

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, 4 September, 1986.

Time — 2:00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER, Hon. M. Phillips: Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees . . . Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports . . . Notices of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills . . .

ORAL QUESTIONS

MTS - affidavits re MTX

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System.

Members on this side of the House have tabled two affidavits with respect to the operations and affairs of MTX during the past number of weeks. I wonder if the Minister has knowledge of any other affidavits that have been prepared and submitted, either to himself or the government or the Manitoba Telephone System or the RCMP.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for MTS.

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, I believe if the Honourable Leader of the Opposition will check Hansard, on an earlier occasion I answered a question in which I indicated that I had received letters and other documents which I had referred to the management audit and the RCMP.

He asks specifically about affidavits. I'm aware that there was one affidavit that I have knowledge about. There may have been others that went directly to Mr. Curtis or to the RCMP or the management audit that I'm unaware of.

MR. G. FILMON: Has he knowledge of an affidavit that may have been submitted by an individual named McDonald?

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, I received the letter; it was written to me in confidence. I have referred the letter and the affidavit that was referenced to the RCMP and I think they're the proper body to deal with it.

MTS - tabling of affidavits and documents re MTX

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that in the past the Minister has challenged us to table documents with respect to the MTX issue, I wonder if

any of those documents that he has received, or affidavits, or information in writing are able to be tabled.

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, the honourable member is correct when he indicates that I was concerned that information that was available, that the honourable members had, be made available to the RCMP and the management audit. I have expressed concern that every assistance be given to the RCMP investigation and the management audit. We have encouraged employees to come forth, both past and present employees of MTX, cooperate with the RCMP and cooperate with the management audit, assuring them that their so doing certainly wouldn't have any impact on their continued employment with MTX or MTS.

In respect to documentation that I received in a confidential manner, I'm not in a position to undertake to table that. Once the RCMP is in the picture, I think they're the appropriate body to receive that information.

Grain handlers' dispute, Lakehead

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll have a question for the First Minister but first of all I'll ask a question of the Minister of Agriculture, Madam Speaker.

Yesterday he responded to my colleague's question that he had, in fact, or was preparing to send a telex to the Federal Minister of Transport, Labour, and Agriculture, I believe, to do something in regard to the Thunder Bay grain handlers' strike. In view of the fact, Madam Speaker, the majority of Manitoba farmers are devastated by that strike action taken, along with all other Western Canadian farmers, what did the Minister of Agriculture say in his telex or did he in fact send it and will he provide a copy for this House so we know whether or not he's done anything on behalf of those farmers?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, the telex that was sent was a joint telex from myself and the Minister of Transportation and certainly a copy can be made available to my honourable friend.

Madam Speaker, when the questions were raised in this House about the alleged work stoppage and the consequences of that, I certainly was not aware that in fact at that time, not only - in fact, I answered the Member for Morris that I felt Manitoba Pool Elevators was still operating because they were on a separate agreement. I did not have information at that point in time that in fact, a lockout had occurred, even though they were not in a strike position. But, Madam Speaker, my answers that I gave yesterday still stand, stand very

much as they do today from the point of view that, in fact, there is a lockout.

There is grain through the system, through to the Lakehead and, in fact, Madam Speaker, at noon time, I overheard a commentary that was alleged to have been made by the Minister of the Wheat Board, after hearing a call from Federal Members of Parliament, Opposition members, that there should be conciliation services, services that we recommended yesterday as part and parcel of getting the people back to the bargaining table. The Minister of the Wheat Board says, well, we'll have to have a look at it. Madam Speaker, the Minister responsible says, we're going to just have to have a look at it. What does he expect members on this side to do when that's the responsible body?

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that what the Minister has just said is cold comfort to a farm community who are again devastated under this administration and their lack of action on behalf of the farmers . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have a supplementary question?

MR. J. DOWNEY: Yes, I have a question, Madam Speaker, and it's important to the people of Manitoba and to the farm community.

Madam Speaker, the question to the Minister of Agriculture: in view of the fact that he was aware - out of order, I'm sorry, Madam Speaker - in view of the fact that the strike action was being contemplated, did he at the Ministers of Agriculture meeting in Vancouver work with the Federal Government and other Ministers on a contingency plan?

They laugh, Madam Speaker. Let the record show that the Premier of the province is laughing at the devastation which the farm community are going through. The First Minister laughs, Madam Speaker, at the devastation of our farm community.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order please.

May I remind the honourable member that question period is a time for questions, not for speeches.

The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, if there's anything funny, it's certainly the hysterics and the comedy from the other side. That's really what is funny.

Madam Speaker, it seems that, for the first time this Session from members opposite, agriculture is somewhat taking the forefront. Madam Speaker, where were they for the last four months? Where were they for the last four years, Madam Speaker? They were sifting sand, Madam Speaker. That's what they were doing.

Madam Speaker, the grain farmers in this country are in very serious financial conditions, precisely by the actions of their federal colleagues, a 24 percent reduction in grain prices by one fell swoop. Madam Speaker, what did we discuss at the Ministers of Agriculture conference in Victoria, that we should bring

into play a rural transition program to get more farmers off the land? That's the federal policy that we were discussing. If the Member for Arthur, a former Minister, now wants to go ahead and defend those policies, he can do so, Madam Speaker. I will not.

MADAM SPEAKER: May I remind the Honourable Minister also that question period is not a time for debate.

The Honourable Member for Arthur with a supplementary.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, I have a question for the First Minister, who finds it funny to laugh at the farmers of Manitoba and the situation which they're facing.

Madam Speaker, I ask the First Minister: will he forget his ties and financial support with the labour movement in this country and support federal back-to-work legislation to protect the livelihoods of the farmers of Manitoba?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, the only thing that is funny in this Chamber is the tactics, histrionics of the Member for Arthur, suggesting that there is back-to-work federal legislation. Madam Speaker, there is no back-to-work federal legislation. He may be living in the world of Fantasyland because he wishes that his federal brethren in Ottawa would do certain things.

Madam Speaker, we are prepared to urge the honourable member to telephone his colleagues, his Conservative cousins in Ottawa, just as the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister responsible for Transportation on this side of the Chamber have teleaxed the Federal Government and asked for Federal Government resolve in bringing about a reconciliation of the dispute at Thunder Bay. But those kinds of stunts in order to try to deflect from their embarrassment, Madam Speaker, because of the growing disenchantment with the Western Conservative Party, does not wash in this Chamber or with Manitobans.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order please.

The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, would the First Minister, on behalf of the farm community in Manitoba, call the Federal Government and the labour unions and the grain handlers to a meeting so that the message can be put forward to those people who are asking for a wage increase to put the position of the farmers forward, that they have in fact taken 20 percent less in their income, that they can't get the kind of maximum returns that they need to make a profit and make a living, Madam Speaker? Would the First Minister do that on behalf of the farmers instead of all the noisy rhetoric that we hear come from his socialist dogma?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, regrettably, the Member for Arthur is attempting to deflect from the fact that there is a federal responsibility; there is a responsibility by his friend, the Minister responsible for

the Wheat Board, a Member of Parliament from the Province of Manitoba, to undertake the submissions to his federal colleagues that he deems to be right. We heard just a few moments ago, and obviously its an embarrassment to the Member for Arthur that the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board isn't even sure whether he wants to suggest conciliation, Madam Speaker.

A MEMBER: Too delicate.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Not - too delicate to even discuss conciliation and yet here we have the Conservative cousin from the Constituency of Arthur some way or other suggesting that it's within the jurisdiction of the Province of Manitoba. Obviously the Member for Arthur is uneasy and embarrassed because of the vacuum created insofar as leadership by his federal cousins in Ottawa.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Premier of the Province.

In view of the fact that the present grain handlers' strike has potential to create disaster of gigantic proportions for the grain farmers of Western Canada and particularly the grain farmers of this province who have the majority of their grain shipped east, is the Premier prepared to make representations in his capacity as . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. I can't hear the honourable member.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Is the Premier prepared to make representations in his capacity as the Premier of the province and responsible for federal-provincial relations that the grain handlers be declared an essential service and essential employees so that the economy of this country can proceed due to the constrictions of weather in the Great Lakes?

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.
The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Transportation have already taken action to make submissions to the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board, the Minister responsible for Labour, the Minister responsible for Transportation; all - with the Federal Conservative Government in Ottawa to take action to ensure the encouragement of both sides to resolve both lockout and strike, at Thunder Bay so that there can be a resumption of work in order to ensure that there is an avoidance of problems insofar as the western producer is concerned.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, the Premier conveniently forgets that the mediation report was accepted by the employers. The question is still, will he use his good office to contact the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board, the Prime Minister

of this country, to ask that those workers be considered essential employees?

MADAM SPEAKER: That question repeats almost identically in substance the previous question. Order please.

The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Madam Speaker, has the Premier, then, had any correspondence with the Federal Government to indicate his concern on behalf of the farmers of this province?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, it's because we are concerned and because rather than posture and grandstand as honourable members across the way, my Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Transportation made their submissions yesterday.

I would be quite prepared to also forward the same submission to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, so that I can ensure that he is aware of it, as well as Dalton Camp.

Farmers of Manitoba - assistance to

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose with a final supplementary.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: May I ask a new question to the Minister of Agriculture?

Madam Speaker, my question to the Minister of Agriculture is, in light of the grave pressures that are being put on the agricultural community with the strike, with the reduced returns and with the considerable economic pressures that are on from all economic areas in the community, will he be prepared to intercede with MACC and add some additional funds so that they will be able to stop their foreclosures?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I think members opposite have put enough confusion and misinformation on the record, including the Member for Ste. Rose.

Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is there was a separate agreement with Manitoba Pool Elevators but all the companies decided to get together and lock out. That was the situation; in fact, workers were not on strike at Manitoba Pool Elevators in terms of Manitoba.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, the honourable member may not be aware that the system generally throughout is plugged; that there is grain at seaboard to last a number of weeks. In fact, our call yesterday for conciliation services to resume is the right call to get to the table before there is a shortage of grain at seaboard because the entire system is in fact plugged with grain.

For the honourable member to suggest that MACC put more money on the table, he should be asking his colleagues to make sure that if they put in their rural transition program, that they continue the moratorium on FCC foreclosures and not lift them as then intend to do, because it will place hundreds of farmers across

Thursday, 4 September, 1986

Western Canada in jeopardy, Madam Speaker, that's what he should be doing.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose with a final supplementary.

MR. E. CONNERY: Madam Speaker, to the Minister of Agriculture with a supplementary question.

It strikes me as unusual that he is not concerned with the cooperatives that are being forced, that are being backed to the wall after accepting a conciliation report or mediation report. Will he speak out on behalf of the farmers of this province?

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order! The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I don't believe that any Minister on this side has to take a back seat in terms of standing up for Manitoba farmers. Madam Speaker, it was the Premier of this province, who, along with his colleagues at the Western Premiers' Conference, called for a massive infusion of capital into the grain industry in Western Canada to make sure that that commitment was there. Because of the legislation that is now in place in Ottawa, because of the rural transition program, because of the threat of removing the foreclosures on FCC clients, thousands of farmers will be put into financial jeopardy and removed off their land.

That's the kind of fight that this Premier and this government have been carrying on; where the honourable members have been defending their federal colleague, defending the 25 percent cut in grain incomes of Western farmers and saying we should be doing more in the provincial Budget and fight "Uncle Sam's" treasury, Madam Speaker. That's the position they have taken, nonsense - nonsense, Madam Speaker.

Churchill, Port of

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Given the concern of Manitoba farmers about the shipment of grain, and given the situation of the Port of Churchill in this regard; I would like to ask the Minister whether he's been advised as to the present situation at the port, and specifically as to whether there are any problems with meeting the current commitments to ship grain through that port?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Madam Speaker, it seems the Opposition isn't interested in Churchill, particularly when there's a strike and a lockout at Thunder Bay, they are sitting here and criticizing questions about Churchill which is one of the alternatives.

Madam Speaker, we are very pleased with the efforts of the Wheat Board this year at the Port of Churchill. They have made an effort to increase the throughput through the Port of Churchill and the projections are, Madam Speaker, that we're looking at a season in excess of 500,000 tonnes, but it could be more if the CN lived up to their obligations under the sub-agreement to provide for 750,000 tonnes minimum each year, enough rolling stock to provide for that. They are not living up to that. As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, they're not living up to providing for the 550,000 tonnes that the Wheat Board wishes at least to put through that port this year. We have indicated serious concerns to the Minister of Transport to take action to ensure that CN lives up to that commitment of a minimum of 750,000 tonnes at that port.

MR. S. ASHTON: In view of the fact that such a commitment was made, I'd like to ask the Minister whether, in conjunction with the Premier, he will immediately telex the Federal Government and demand that they direct the CN to live up to its present commitments to provide boxcars for the shipment of grain through the Port of Churchill?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, I have sent a telex to the Honourable John Crosbie to that effect today, asking him to take action to have CN immediately live up . . . I am talking about the telex regarding Churchill.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Will you please conduct question period in an orderly fashion.

The Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Madam Speaker, I will table the telex that we have sent to the . . .

Madam Speaker, I have stated in this telex that the subsidiary agreement on Churchill, signed in 1984, and followed by a commitment by the Minister of Transportation at that time, Don Mazankowski, a commitment by Charlie Mayer and commitment by Sinclair Stevens and other Ministers at a May 1 meeting in Ottawa, that there would be no problems with providing for 750,000 tonnes, sufficient rolling stock for 750,000 tonnes, at least till 1987, through the Port of Churchill. We are asking now that John Crosbie follow up on that and ensure that they meet that commitment. That is a minimum.

We have also asked them to ensure that there can be in excess of rolling stock to ensure that Churchill can realize its true potential and expand in shipments in the next number of years, Madam Speaker.

I'm prepared to table that telex and one wonders, Madam Speaker, how serious those members are over there about protecting the interests of farmers when they will not even insist that their colleagues federally . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

Could I remind honourable members . . . and the Honourable Member for Brandon West had better quit shouting directions at the Chair. I'm quite able to do

my job. I was on my feet to call the honourable member to order without instructions from honourable members.

If each honourable member on both sides would follow the rules of the House, we could all get along famously.

Grain handlers' dispute, Lakehead

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNESS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, given that Manitoba Pool Elevators and UGG between them, account for 80 percent of the receipts, farm handled receipts, and given that they are cooperatives, owned and controlled by farmers, shut out, closed down those ports, in part, in part because they're trying to drive a better deal for the farmers of Manitoba, Madam Speaker, their owners, under the cooperative system so highly regarded by members opposite, can the Minister of Agriculture tell me how long the government is going to wait and watch the conciliation process evolve before they will come and join thousands of Manitoba farmers who want an immediate end to this dispute?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I believe that the Minister of Transportation and I have taken responsible action in encouraging the Federal Government to provide conciliation services to bring both parties to the table to resolve this dispute as soon as possible.

Madam Speaker, it should be pointed out as well, unless members opposite are not aware, they should remember that the end of the crop year at August 1 was extended so that farmers, many farmers who were unable to fill their quotas, brought as much grain into the system as they could. As a result, the entire system is quite full, that there is grain -(Interjection)- well, Madam Speaker, it was the cooperative movement that accommodated that, even though it was illegal, according to the The Wheat Board Act, Madam Speaker. It was accommodated.

There is grain in the system. I don't know what my honourable colleagues opposite, members opposite want, unless they want to continue to drive the wedge between farmers and workers in this country for political posturing. That's the only thing I can read into their comments, Madam Speaker, to continue to divide farmers and workers in this country.

There is no doubt that we want an end to that dispute as soon as possible, but the responsible party is the Federal Government and the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board.

As well, I want to table the copies of the telex that was sent yesterday to both the . . . Madam Speaker, do I have leave to read the copy of the telex so honourable members will know?

HON. J. COWAN: Leave? Yes or no?

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

HON. B. URUSKI: No leave. Okay. Madam Speaker, I am not granted leave so I will table those copies. I have not been granted leave.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

The Honourable Member for Morris with a supplementary.

MR. C. MANNESS: Madam Speaker, a new question to the Premier.

Given that the NDP Party secures hundreds of thousands of dollars from union checkoffs, Madam Speaker, given that the National Farmers' Union has taken the side of the grain handlers in this dispute, can the First Minister tell me whether he will be marching in the picket line alongside the grain handlers in Thunder Bay, as he did in the Gainers' dispute in Edmonton, against the wishes and the needs of the farmers in Manitoba?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, let me . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Could the honourable members please come to order? Are the honourable members interested in continuing with question period?

The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, let me advise the Member for Morris that I make no apology that my sympathies are with the workers, as against Peter Pocklington. Their sympathies may be with Conservative Peter Pocklington; mine are not with Peter Pocklington. Let that be clear; I make no apologies.

Madam Speaker, let the record also be clear that my support is with the farmers and not with the banks, as is the case with the Conservatives in this Legislature during the debate on Bill 4.

Madam Speaker, let the record show that we've been prepared to discuss agriculture any time during the entire four months of this Session, where the Conservatives now are suddenly trying to catch up with their expressed concerns for agriculture in Western Canada and Manitoba because they've abdicated their responsibilities as agricultural critics during this Session.

Grain prices - deficiency payments

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. C. BAKER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My request or question, I don't know what you could call it, is to the First Minister.

Might I ask him that, in any future telexes that are sent to any Ministers in Ottawa, to get the strike settled which is important, no question about it. We want to get that strike settled. But more importantly, Madam Speaker, will they put an addendum to it, and ask the Federal Government to announce that \$1 billion or \$1.5 billion deficiency payment because, when the grain gets rolling, the farmers also want to have a decent price?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

Could the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie please come to order. His colleague has a point of order to raise. If I started ruling out stupid questions, we'd have a short question period.

The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

A MEMBER: All our questions are stupid, is that it?

MADAM SPEAKER: I didn't say that.

The Honourable Member for Lakeside on a point of order.

MR. H. ENNS: Madam Speaker, just on a question of order, as I understood the Member for Lac du Bonnet's question, he was asking the Premier of this province as to what the Federal Government was going to do with respect to adding to the \$2 billion that they have already expressed to Western Canada. I believe that's out of his jurisdiction, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: My understanding of the question was that he asked, on future telexes, could the Honourable First Minister please put an addendum that said such-and-such. That particular question is within the administrative responsibility of the government.

The Honourable First Minister.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon West on a point of order.

MR. J. McCRAE: Your Honour just a few moments ago said that, if you ruled out all stupid questions, we'd have very short question periods. I would like to ask the Chair to advise honourable members just which questions in this Session she regards as stupid.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member does not have a point of order.

The Honourable First Minister.

