even hurt. Those people obviously will let their feelings be known, and we as parliamentarians and legislators in the country will reflect on that as we hear their problems.

It hasn't taken very long though, for the agricultural community to let me know what they think of the process that is going on today. Many of the farmers that I represent, Mr. Speaker, have said very clearly and very quickly that they're fed up with strikes and lockouts hindering their potential to make an honest living in this country. They're tired of it, and they don't want any more of it; 14 times out of 29 years is just too many times to have it happen. Last year we found ourselves in a similar situation. Here we are, a year later, back-to-back problem, same kind of issue.

When is it ever going to end, people say to me. When are we going to bring a stop to this stuff? Well this is the time, Mr. Speaker. Right now would be the right time. We are a little upset with our government here in Saskatchewan, not having

taken a more solid, more definitive stand on this issue yesterday and the day before, but we do want to compliment them for catching up today and getting on board. It's high time. And even though their amendment is a weak-kneed approach to a serious problem, we think we will have to support any kind of effort that will go along with trying to get this problem resolved.

We don't agree that a soft-hearted, weak-kneed approach is the way to go. We think it's time to get tough — get tough on everybody that causes these problems, get tough on the railroads, get tough on the unions, get tough on anybody that is a contributor to these kinds of actions happening. There are such things as essential services in this world, and we had better start to think about that.

In our province, Mr. Speaker, we are land-locked. One of the members opposite I noted, made special mention of that, and it's a fact. And we are people who are land-locked, and therefore we find ourselves in a precarious situation when we have to export goods in order to make our living.

We don't have the population to eat all the food that we grow, so we depend on outside markets to use that product up. If we can't ship it out, then we can't make a living. It's as simple as that.

There are people who have got bills to pay in the country. There are farms that are close to going bankrupt, even though we are in a somewhat better time than we were a few years ago. There are still vast numbers, Mr. Speaker, of people in Saskatchewan whose livelihoods go basically day to day — not on a month-to-month or year-to-year basis — day to day, keeping the wolf away from the door. And we just cannot tolerate another strike or lockout, whichever it is. It's just not acceptable.

The impact of prices dropping in the commodity markets has already been demonstrated and reflected in yesterday's market, and the day before. Clearly farmers are taking a financial hit when that happens. There is no other way of explaining it. There is no other way to look at it.

The farmers are being charged a penalty, not to mention the fact that we would have ships not being loaded and demurrage charges that will generate back to the Canadian Wheat Board which takes money straight out of the pockets of the farmers, because the Wheat Board doesn't have any of its own money. It only has the money it takes out of selling the product.

So that's money out of the farmer's pocket, and that cannot be tolerated and it is unacceptable, and we have to put a stop to this kind of thing and we may as well do it right now. And so we're saying, get tough, get tough now, and get tough on anybody that is causing the problem.

So clearly then what we have to do is to identify who's causing the problem. And if we want to bunch them all up, then legislate them to back to work, that's fine with me. But right

after that we have to start working on how to prevent this thing from happening again in six months; how to prevent it from happening again in a year. It's just happening far too often.

Now collective bargaining, we have told you in many times in this House that we believe in it. It has a lot of merit in our free democratic society, and it's something we should defend. But how far should it go? How far should we allow it to go? How many people get hurt before you put a stop to it? That's the question we have to answer. Because every good rule has a limitation, and it's high time that we looked at where that limitation should be applied. It's got to be some time, some place, that we draw a line in the sand and say, enough is enough; we're not going to put up with any more of this.

I say to the railroad companies, the same thing applies. As soon as you have a little disruption, right away you start to lock everybody out in order to create a confrontation. That's what it appears to be in the news today. And if that is a fact, then enough is enough and let's draw the line in the sand there too. It's got to be put to a stop.