MR. J. McCRAE: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. J. McCRAE: . . . questions in this Chamber being stupid, I find that offensive. I would ask you to reconsider your position and withdraw that statement.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister in answer to the question from the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, as we provincially and as a Provincial Government have maintained our responsibility to make recommendations to the Federal Government vis-a-vis the grain-handling strike and lockout in Thunder Bay, we likewise will not hesitate to ensure that we fulfill our commitment to the western farmer, as witness the position that we took along with other Provincial Governments at the Western Premiers' Conference, at the Canadian Premiers' Conference, in calling for clearly and unequivocally, assistance from the Federal Government by way of deficiency payment, upwards to \$2 billion.

Madam Speaker, if there are sums of monies for the oil industry and for the banks and for all other kinds

of segments of our society, then there ought to be money for the farmers of Western Canada. I can assure the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, as we have in the past, we will continue to press the Conservatives in Ottawa for some action in respect to some fairness for the western farmer.

French Program - mediator between school divisions

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education.

During the Estimates process, I urged the Minister to facilitate quality education for our children by mediating jurisdictional disputes between school divisions. Can the Minister tell the House if he has, in fact, contacted the Winnipeg Transcona Division or the Transcona-Springfield - excuse me - and Winnipeg 1 in order to facilitate a child taking the French program formerly in the Transcona School Division?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, the member knows and it has been indicated on previous occasions that disputes like the one that exist between Transcona-Springfield School Division and Winnipeg 1 are resolvable between the divisions. The department does have personnel who will act in the capacity of mediators or facilitators, and we have done that on numerous occasions over the past year. Certainly, the services of those people will be available should they be requested in the future.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: A supplementary question to the same Minister, can the Minister tell the House why he would intercede with a special needs child within one school division, but will not mediate between two divisions which is much more logically part of his mandate?

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, I think the use, "intervene," is perhaps an unfortunate or at least inaccurate term. I indicated on a previous occasion to the member that I had restated government policy and indicated, as I believe is rightly the case, that the school division, in this case, the Winnipeg School Division, was going to be the ultimate decision-maker on that issue.

Grain handlers' dispute, Lakehead

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights with a final supplementary.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Actually, Madam Speaker, a single question to the First Minister.

In the telexes which his government has sent to Ottawa Ministers asking for conciliation activity to take place and which I support, will the First Minister also support back-to-work legislation while that conciliation process is taking place?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, what we have called upon the Federal Government to do is to conciliate so that the proceedings can be carried on within the free collective bargaining spirit, but for action on the part of the Federal Government in order to bring about conciliation proceedings.

Grain prices - subsidization payment

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the First Minister.

Given his hearty joining with the Premier of Saskatchewan, the Premier of Alberta in urging the Federal Government to come up with a subsidization payment to the grain farmers, when is the First Minister going to take action on behalf of his government and give credibility to his request as Saskatchewan and Alberta have by their injection of hundreds of millions of provincial dollars into the support of the grain farmers? When will the First Minister find some of the millions that we've squandered in Saudi Arabia, some of the millions that we've squandered in Manfor, some of the millions we've squandered in Flyer, and put his money where his mouth is to support the grain farmers in Manitoba at the same time he requests the Federal Government to do the same thing?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, possibly the honourable member's memory is short. Madam Speaker, I will tell him what our commitment to agriculture has been.

Madam Speaker, we have written interest rates down for several years. We have allowed a saving, a buy-down, Madam Speaker, which has saved Manitoba farmers \$19 million. Madam Speaker, we have poured in \$60 million to support the livestock industry in this province. Madam Speaker, we have in fact written down interest rates to 9.75 percent through our Properties Fund for those in financial difficulty. We are providing monies to back up our negotiating bill that they've held up for four months, Madam Speaker, while the Federal Government has not put in a penny in their bill.

Madam Speaker, we will continue to fight on behalf of Canadian farmers and Western Canadian farmers in particular, because we see the difficulty rising and the numbers are horrendous, from 14,000 to over 30,000 from '85 to '87. If federal policies of rural transition, no support, when their review process goes into place, we will lose thousands of farmers in Western Canada, Madam Speaker, and they will stand there and defend them; we will not.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Ste. Rose: THAT the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance; namely, the need to have the Government of Manitoba support the farm community and move immediately to do everything possible to help resolve the grain handlers' strike at Thunder Bay.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Would the Honourable Member for Inkster please come to order?

Before determining whether or not the motion meets the requirements, the Honourable Member for Arthur has five minutes to state his case for urgency of debate.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to make the points on urgency that I know are the governing reasons for your decision. The first matter of urgency is there are thousands of farmers that are in the farm community that are losing millions of dollars a day because of the tie-up of grain movement at Thunder Bay. That, Madam Speaker, is the reason for the emergency.

Another point, Madam Speaker, is that probably later on today - and I say probably - we will be passing Interim Supply which is the government requesting money from the taxpayers of Manitoba to carry on the operations of government. The farmers have to sell their grain, Madam Speaker, into the system so that they can pay those taxes and so that we can vote for that bill - the bill could be passed later on today, Madam Speaker. Those are the kinds of reasons of urgency.

Madam Speaker, there are employees of the CP and the CNR that are losing their jobs and being laid off and losing incomes because of the strike at Thunder Bay. It's not just a one-way street.

Madam Speaker, it is traditional that land taxes be paid in the fall of the year to operate municipal governments; to operate school boards; to operate the daily needs of the rest of the governments in our country. That's the reason for urgency and they need the money today; they need it tomorrow, Madam Speaker. They have seen fuel prices increase; they've seen fertilizer increases; they've seen all levels of their increases go up to them, but a lowering of income plus this devastation of a stoppage of movement altogether, Madam Speaker, today has to be the reason for urgency in the need for this debate. We do not have another opportunity, Madam Speaker, as members of the Legislature, to debate and to support the farm community.

The Minister indicated that I could use Interim Supply. I have not, Madam Speaker, the second opportunity to speak on Interim Supply unless the rules have changed. The majority of people have spoken on Interim Supply prior to the knowledge of the strike taking place.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. I am trying to listen to the honourable member. Could other members please come to order?

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, all one has to do is turn on the radio, the TV, or look at the newspapers

Thursday, 4 September, 1986

- and I make reference to one constituent of my colleague, Mr. Russ McDowell, who's pointed out in the press - and I know it's not proper to do so - just one more disaster for the farm community. Madam Speaker, they cannot tolerate any further loss to their income. It means, as the Minister of Agriculture - and again, this is a supporting document for the need for the urgent debate - he went to the west coast, Madam Speaker, to meet with all Ministers of Agriculture. In his press release prior to going he said there will be 11,000 western farmers giving up farming next year because of the tough times; his own quote, Madam Speaker. So I'd expect him to support this urgent need for debate on this matter.

Yesterday, Madam Speaker, just to show that the Minister of Agriculture - and I do give him some credit for correcting it - but when a Minister of Agriculture puts his political expedience ahead of the farmers, again another reason for urgent debate. Let him clarify what he really meant in that statement.

The First Minister, Madam Speaker, in his answers today shows a clear lack of understanding of the need to help the farmers and whose side he's really on. The farmers have to know today whether or not the Premier supports them or whether he supports the labour movement.

Madam Speaker, it is as well urgent because the Minister of Agriculture yesterday indicated that he had sent a telex out. This is not a very firm stand to resolve this situation. Again the need for a debate to get the Minister of Agriculture and the First Minister, their position clearly on the record today as to what action that they are prepared to take.

As my resolution reads, Madam Speaker . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

The honourable member has made a motion requesting that the ordinary business of the House be set aside. He has five minutes in which to make his case. I presume if this matter is so urgent, all members are interested in listening to the reasons that we should set aside the ordinary business of the House. I would certainly appreciate being able to hear his reasons.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, it's through the good graces of our Whip yesterday and I'll conclude with these remarks.

I had the opportunity to be amongst several farmers who are busy in the harvest season as they are, working themselves from daylight to dark, bringing in one of the best crops they have seen. Every time they turn a radio on, they hear that someone is not prepared to move that product which they are breaking their backs to bring into storage; and to find out that somebody's prepared to use the system and the mechanism that is available to them to deprive them from an income, Madam Speaker, is not fair and it is time for an urgent debate on that very point. From daylight to dark bringing in a crop which they do not have storage for.

The Minister of Agriculture indicated today in his comments that the system is full. Yes, the system is full; grain is being dumped on the ground. How would you like to dump your cash on the ground or your valuables on the ground because there isn't room in the system to take it?

Madam Speaker, there's urgency. The weather could turn bad and there could be a major loss of that product that is in the field.

The final reason, Madam Speaker; I would find a government hard-pressed to vote against this kind of motion, that they take all action necessary to resolve the problem.

I will conclude with that, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader has five minutes.

HON. J. COWAN: Madam Speaker, I think it should be stated right from the onset in speaking to the request to set aside the business of the House to discuss this matter, that in essence, this is a federal matter that they wish to discuss. The jurisdiction rests primarily with the Federal Government and I think that should be made very clear.

Secondly, as you are aware, according to Beauchesne and the Rules, it is necessary that there not be another opportunity during the normal business of the House to conduct the type of debate which is being requested.

Madam Speaker, I would suggest that there is another opportunity given that we are in Interim Supply today, and intend to call Interim Supply and that allows for a wide-ranging debate. So I believe in fact that there is another opportunity. I believe, in fact, that the matter that they are requesting be discussed is a matter of federal jurisdiction.

However, having said that, the government is prepared - and as a matter of fact, welcomes this resolution - and is prepared today, notwithstanding what I've just said, to allow the ordinary business of the House to be set aside, not considering this to be a precedent in any way, but to allow the ordinary business of the House to be set aside so that we on this side, by leave, can in fact set the record straight because all we've heard from members opposite is the talk about a strike when in fact there is a lockout and a strike - to set the record straight.

They say that this is a matter that this Provincial Government should deal with directly. While we're prepared to support the Federal Government and to encourage the Federal Government to bring the parties back to the table to resolve this issue, it is a matter that is under federal jurisdiction.

You know, it's interesting that they've finally awakened from their obsession with MTX to recognize that the agricultural community in this province is in trouble and has been in trouble for some time. So if they need our help now, after finally having seen the light and come to their senses, to convince their Federal counterparts, to convince the Conservatives in Ottawa that action must be taken and action must be taken quickly, we're prepared to help them in the job that they have failed to do so far this year because they've been unable to look beyond the MTX affair and look at the real issues of importance to the people of this province. We've been saying all along that agriculture is an important issue to the people of this province.

So this debate will allow us to clarify the misinformation which they have put on the record. It will allow us to continue our work which we had already started previous to them even bringing this issue to

the attention of the House, to continue our work to encourage the Federal Government to get those parties back to the table so that this strike can be resolved.

That's the issue at hand. This government has taken decisive action on it to date, we will continue to take decisive action, and, in fact, we can help through this debate today to convince the Federal Conservatives to live up to their responsibilities not only to the farmers but to the workers who are prepared to accept that challenge.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

The motion must meet all of several requirements to be in order for debate.

The first condition to be satisfied for this matter to proceed has been met in that I have received the required notice of the motion.

The second condition is that there is no other reasonable opportunity to debate the matter.

Other opportunities for debate of this subject are the continued Second Reading debate on Bill 56, the Third Reading debate on the same Supply bill, the second and third debates on the Main Supply and Capital Supply (2) bills. In addition, the matter could also be the subject of grievances.

Also, the motion is worded in such a way that argument can be made as to whether it is one subject matter or two. A matter of urgent public importance must be restricted to one subject matter.

Also, because of the way the motion is worded, it is not clear that it is within the administrative responsibility of the government.

May I remind honourable members that in preparation of motions, members may always seek the advice of the Clerk.

However, the motion is out of order specifically because there are several other opportunities for debate. If the honourable -(Interjection)- Order please. May I finish? Order please.

The motion is out of order. However, if honourable members want to give leave, they certainly are free to do so. The way the motion is worded, and according to our Rule 27, it is out of order.

The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. J. COWAN: Madam Speaker, while the motion may be out of order and while it may not meet all the requirements for a matter of urgent public importance to be debated by setting the ordinary business of the House aside, this side of the House is prepared to grant leave to allow the debate to proceed if all members opposite agree with that.

We think it is important to set the record straight. We think it is important to reinforce the actions that we've already taken on behalf of the farmers, and also the grain handlers, and we're prepared to debate this with members opposite for the purpose of meeting the needs of their resolution, and that is to do everything possible to help resolve the grain handlers' strike and lockout at Thunder Bay.

It is our hope, however, that we can continue with the Interim Supply debate during the day and perhaps conduct some other business if possible.

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have leave? (Agreed)

The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to debate this particular matter at this particular time as we are looking at one of the worst periods of time . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. For clarification from the Honourable House Leaders, if we debate this matter, we are operating under Rule 27 which says every member has 10 minutes.

The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, being an auctioneer, who'll give me 15?

Madam Speaker, because of the importance of it, I would hope, although we don't ask for the bending of rules, that each member is able to make their point and make it well because the devastation of which the farm community has gone through, and are going through, has to be addressed and addressed immediately.

I'm extremely pleased and want to thank the members of the caucus, which have the strong rural support and representation for Manitoba, that they were more than pleased to participate in this debate in support of the farm community.

Madam Speaker, when one looks at the weak-wristed, and I say "weak-wristed," action taken by this Minister of Agriculture and this Premier, one really has to get into the urgency of taking the whole of the situation that farmers are facing.

I'll just quote a couple of lines from the telex so that it puts it in perspective. Here's the telex to the Federal Minister; here's how they start out: "My Dear Minister: I understand the Lakehead Grain Handlers' Union has exercised their legal right to strike following receipt of the conciliator's report last week." It's "I understand," Madam Speaker.

Well, the fact of the matter, there is a strike and it's affecting the livelihood of thousands of people. That's how tough it is. And I would have thought his opening comment would have been somewhat tougher and somewhat more assertive on behalf of the people of the Province of Manitoba.

Here's the main part: "We would urge you to work together . . ." Fine, I think they should work together; that you work together with your colleagues to bring about a satisfactory and expeditious resolve between union and management.

Yes, a fine objective, Madam Speaker. But when are they going to do that? Why didn't he ask that they immediately get on with the job of resolving the blockage? Madam Speaker, the resolution today, which I have introduced, asks for immediate action by this government who really haven't decided whose side they're on.

Madam Speaker, 1,500 grain handlers deserve a fair shake in society. Those people deserve the right to be protected under union legislation. They deserve the rights and the freedoms of every other Canadian. But I have to question, as do many farmers, in fact all farmers, I'm sure, except the Farmers Union who spoke out in support of the . . .

HON. B. URUSKI: The Honourable Member for Arthur was quoting from a document and I'm not sure. I'm

looking at the telex that the Minister of Transport and I sent on September 3rd to the Minister of Transportation with copies. Is he quoting from that telex or from another one because I don't recall the words he is using?

A MEMBER: Pierre H. Cadieux, Minister of Labour.

HON. B. URUSKI: Yes, the Minister of Labour, yes.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER, C. Santos: The Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, yes, I'm sorry if I indicated it was the Minister of Agriculture. The one which I was quoting from was the Honourable Pierre H. Cadieux. The Minister of Labour was the one which I was quoting from and if I said otherwise, then I apologize to the Minister because I had the page turned.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the whole question is at whose expense shall they exercise the right to press for higher pay? As Mr. Russ McDowell of Sanford indicated yesterday when he was interviewed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'll quote directly from his comments because I think they're very appropriate: "I've been through grain handlers' strikes before but never one at such a bad time. I don't know why they have to wait until we're taking grain off the field to strike."

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I indicated in my remarks earlier, farmers are busily harvesting, gathering their products of this year's efforts, and to find, when you turn your radio on, that somebody down the line is putting a blockage in front of you to stop you from getting the final reward from that hard work.

Do you think it's fun, Mr. Deputy Speaker, running a combine all night, when the weather is dry, to try and beat the elements? Do you think it's fun to dump your grain on the ground and see, because of the system full of grain, no grain quotas?

And when you get in from the field, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's been a telephone message. The telephone message is from the banker saying that you're overdue on that note; or the fuel dealer, that he wants payment for his fuel that you've burnt all summer; or the fertilizer, Mr. Deputy Speaker; or it's the school board who is spending money to increase the wages or to give something else in education.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're in a crisis situation. We're in a mental crisis situation, and that's why we urge the Government of Manitoba to take immediate action. You cannot add any additional pressure to those people who are out there.

As I indicated earlier, this Minister of Agriculture goes to the West Coast to meet with Ministers of Agriculture, saying there's 11,000 farmers in trouble this fall in Western Canada and there'll be an additional 27,500 in problems if it's to continue. We have, before our very eyes, what he is saying about to come true. Mind you, there aren't many things that he says that fall into that category, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but in this particular case it well could come about.

He and the Premier of this province in their capacity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have the ability to organize, to do something on behalf of the farmers and stand up for the people of Manitoba as they were elected to do during the election of March 18th, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'm not saying take the rights of the strikers away. I'm not saying that at all. But I'm asking him to put the case before those strikers that there are people who are definitely going to be put out of business and put on the welfare rolls if something isn't done to resolve it.

I ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker: is \$15.00 an hour not a reasonable wage? Is that not a reasonable wage when a farmer today is taking 20 percent less for his product? Is it a fair and reasonable request to say I want more money on my \$15 an hour wage? I don't think so, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think we have to start looking that when those who pay the bills are doing well, then everyone does well; and when those who can't afford to pay the bills aren't doing so well, then everybody backs off, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's really where we're at in our society today. We can't take sides and I'm not here taking sides, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What I'm putting forward is a fair case on behalf of the farmers and I don't think I'm being unfair in what I'm saying.

As a representative of a farm community, I think they deserve to have this House, this Legislative Assembly, help resolve the problem in a proper manner. Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not by force, but by the kind of proper conciliation that would normally take place. But if that conciliation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, isn't about to happen, then stronger measures will have to be taken.

I make no bones about it. I'll stand up in any community. I'll stand up in the Legislature anytime. I'm sure I'll be joined by the Member for Lac du Bonnet on behalf of the farmers that he represents. There are times when you have to take a firm and strong position.

This is the time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we, as members of the Legislature, stand and take a strong position and support 20,000 farmers in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and say to those 1,500: back off; back off until we can afford to give you the money that you're requesting.

The Government of Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker, make a lot of to-do about the walkout. You see they're anxious to jump on the defence of the labour unions because of management forming the lockout. Who do they think the lockout people are? It's farmers who have made the decision. It's the farm grain companies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that are doing the lockout.

Are you going to stand and support the farmers when it comes to their companies in the negotiations? No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're not going to stand, because my colleague in question pointed it out as I did. When you're getting paid support from labour movement, you're not about to stand up and go against their wishes. That's right where it's at, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The bottom line is if you get support from the labour unions, who are you going to support? That's where we're at, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If that's not the case, I challenge the First Minister of this province to stand in his place and say so. I would challenge him to say so. Does he support the co-operatives, the farm movement, or does he in fact support the labour movement right down to the wall?