We cannot have the farmers and the consumers of food being the pawns in some kind of a chess game that people play. It's time we put a stop to that kind of nonsense, and it's time we call this an essential service and legislate it so that it has to go to binding arbitration on an annual or semi-annual basis. And enough of this ability to lock out or to strike whenever you feel like it. And I say we hit the railroads and we hit the unions; we hit them equally and we hit them hard and we hit them now. And we tell them, that's the end of it. No more.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — It is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that many farmers will already have taken a financial loss. And it's a fact that we will, if we allow this thing to go on very much further, pay demurrage.

Who should pay that demurrage? Right now the farmers will pay for it through lost income from their grain sales. The Canadian Wheat Board will deduct that from the pooled price of the grains they sell. Well I say the railroads and the unions should pay those demurrage charges, and then they would get back to the table and bargain.

I'll bet you, you send them a bill for the demurrage charges, they'd be sitting down and talking pretty quick. But as long as the farmers are paying the bills, why should they bother. They have nothing at stake here except to hurt third parties who have everything at stake — their livelihoods and their very existence in the prairies of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta.

And it's time we put an end to this kind of nonsense once and for all. Let's send a clear message to Ottawa. We want this declared an essential service. No more of this going on strike, locking them out.

Whatever it takes, let's do it. If we have to expropriate the rail

line, then let's do that too. It's time we get tough. It's time we order these people back to work. And if they don't want to go from the union side, put them in jail; that's where they belong. They're criminals if they don't get the job done of saving the third parties who are being injured.

If the doctors tried to walk out on strike when somebody came in with their leg cut off, they'd be in serious trouble. Well I say this is just as important to the people whose livelihoods are at stake.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm saying to the people in Ottawa who are supposed to get a copy of these transcripts: get tough; get now; get tough now. Draw your line in the sand and say enough is enough and we're not going to allow this to happen any more. Declare it an essential service and tell everybody to get back to work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll be very brief but I do want to take the opportunity to get on the record.

First of all this situation obviously is very complicated. We're in a time of the year probably when the farmers are at one of the busiest times for shipping. With the road bans coming on very soon now, they're anxious to get the grain moved.

It is obviously a dispute between the CP rail system and also two of its unions. On one hand I certainly respect the rights of the ordinary worker that they be treated fairly and that they are paid fairly, while on the other hand of course, they respect the rights of farmers as well, that they should be able to move their grain freely across Canada.

Our Agriculture minister just a few minutes ago moved an amendment that back-to-work legislation should only be considered as a last resort, and I certainly want to say that I concur with that 100 per cent.

Agriculture in the last few years has been hit very hard. There's been hundreds of millions of dollars, in fact billions of dollars, cut by way of the elimination of the Crow benefit in the last couple of days. We've had not enough rain. We've had too much rain and grasshoppers. So farmers have been hurt pretty bad in the last 8 to 10 years. As the member from Maple Creek said, we live in a land-locked province and our farmers depend on the rail line system for their income and to move grain.

I want to say then that I think it's incumbent on the federal Liberal government to develop a national transportation policy that is workable for our workers and also for the farmers and indeed all Canadians. I would certainly concur that the federal Liberals, along with the support of the provincial Liberals, need to develop a solution to transport grain and potash, not just in the short term but indeed in the long term.

I want to close then by encouraging the federal government, the federal Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Goodale, from here in Saskatchewan, to sit down with workers and the railways, their employers, to negotiate a fair settlement. While they're doing this, I guess I beg them and indeed urge them to consider the impact that this has on farmers and producers here in Saskatchewan and the urgency with which this resolution to this problem needs to be developed.

So I just want to be on record as supporting this motion with all of my colleagues here in the legislature and do indeed urge the members from the third party as well to be supporting this. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Amendment agreed to.

The division bells rang from 4:46 p.m. until 4:48 p.m.

Motion as amended agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas

Romanow	Thompson	Wiens
MacKinnon	Lingenfelter	Johnson
Goulet	Lautermilch	Kowalsky
Cunningham	Penner	Upshall
Hagel	Bradley	Koenker
Lorje	Teichrob	Pringle
Cline	Crofford	Draper
Serby	Sonntag	Flavel
Roy	Kujawa	Stanger
Kluz	Harper	Carlson
Boyd	Swenson	Neudorf
Martens	Goohsen	Toth
Britton		

Nays

MOTIONS

Transmittal Motion

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With leave, I would like to move a motion:

That a copy of this emergency resolution and the verbatim of the debate be forwarded to the Prime Minister and the federal labour minister, Lucienne Robillard, for immediate attention and consideration.