The Member for Swan River's got a good agricultural community. I have been getting calls as well from those communities saying: "Are you going to allow this kind of thing to happen, stop us from getting our income? We've got a beautiful crop, No. 1 wheat, and we're

putting it on the ground or we're having to buy storage." Buy storage again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for how long? When are we going to have leadership?

I have one comment to conclude my remarks and I have about a minute left, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On behalf of the farm community, who, as I indicated to the Minister of Agriculture, on behalf of those 20,000 farmers and their representatives, whether they be grain companies, whether they be the Keystone Agriculture producers, I want them to know that there are members of this Legislature, particularly the Conservative members, who felt it extremely important today to raise this issue.

We want to make sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that immediate action is taken by this government, by the Federal Government, and I give a lot of compliments to my colleague, Charlie Mayer, in Ottawa, who's done a lot to put money in the hands of farmers this year.

A MEMBER: \$2.5 billion.

MR. J. DOWNEY: That's right, billions of dollars, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and probably held the price of grain higher than what it would have normally been if it had not of been for his strong feeling and support for the farm community.

So I request and would hope that this debate today would urge the First Minister to stand in his place and come clean with the farmers and tell us whose side he's really on, because we believe the farmers deserve better than they've been getting from this government.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have listened with interest to the remarks from the Member for Arthur. I am delighted to have the opportunity to discuss this matter because it is a matter of great importance and urgent importance to Western Canada and, particularly, to the farmers in rural communities of the Province of Manitoba.

The Member for Arthur also said it's time that we take a strong position. Those were his words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and he emphasized that a number of occasions.

Prior to dealing with the particular item at Thunder Bay, I would like to ask the Honourable Member for Arthur where was he when he voted against a Budget which provided more assistance for agriculture in the Province of Manitoba than any earlier Budget in the history of the Province of Manitoba.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Arthur on a point of order.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was asked a question by the First Minister and I want to answer, and I want to correct a statement.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member can only interrupt except on a point.

MR. J. DOWNEY: It is not true that this government have put a record on the . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please, order please. The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I trust that the time will be deducted from the time that's allotted for me during my address at the improper interruption by the Member for Arthur on a fallacious point of order.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The corresponding time will be . . .

HON. H. PAWLEY: I wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where members of the Opposition were in respect to the Throne Speech this Session that committed the government to a strong course of action in regard to agriculture and to the western communities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder where honourable members are in respect to a legislative program introduced during this Session of the Legislature that very clearly defines the support of this government for the farmers of Manitoba.

What have we noticed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, insofar as support by honourable members across the way for hard-pressed farmers in Manitoba insofar as the debate on Bill No. 4 is concerned? Stand, stand, stand, block, attempt to defeat.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the chips are down, the honourable members across the way, that pretend to be the friends of farmers, pretend to be the friends of rural communities, come down heavily on the side of the banking and lending institutions as against the farmers in rural communities of this province. Let there be no doubt about that.

I would like to ask honourable members across the way what do they consider insofar as the strong position by the Conservative Leader of Canada, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, insofar as the interest of western farmers are concerned. Are they proud of the position of their federal leader, Brian Mulroney?

Let that be recorded - the Honourable Member for Arthur clearly indicates his support for Brian Mulroney and his agricultural policies in Ottawa. He clearly indicates that and that's clearly on the record.

I wonder, Madam Speaker, where is the history of Conservative posturing in respect to this matter? In 1981, in September, the Winnipeg Sun, "Strike hurts future sales, grain officials." September 11, 1981. " 'Enraged Manitoba farmers plan to meet with Federal Labour Minister Gerald Regan next week to urge a quick end to the strike,' said Don Bergen, President of the Manitoba Farm Business Association. Mac Runciman, President of the Winnipeg-based United Grain Growers Limited, says there has been only four grain handlers' strikes during his 20 years in the business and the public is getting a false impression about handlers and some of the industry's problems."

Who was the provincial Minister of Agriculture in September 1981? The Honourable Member for Arthur.

Did the Honourable Member for Arthur call for the Session to come into immediate being in order to press the Federal Government to come to grips with the strike at the Lakehead? Did the Honourable Minister, then Minister of Agriculture, say to the Federal Government and to Manitoban farmers I'm taking a strong stand on behalf of the farmers of the Province of Manitoba? No, no.

Madam Speaker, what did the Member for Arthur, then Minister of Agriculture, do during that 15-day strike on behalf of the farmers of Manitoba insofar as the Lakehead is concerned? So let the honourable members across the way not posture and not grandstand.

Madam Speaker, I would like to read into the record of this Chamber, for the edification of the Member for Sturgeon Creek who is ignorant of the details of the telex forwarded by the Minister of Agriculture to Ottawa because his colleagues wouldn't permit the telex to be read into the record a few moments ago because contrary to what they said about wanting people to be enlightened, they wouldn't allow the wording of the telex to be read into this House by the Minister of Agriculture. Why? Because they want to exploit their efforts to distribute confusion in respect to this issue in the Province of Manitoba.

The telex, dated September 3rd, reads: From the Honourable Bill Uruski, Agriculture Minister for the Province of Manitoba, and the Honourable John Plohman, Minister of Transportation for the Province of Manitoba, to the Honourable Pierre H. Cadieux, Minister of Labour, House of Commons, Ottawa, and reads:

"I understand the Lakehead Grain Handlers' Union has exercised their legal right to strike following receipt of the conciliator's report last week. Although, as of this morning, the union is only picketing the Saskatchewan Pool facilities, it is expected that work stoppage at other terminals is imminent through strike action and/or lockout.

"Manitoba grain producers are overburdened by the high cost of production input, unfair competition, extremely low grain prices. They are clearly not in a financial position to be able to withstand a prolonged strike. Accordingly, we would urge you to work together with your colleagues to bring about a satisfactory and expeditious resolve between union and management.

"In the meantime, to minimize the impact of grain producers in the western economy, we would ask that grain be diverted to the Port of Churchill and other western ports. This would include moving grain in boxcars from C.P. points in Saskatchewan and Manitoba to Churchill.

"We anxiously await your prompt and positive response to this proposal."

So honourable members posture across the way. Madam Speaker, it is the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture and the Manitoba Minister of Transportation that took action to submit their concerns to the Federal Conservative Government in Ottawa on behalf of the farmers of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, it might also be of interest that honourable members have knowledge and respect to another area of concern: boxcars. Do you know, Madam Speaker, despite the federal-provincial agreement that was arrived at and signed between this government and the former Minister of Transportation, Lloyd Axworthy, there has been a lack of initiative by this Federal Conservative Government in that respect to the end result that our Minister of Transportation is compelled to write to the Honourable John Crosbie and advise the Honourable John Crosbie by way of telex that it appears that there will be insufficient grain in Churchill to load the three ships due to arrive next

week, despite the grain handlers' strike in the Lakehead. Why, Madam Speaker? Because of the neglect to ensure the construction of the rolling stock as had been committed to under the federal-provincial agreement.

Madam Speaker, what we have proposed to the Federal Government is a clear proposal that immediately ensures that the parties get off their duffs, whether it's the companies, whether it is the unions, in order to ensure that in the public interest there is a resolution, a resolution of the strike lockout situation at Thunder Bay.

Madam Speaker, that is the message that we are sending to Ottawa, to the Conservative Government in Ottawa, to ensure that they recognize that public interest and a public concern by arranging for the appropriate proceedings to be put in place to realize a resolution of the strike and lockout insofar as Thunder Bay.

Madam Speaker, this was done on our part out of an earnest concern which has been ignored by honourable members, I must say, throughout this Session for the plight of the Manitoba farmers. Today, for the first time we hear from the Honourable Member for Arthur that he accepts the statement by the Minister of Agriculture that some 11,000 farmers in Western Canada are at the brink of bankruptcy in Western Canada. But where was the Member for Arthur, where was the Member for Virden, where was the Member for Brandon West, the Member for Emerson, insofar as the debate on Bill No. 4 is concerned? When we pointed out to them there's a crisis in agriculture, Madam Speaker, they chose to ignore that particular fact for their own political interest.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Let me begin by rebutting something that the Premier just said. The Premier has said, Madam Speaker, that it is time to discuss the issue, that it is urgent. Yet, Madam Speaker, last week in this House I posed a question to the Premier. I asked him what stance this government was going to take, because we knew that there would be a conciliatory report coming down, Madam Speaker, with respect to this issue.

This is what the First Minister said, and I quote from Thursday, August 28, Page 3424. Madam Speaker, he says, and I quote: "The Member for Morris asked me what advice I would offer. My advice is the common-sense advice that I offer in any situation of this nature, for the two parties to get together, to continue the collective bargaining process and to come to a fair and proper resolution of a labour dispute."

Madam Speaker, does the sense of that remark, does it show any urgency? None whatsoever, Madam Speaker. Today, the Minister of Agriculture leaves before us his telex, Madam Speaker, and what urgency is shown within this document? He says they are clearly not in a financial position to be able to withstand a prolonged strike. Madam Speaker, they're not in a position to withstand any length of strike - none. The members opposite don't realize the urgency of this situation. The Premier wants to challenge my colleague,

the former Minister of Agriculture. Madam Speaker, I can tell him that my colleague for Lakeside will address what action this former Minister took in strike situations, particularly the one at Churchill.

Madam Speaker, the response by the First Minister right now, in my view, was bizarre, and I can tell you when a Minister stands, and when the First Minister and Premier stand and recite to us the fact that one department of government has increased their expenditure from 45 million to 60 million and uses that as justification that his government is totally concerned about the economic plight of farmers in this province today, I tell you, he and his members have no understanding of the farm community problem that exists today, because that is a tired response just yawned at by the Minister of Transportation.

Madam Speaker, I have been asking for days wanting to know what stance this government was going to take; who they were going to support in this issue? Madam Speaker, I know I'm not supposed to show, I know it's against the rules to use an exhibit in this House. Madam Speaker, I'll put it back in five seconds.

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member can put it back now. He just admitted that he knows there is a rule about exhibits.

MR. C. MANNESS: Madam Speaker, this is one pound of wheat; it will bake a loaf of bread. Do you know, members on this side and those members on that side, what farmers receive for this? Madam Speaker, 5 cents - a nickel. That's what that's worth. Yet it produces a loaf of bread.

My colleague for Lakeside smokes cigarettes, Madam Speaker. I asked him the price of one cigarette here the other day and it's 12 cents. It is 12 cents, Madam Speaker.

So you wonder why there is going to be a backlash from the farm community when they are in a dire situation as they are today and there is somebody within the whole grain handling system, because that system narrows down to one specific place, the Port of Thunder Bay. There is some group that has power through a union and can shut down that whole system, Madam Speaker.

So when the Minister of Agriculture stands or shows us a telex and he says that the farmers of Manitoba cannot stand a prolonged strike, Madam Speaker, they can't stand a strike of any duration. Madam Speaker, because what is lost are the sales at the end of the crop year. At the end of the crop year, Madam Speaker, those dollars are missing; those are the ones that are missing.

Madam Speaker, I go into my coffee shops every morning and nothing struck me of greater concern over the last three days was the fact that I have gone into community groups or into coffee circles and noticed young farmers in the age of 30 to 40 totally demoralized with respect to what is happening to the agriculture community today. Madam Speaker, there are fair crops out there. Madam Speaker, there are fair crops, and yet in spite of that, and in spite of fair grades in my area where some of the crop has come in, there is a discrepancy there that you cannot imagine. Madam Speaker, those people will not stand for anybody in

that grain handling system using the power they may have through, first of all, the union and, secondly, through the location, that being a very narrow pass within the grain handling system to stop and bargain for higher wages at their expense.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and the First Minister show their total misunderstanding of the system. They want to make the grain handling companies appear like they are the Peter Pocklington of this whole issue. They want to set up the fact that the grain handling companies are the bad people here, owned by the wealthy. Madam Speaker, the Member for Lac du Bonnet is an owner of Manitoba Pool Elevator, so is the Minister of Agriculture and so am I and so are many members on this side. We're the owners of that company.

The Minister of Transportation says why are they locking out. Madam Speaker, because they are acting on behalf of all of the 18,000 farmers who deliver grain to them. That's why they are locking out.

Madam Speaker, you have in place today a situation where revenues are dropping 24 percent, where net incomes are dropping 100 percent, yet you have a group in society who were asking for an increase in salary. Members opposite will support them, work with them, if they have to, because they will not turn their backs on their union friends, against all the farmers, all the grain producers in this province.

The First Minister stands and rises today and he reads and recites the fact that they have contributed \$60 million to agriculture within this province this year. Madam Speaker, it shows me that they have a total misunderstanding of the seriousness of this situation.

Madam Speaker, I'm telling you Bill 4 and its importance absolutely pales when you consider in light of the strike and the potential for the seriousness of the economic shortcoming that can come out of the strike at that port. Madam Speaker, I can't believe it for a minute on this occasion that this government will, in sympathy, walk with the National Farm Union and support the union against the farmers in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, there is no middle ground on this issue; there is no middle ground. Madam Speaker, you are on one side or the other. Members who try to walk the narrow line on this one are going to fall and they are going to be hurt badly. Madam Speaker, I say that to my federal cousins, too; I say that to my federal cousins, and I have said it to them. But Western Canadian farmers in the Western Canadian region today will not stand for anybody exercising market control and stopping the flow of grain during these times.

The members opposite remind us. They say well, those are your friends and your cousins in Ottawa, why don't you approach them? Madam Speaker, we will do that, but let the members opposite realize that they are in government. They are the ones who remind us they won the election. Madam Speaker, they are the ones who legitimately - and it hurts me to say so - speak for the Province of Manitoba on this issue. I ask them, and I keep asking them: what more are they going to do than this? The First Minister says, the Minister of Agriculture has. What kind of action is this, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker, I implore upon the members opposite to do something more on this issue. The farmers of Manitoba won't stand for this dismal effort . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. C. BAKER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I want to say at the outset that I feel most uncomfortable in this arena where you have what you'd call adversary politics. I know some of my friends on that side of the House have told me the same thing, Jim, so it doesn't matter which side you sit on. We come out of a municipal arena where you could have a good argument around the table, then you leave and you all pull together. So it's difficult to sit here and listen to people on one side and the other side and sometimes repeating the same thing, wanting the same thing, but for reasons unknown to me, we have to keep ourselves divided.

I would think that perhaps this is one occasion when we could get a unanimous rule from this House, not just to support the farmers against the grain handlers' strike at the Lakehead, but also to support the farmers in their quest to get more attention, more federal money from the Federal Government.- (Interjection)- You bet, you keep at it, we'll get more. But I believe, though, with the limited budget we have, we're doing quite well and farmers need support, not just from one source, but from all sources. The gentleman there said that we can't find middle ground. I think that's a shame if we ever get to the point where we can't talk and find some middle ground, because I really think that's what the strike and the lockout is all about, to impress each other of the gravity of the situation, and from that will flow a middle ground, a middle position.- (Interjection)- No, I haven't said that yet, and I think that the conciliation board, \$800 signing bonus, if I'm correct, and a 3 percent over three years is pretty good middle ground.

But I think though that we have something in common with the workers at the Lakehead. We should also bring that into this question, and that is a fact that there is a threat - and I don't know whether it will come true or not, the Wheat Board Minister has put a hold on it - to make all of the grain flow west by the fact that they will move the highest tariff to Thunder Bay to make it cheaper for everybody. Manitoba Pool, all of the elevators in Manitoba to ship their grain west, and I think that should be brought to bear in this whole question because if that happens we're going to be going from the lowest grain tariff, Winnipeg and East, to the highest grain tariff and I think that should be brought to bear in the whole situation. Because if we start moving our grain west, then we're going to put those people at the Lakehead out of work and I think we should impress upon them that we have some common ground here that we have to meet with the Federal Government, meet with Charlie Mayer and make sure that those grain terminals, which the farmers of Manitoba have built in Thunder Bay don't become relics, because that's what will happen. If we were to get the tariff structure so that it's cheaper to ship grain west, you will find every grain company trying to get as many orders as they can and Prince Rupert isn't full, you can understand that. As a matter of fact, they're losing money. They can handle a lot more grain, so I think there's a lot of middle ground we can find in this whole issue.

I want to make a remark about the gentlemen opposite when they tell us about how much money the Conservative Government is putting into the farmers, and I'm not one to belittle somebody when they make an effort, and there has been some effort. But I object to the fact that they take credit for the fact that there's a western grain pay out, because it would have come anyway and that is predominantly farmers' money.- (Interjection)- What did they trigger? I'm not in the position to argue with the gentleman one way or the other, but I'd like you to show me where they've changed that mechanism. I know that we went down on our pay-ins to 1.5 percent, but that will be going right back up again because we'll be in a deficit position.

But what I would like to see happen is that the Western Grain Stabilization Fund be discontinued, and that we all be covered under the Canadian Agricultural Stabilization Program, which would guarantee all the farmers 90 to 95 percent of the last five-year average. That is the type of system which would bring justice to the farmers of Western Canada, not as it is now, if you pay your levy, you're covered, you'll get something; if you don't pay your levy, you don't get anything. Farmers in Eastern Canada don't have to pay a thing and they will get stabilization.

I think there are areas where we can pull together in this House. What I would like to see happen in this House, and I'm sure the farmers would like to see it happen, is a resolution brought forward and voted on by both sides, saying let's get this grain handler strike settled; saying along with our western farm leaders, that we need \$2 or \$3 billion if we're going to stay alive in Western Canada to the Federal Government. We don't have to be divided on those issues.

We know that members opposite, when they are talking to their federal counterparts in Ottawa, are telling them the same story that we are telling them. Why can't you be big enough to say it in this House that there is a part for the Federal Government to play, that we can get together on both sides and go to the Federal Government and say that the farmers are in trouble and if there's no money coming forth, we're going to be losing so many? What was it? 10 or 15 percent.- (Interjection)- That's right, but we're also talking about money in the farmer's pocket. The strike is going to cost the farmers money and I say to you that it won't cost us 25 percent of our income, so which is more important? We want to get the strike settled, but we also need a price.- (Interjection)- Well, I'm sorry, I think that there are a lot of places that will buy our grain.

I just want to make another remark, our great friend from the United States, Ronald Reagan, can you imagine the irony of the situation? Back when we were in our heyday when land prices were going up and we were getting a good price for our grain, the Russians invaded Afghanistan; and Jimmy Carter, who is not known as one who stood up to the Russians, decided he was going to use food as a weapon to try to stave the march of communism, so he put a grain embargo on. What happened when he put that grain embargo on? They had to close down the grain exchange in Chicago because they felt there would be almost near disaster. As it was, corn prices dropped by \$1.11 a bushel over the weekend, and we've in trouble ever since.