Moved by myself and seconded by the member from Saskatoon Eastview-Haultain.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 45 — An Act respecting Trading in Real Estate, the Real Estate Commission and Brokerages, Brokers and Salespersons Trading in Real Estate

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Real Estate Act. This Act will serve to improve consumer protection and enhance the Real Estate Commission's ability to administer the Act effectively and efficiently. It also responds to the changing real estate market-place and clarifies the roles and responsibility of people registered to trade in real estate in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this Act replaces The Real Estate Brokers Act, 1987. That legislation established a new direction for regulation of the real estate industry by delegating responsibility for regulation from the government through the Superintendent of Insurance to a newly created Real Estate Commission.

Mr. Speaker, the system of delegated self-regulation has proven to be beneficial for the public, the industry, and the government. However, Mr. Speaker, areas in which the Act could be improved have been identified during the past several years by the commission, by the Saskatchewan Real Estate Association, and by my department. And, Mr. Speaker, therefore a new Act is proposed, and I will highlight the major changes.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, consumer protection is enhanced in several ways. The existing Act requires that an offer to purchase be in writing, and it prescribes the content of such an offer. These requirements will also apply to other types of offers such as an offer to lease or exchange real estate.

— 37

— Nil

The Act will permit the Real Estate Commission to order a real estate broker or sales person to pay restitution to a consumer where the consumer has suffered a loss as a result of the professional misconduct or professional incompetence of the broker or salesperson. This removes the need for the consumer to take additional civil action to recover such losses.

Mr. Speaker, the Superintendent of Real Estate will also be authorized to issue a cease and desist order against a brokerage where there are serious concerns such as a deficiency in a brokerage trust account or where the brokerage registration is suspended and criminal proceedings are under way. The existing Act has no such provision.

Recently there has been an increase in the sale in Saskatchewan of time-share plans in relation to properties located outside of the province of Saskatchewan. The Act will permit regulations to be made to govern such sales. Consumer protection provisions respecting time-share plans may include, for example, a cooling-off period and bonds or other forms of protection for consumer deposits. Similar protection exists in

some other province in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the current Act prohibits arrangements for payment of commissions on the basis of difference between price at which real estate is listed and its actual sale price. However it does not prohibit other methods of computing commissions that can be to the consumer's disadvantage. The new Act will require commissions and remuneration to be computed only on the basis of a lump sum or a percentage of the sale price and to be agreed upon in writing.

Mr. Speaker, the Real Estate Commission identified a number of ways in which the Act could be amended to streamline its administrative duties, such as giving the commission the ability to appoint committees and to delegate functions. Changes are being made to address these issues.

The disciplinary sections of the new Act are also greatly improved and are consistent with other professions' legislation. The Act establishes an investigative committee, provides for interim suspension of a registrant in serious cases, and clearly sets out hearing procedures. Decisions of the Real Estate Commission will continue to be appealable to the superintendent, whose decisions may be appealed to the court.

Mr. Speaker, property management is included as a forum of trading in the real estate under the existing Act. However the definition is too broad and could, for example, include the caretaker of an apartment block. It was never intended that a caretaker be required to be a registered . . . and to be registered under the Act. Therefore property management is being defined as negotiating or approving of a lease on behalf of a landlord or holding money received in connection with lease or both.

The existing Act does not provide for agencies' agreements other than listing agreements. Increasingly real estate is being marketed in other ways, such as buyer agencies' agreements. And under the new Act, all agency agreements will be governed by the Act.

Mr. Speaker, within the real estate industry there has been some confusion with respect to the term broker and manager and their respective responsibilities. Terminology is now being clarified. The proposed Act spells out application procedures, requirements, and responsibilities for brokerages, brokers, branch managers, and sales persons.