Now what's our problem? It's another American President. This guy even says that he is a better Red-

fighter than the other one. He's even better, he would stop the Russians cold in their tracks, if he could, but what's he doing? He's now saying that we will sell you our American grain and the taxpayers will help to pay for it yet - and the inconsistency we have in this world.

So, Madam Speaker, I think that there is a lot of middle ground; there is middle ground in this House. We can get together before this Session is over and we can draft a resolution - if everybody is really serious about helping the farmer and I think they are - that we can vote for, the Opposition can vote for, not only telling them that we should settle the strike, but also telling them that we have to have more money because moving the grain and selling it at \$3 a bushel isn't going to pay anybody's debts.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to speak on this debate with a great sense of urgency. I have to tell you that along with almost every other farmer in this Legislature and every other farmer in this province, we're involved on a day-to-day basis with trying to achieve what has been our goal for the last nine months, and that's to plant a crop, to grow it, to harvest it, and get it to market.

What we are seeing with this strike at the Lakehead, is putting a cloud over the activities, the agricultural community of this province, that we have to, as the member just spoke across the way, do what is within the grasp of this Legislature to do, and that is that we have to send out a very clear message to those workers who are on strike at the Lakehead and to those authorities who are responsible for the movement of our grain, that there is no way that the farmers of this province can tolerate any delays.

Many of the points that I wished to talk about have been covered, but let me talk simply, Madam Speaker, about what some of the problems are of those farmers who would be faced with economic problems, right from the day they decided to sow a crop this year. They are faced with the problem, first of all, of acquiring credit. Many of them were not able to get credit, Madam Speaker, so they went to their suppliers for credit.

When we talk about the urgency on behalf of the farmers out in the fields today and tomorrow and last week, about whether or not they're going to be able to move their crop, let's remember that when they get that crop in the bin or on the ground, but if they can't move it, they can't pay their bills. They can't pay their bills if they can't move the grain. I'm sure the Minister of Agriculture would agree with that.

Many of those farmers went to dealer credit, they mortgaged this fall's crop a second time - not a first time, a second time - because the productivity they can earn from that crop's first mortgage was probably already in place, as to whether or not they would be able to pay their long-term credit.

Their second mortgage that they were unable to obtain from regular lines of credit, either MACC or the banks, they obtained through private dealers. Those private dealers have an impact in the communities of rural Manitoba, that there's not too many of us who

live within the boundaries of the perimeter of this great city can really realize the importance of. You can look at communities where the population might be only 200 or 300, Madam Speaker, where the school, the municipal employees or the municipal governments are probably the major employers in the community.

The other major employer may very well be the local farm supply store or supplier, if you will. When he took a mortgage on that crop he gambled on the ability of that farmer to produce and sell, and when the first few truckloads begin to roll up the ramp, I'm sure he was able to breathe a sigh of relief and say, well, I'm going to be able to recoup, I'm going to be able to pay, to bring in additional product this fall to sell to those farmers, I'm going to be able to pay for the product that I put out on their credit this spring and I'm going to be able to continue to employ the people who work for me.

We talk about the urgency of this debate. These people are in an urgent position. The chemicals, the fertilizer, the fuel that went out to these particular people, as well as all the other customers involved, is now being called. The credit that was put there to purchase it in the first place is now being called on the basis of the fall crop being harvested.

Madam Speaker, I speak from the heart in this particular issue because I know of thousands of farmers out there and most of my neighbours, I can guarantee you, have not had a dollar's income in 1986 from their crops. Why is that, Madam Speaker? Because in my particular area there was a great movement of grain last year - we were able to move a lot of grain off the land in the fall, but gradually the pipeline has begun to fill. The members are well aware of it. The members of the government are well aware that the opportunities at the elevators are very quickly going to dry up. There are many elevators where they've dried up already, and in fact those farmers who did not have early crops to harvest will not achieve a dollar's income until that grain begins to move again through the pipeline.

The situation is not the same in all blocks, Madam Speaker, but the urgency will very quickly hit all shipping blocks in this province. We can talk about the fact that it was only Sask. Pool that was struck and that the other grain handling companies were able to proceed; but everyone in this House knows full well that the grain companies dealt with the unions as a block and the unions, by and large, have dealt with the grain companies as a block. Whatever the settlement is with one company, that is the settlement that is achieved with the other.

They have chosen to strike one company to try and bring it to a settlement so that they can force that settlement upon the other companies; and it only makes sense that the other cooperatives and the other grain handling companies would say, whoa, whatever happens to Sask. Pool will happen to us also. So we have a very great stake here. The unions made great issue of the fact that they were offered a 20 percent rollback. In fact, the Minister of Agriculture ridiculed me in this House for bringing up the fact that there would be a 20 percent rollback.

He said that was unfair to ride on the backs of the workers at the Lakehead, but the workers were offered a 3 percent increase after the conciliation report came in. I don't think he's prepared to ridicule me on that

point any more - 3 percent, when we are taking a 20 percent out in rural Manitoba, 20 percent of a high income could be survived; 20 percent of an income that is already greatly under stress is going to cause considerable damage to the economic structure of rural Manitoba. Because that pressure is there now, Madam Speaker, this strike becomes very, very critical.

A few days in this time, in the shipping season, will mean that the shipping season will be additionally shortened because of the weather conditions. We know that the canal cannot withstand undue pressures from ice. We've seen the damages that have occurred the last few years; we have to make the very best of what we've got, the same as what the agricultural community has been doing for years. For decades the farmers have made do with what is the very best that they can provide at the time, and that's what we've got to do, is put that grain handling system through its paces and move this crop, because there are two things that happen; and I shouldn't have to give the Minister of Agriculture or anyone on that side a lesson in agricultural economics. But the simple fact is that grain in the bin is not dollars in the bank.

You can have all the grain in the world in your bin, and if you can't borrow against it and you can't sell it, it becomes a liability.- (Interjection)- Cash advance, the Minister says, cash advance. There will be no quotas; the Minister knows full well there'll be no quotas when the elevators are full. Even if there were quotas when the elevator is full, there would be no place to deliver it. That's ridiculous!

He says he wants to talk about cash advance. Cash advance is not full value for the grain. Cash advance is not available in September; cash advance is not available when those people want to pay their costs. It is illegal to take a cash advance on a grain that is in the field. You take cash advance after the grain is in the bin and you take cash advance after the deadline has opened for those advances to be taken and after you have signified the amount of grain on hand.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Mazur refers to Pocklington's diarrhea, but yet we're talking here out of the other side of his mouth about wanting to achieve a settlement. This government, Madam Speaker, is closely related to the unions; they can use their influence to provide leadership to give the farmers of this province a break.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. L. HARAPIAK: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm pleased to rise and join in debate on this very important issue. I'm proud to join in this debate as a farmer and I hear a member opposite refer to me as a gentleman farmer. I hope that, as the Member for Lac du Bonnet says, we could be gentlemen and we could be farmers as well.

I am proud that I've had the opportunity and I continue in that particular kind of activity because I think it is an honourable way to earn a living. It is an honourable contribution to society. I am proud as well of my association with the rural community, aside from the fact that I am a farmer with my family operating an individual farm unit, I am part of a rural community which is affected by this issue as well. It is not just a

matter of addressing the concerns of individual farm families; it is a question as well of addressing the very heart of rural Manitoba.

I am proud as well to be a shareholder in Manitoba Pool Elevators that was referenced by some of the members opposite and members on this side, one of the parties to the dispute. That organization is the one through which I deliver the grain produced on my farm; but mostly I want to indicate that I am proud of my association with this government and particularly with the efforts of the Minister of Agriculture.

The Minister of Agriculture has demonstrated, in his term of office, considerable leadership in issues of importance to the rural community. I frankly want to thank the members opposite for bringing forth this resolution because it in fact gives us the opportunity to speak to the record of this government, and it's a record that will, that has stood the test and will stand the test in the future.

The one point that troubles me in addressing this issue is that in trying to resolve this matter, the crisis that is facing agriculture, as was indicated by the Member for Arthur, there is a crisis in the agricultural community, there is a crisis in rural Manitoba, but we cannot and I think it is unfair to suggest that the root of that problem is a labour dispute at the Lakehead. I think it is far too narrow a view to take to suggest that, all of a sudden, because we have a labour dispute at the Lakehead, we have someone to whip. I think, for too long, in trying to address the difficulty in agriculture, and the Member for Morris indicated, rightly so, that farmers deserve better. They do, but farmers have always been pitted against some other group in society. In this case, the members opposite are suggesting and, I think, rather narrowly that, if only there wasn't that labour dispute at the Lakehead, all would be well in the rural communities.

Let me suggest that the members opposite having dwelt on a single issue in this Session and seeing that issue is not unfolding as they thought that it should, in the dying moments are grasping, shall I say not facetiously, at straws. They are grasping at straws in this case. They want another issue.

The issue of agriculture, the vitality of the agricultural industry should have been addressed in many ways during the course of this Session. We attempted to deal with it, and we were dealing with it by way of Bill 4. The opportunities that were there to address that particular item were passed over in many instances. But at this moment, we have an attempt to link somehow the affiliation of the government on this side to its support with the labour movement against agriculture.

I again, let me indicate of having made some other references to the pride that I take in associations. I am proud that the labour movement would see that some of their concerns could be addressed through this side, but I reject the notion that we are in some way captives to labour. We have addressed the issues of concern to many groups in society, the labour movement being one of those. I hope we will continue in that way. But to suggest, because there is concern on our part for some of the issues that are important to labour, that we do not have a concern for agriculture flies in the face of the facts that we can present.