The new Act has been developed jointly by the Real Estate Commission and by the Department of Justice in consultation with the real estate industry, consumers, and other interest groups. The Act provides for many improvements that I believe will be beneficial to everyone concerned. And it is with these ideas in mind, Mr. Speaker, that I am proud to move second reading of The Real Estate Act.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to make a few comments before I move to adjourn debate, just to indicate that as I was listening to the minister. The length of submission and presentation of this Bill this afternoon is

almost indicative of the size of the Bill itself. And I think it means that we're going to need a little extra time to review that legislation before we get into further debate and move into committee.

Therefore I would move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 46 — An Act to amend The Wascana Centre Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to move second reading of The Wascana Centre Amendment Act, 1995.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments to this Act are strictly budgetary in nature. As in the past three years, we are setting the statutory funding level for the Wascana Centre Authority. This level and the actual funding will be the same as in 1994-95, and there will be no reduction in payments to the Authority, unlike was the case during the 1980s when the members opposite were involved in the planning of the Wascana Authority.

However, to maintain this level, we are required to suspend the statutory funding level specified in The Wascana Centre Act. This requires the three funding parties — the Government of Saskatchewan, the city of Regina, and the University of Regina — to pay a sum equivalent to the amount receivable by the city through a levy of 1.7 mills. This formula has in fact been suspended since 1986-87.

Mr. Speaker, as all members know, the 1995-96 budget marks a great turnaround for the province of Saskatchewan. Deficit financing is over. We balanced the budget in 1994-95 and in fact had a modest surplus. So although we are not in a position to increase the funding for the Wascana Authority, we are pleased to be able to maintain the same level of funding as was the case last year.

Mr. Speaker, I know that all members appreciate the importance of the Wascana Centre, and not only to the residents of Regina but to all people of the province and to visitors from across Canada and around the world.

(1700)

Thanks to the foresight of earlier generations, we enjoy one of the largest urban parks in the world. It is a beautiful setting for the finest legislature in Canada, and within the Wascana boundaries we find the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, the Science Centre, the Saskatchewan Centre, the Diefenbaker Homestead and of course, the University of Regina — a rich variety of uses indeed.

Furthermore the Wascana Centre is a great attraction to naturalists and environmentalists, and it is a focal point of thousands of citizens, young and old, coming in winter and summer alike to enjoy the park and its many recreational facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that at the end of May and the beginning of June, Regina will host the second national capital cities workshop here in the capital of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this brings together representatives from the capitals of all provinces and territories and of the national capital. One of the main reason the delegates chose to meet here is to see the Wascana Centre and learn how it functions. Wascana is unique among the Canadian capitals. So we should all be very proud of it, and we should resolve to maintain its integrity and plan for its enjoyment by future generations.

Mr. Speaker, it is with those comments in mind that I am now proud to move second reading of this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, after listening to the minister it sounds to me like that's almost a campaign speech that we just heard, and maybe we need to get into a bit of debate. But in consideration of the fact that the clock is winding down on us, I think in order to give time to digest some of the words and come back with some appropriate debate on this issue, it would be appropriate to move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 47 — An Act to amend The Meewasin Valley
Authority Act**

Hon. Mr. Pringle: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading to amend The Meewasin Valley Authority Act.

This Bill implements the budget decision to maintain the 1995-96 statutory funding for Meewasin at the same level as last year. This is the second year in a row that Meewasin funding has been maintained at this level, permitting the Authority to continue an excellent level of service in conserving and enhancing the river valley.

This Bill establishes the statutory funding contributions from the city of Saskatoon, the University of Saskatchewan, and the province. For 1995-96 this funding will be \$1,870,760 in total. This amendment suspends the statutory formula for another year. This should not have an adverse impact on the operations of the Authority.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill also broadens the scope of the Authority, permitting it to enter into agreements with municipalities and organizations outside the Meewasin Valley. This will provide an opportunity for greater sharing of the conservation, planning, and river valley development expertise that the Authority has developed during the past 15 years.

I move second reading of this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, at this time I would move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:05 p.m.