Let me simply point to what has happened by way of the activity of this government, and specifically by

way of the leadership shown by the Minister of Agriculture. Let us look only at the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, which comes under the Minister's jurisdiction. They make low interest rates available. They made available loan guarantees. They indicated that operating credit was not available. Many farmers are able to get operating credit due to the existence of a loan guarantee program, which is a program delivered not directly. Farmers are not coming to MACC for their credit. They are going to the other lending institutions, the banks, and making arrangements to get that guarantee from the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation. The Member for Minnedosa asks, are they being dealt with fairly? Of course they are, and they are being dealt with as well by the banks.

I want to indicate that what we really have to be looking at are two issues, the cost of production that the farmers face, and the labour component that the people refer to at the Lakehead is but one small component of that total cost of production. If the members opposite want to look at that, they should as well be looking and expressing some concern for the price of fuel, the price of fertilizer, the price of machinery and indeed interest costs. Those are far greater components of the farmers' cost of production than is the labour element at the Lakehead.

As well, the real dilemma that farmers face is the question of grain markets. If farmers were getting a price in the market which more truly reflected their cost of production, they would not be facing that crisis that they are facing at this particular moment in time. I would encourage this entire House to seek support from the Federal Government in light of the action that has been taken by the other exporting countries, the United States and the European Economic Community, that we not leave the Canadian producers to compete in that international market against the treasuries of the United States and the European Economic Community.

We should join with the others. The Premiers of Western Canada have indicated that there should be a payout, a subsidy of some sort to the producers of grain in Western Canada.

If we had those two major issues addressed, the one of the grain markets and the cost of production, the question of the strike at the Lakehead would diminish in its importance.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member's time is up.

The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can't believe the member who has just spoken can be as naive as he appears to be in the remarks that we've just heard him . . . I can tell him that I'm also proud to have been from a farming background, and still am the possessor of farm land. I too am a member of the Manitoba Pool Elevator Association, also the United Grain Growers. I like to hedge my bets. I am also a member of the People's Co-op Seed Cleaning Plant and a shareholder at Rivers, Manitoba in my constituency. So I'm also well aware of the problems facing the rural community today.

But, Madam Speaker, what we're debating here today in some urgency is to try and urge this government to

take some concerted effort to halt the strike that is now in process at the Lakehead and also the lockout procedure. We know why the lockout occurred. Because the strike had taken place, the co-ops decided that if they're going to negotiate, they'll negotiate in a block which my colleague for Ste. Rose covered at some length.

There is no question how one group can hit the farming community as hard as this strike is going to hit them. I won't cover the ground that's been covered about the cash flow crisis that faces the agricultural community today. This is just one more blow.

The farm community have sat back year after year, Madam Speaker, and watched this happen. If the Lakehead isn't going on strike or threatening strike, the grain inspectors at Vancouver - and about a dozen of them can tie up the whole system. There has to be some legislation put in place to declare this grain handling system free of any bottlenecks such as a strike can create. It has to be in the line of essential services, because there's nothing more essential to the world than food.

I know the unions have a position to play in the whole market system, but here is a system where I think the unions are flexing their muscles. They've had a conciliation report, they've been given a fair offer and the port at Thunder Bay is in need of vast overhaul and upgrading.

If that port in Thunder Bay was upgraded to the technical capabilities that we have in the transportation system today, they would have a unit system there and be unloading unit trains and there would probably be a fraction of the people employed there that are employed there now.

But the average wage that the grain handlers at the Lakehead are getting now, I dare say you could find 1,500 farmers throughout this province that would be down to Thunder Bay pretty damn fast to take one of those jobs and rent his farm or do whatever if he could pick himself up \$150 a day or whatever wages they are getting down there, and it's somewhere in that vicinity as I understand it.

But that is the urgency of this debate, Madam Speaker. There has to be something done to open that system up. - (Interjection)- Now there's a former Finance Minister, Madam Speaker, who says from his seat that bank managers are blood suckers. Now I'm a former bank manager and I take exception to that and I want it withdrawn. I'm offended, Madam Speaker.

On a point of order, I want the former Minister of Finance to withdraw that remark.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please.

The Honourable Member for Minnedosa, on a point of order, has suggested that the Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology said that he was a bloodsucker.

Could the Honourable Member of Industry, Trade and . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order.

The Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Madam Speaker, I've never seen a former banker with a thinner skin. I didn't call the Member for Minnedosa a bloodsucker. I did make some comments from my seat about bankers in general.

I think, Madam Speaker, if one looks at what happens with respect to people in trouble in our rural areas, if there are some people who might feel that that's not an inappropriate description, but if he feels that it's something that bothers him personally, then certainly, with respect to him, I'll withdraw it.

MR. D. BLAKE: Madam Speaker, I thank the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology for that withdrawal. I'm sure the finance community and the credit union managers who are in the same category will appreciate the remarks of the former Minister of Finance.

To carry on, Madam Speaker, and to touch on the problem of finances in the community, I touched on the cash flow problem, and the Member for Ste. Rose had mentioned that many farmers were at the extreme limits of their line of credit this spring and were unable to get further financing and relied on their suppliers to provide some assistance to get their crops in.

That money has to be paid out of the first cash they receive. We realize there is no quota at the present time, the system is plugged, and it's going to remain plugged a lot longer if we don't get the strike settled and get those ships moving. That's something that has to be addressed with the utmost urgency, Madam Speaker, and that's one of the reasons for this debate.

As I mentioned, the farmers are being faced with one blow after another and this one they don't need. They have enough problems with their input costs and things of that nature. I mentioned in my speech on Interim Supply the other day where the American farmer can buy his diesel fuel for 47 cents a gallon and our farmers are paying \$2, so he doesn't need an added burden such as a strike where he can't move the product that he's got which may give him a break-even position this year. He has to have facilities to move that product.

Other speakers mentioned the price. The Member for Lac du Bonnet mentioned their prices have to be increased. We realize the price is terrible, but if you haven't got a buyer out there that's going to pay you the price, what are you going to do with your product? You're on a world market and governments can't solve all the problems.

We hear the Minister of Agriculture and the members opposite crying for the Federal Government to put in money. They say they can't put in any money provincially because the cupboard's bare, the Treasury can't stand it. What do they think is happening in Ottawa after the mess that Ottawa inherited after 16 years of Trudeau regime? They've got no money either. They are trying their best. They are going to try the best for the farmer.-(Interjection)- Well, the members opposite say go to the banks and the loan companies.

They have such a hate on, Madam Speaker. They have such a fixation and hate over there about a financial institution that happens to be the strongest in the free world, that does one of the best jobs. It's the strongest system in the free world, it's well managed, and they make a profit. There is nothing that riles the members opposite more than someone who makes a profit.

Well, I'll tell the Minister of Agriculture, if he's so worried about his loan guarantee, you can go back to The Farm Improvement Loans Act passed by the government after the Second World War. Their losses were fractional because they let the banks do all of the lending, using due consideration for the taxpayers' money such as they do the shareholders' money, and their losses were minimal. They would have been a fraction of what they've been under the MACC with bureaucrats running the show.

So the Minister could take a leaf out of that book if he's interested in protecting the taxpayers' money that he wants to put into MACC and have it loaned out with some prudence. He would be far better off. It might be a good idea if he had a banker or two on his Farm Land Review Board, too.

Madam Speaker, the urgency of this debate taking place today has been mentioned over and over again. I know the Member for Dauphin is just champing at the bit to get up and extol the virtues of Churchill. We all support the Port of Churchill, but we all know the amount of grain that runs through Churchill is fractional to what's needed to handle the system.

So I will just close with that remark, Madam Speaker, because it has come to my attention that the Minister was up there just recently, and after a Swedish ship had gotten loaded, he asked him if it was coming back for another load and he said "No way." So that's the problem we have in moving grain through that port, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Certainly, Madam Speaker, the Member for Minnedosa is wrong. I was talking with the Dutch skipper, or Dutch captain, and he's certainly going to be coming back for his third trip this year.

Madam Speaker, I think it is appropriate that the members opposite have finally gotten interested in agriculture, even though it is very late, at the 12th hour, 11th hour of the Session. They finally decided now that agriculture is important.

They've been sitting there doing nothing and raising no issues with regard to agriculture for the last number of weeks, Madam Speaker. I find that very regrettable for a group that says they represent the farm community but, certainly, they are raising this issue with the right party because the New Democratic Party over the last four or five years in government in this province has had the best record insofar as lost time due to work stoppages than any province in this country.

We have taken, Madam Speaker, the approach that we have to work in a conciliatory way, that we respect labour and their wishes as well as management. We do not try to impose, as these members would like done, and like the negotiators for some of the grain companies that have been quoted as calling the workers fat cats and saying they have to let them get hungry for a while before they will get anywhere with it; that's the kind of approach, that lack of respect for the other side. We have shown respect. We have shown that they have to work together.

I think it's important to recognize, Madam Speaker, that everyone in this Chamber wants to have this settled.

We all feel very strongly about that. We know that it is very difficult. It is another major blow to agriculture and we've been saying all along that the Federal Government has to take some action with regard to the agriculture industry in this country and they've refused to do that.

These members opposite, Madam Speaker, are very frustrated by that. They have got no action from their federal counterparts, who are of the same political stripe, and now they want to take their frustration out on the New Democrats sitting on this side, on a federal issue, where their members in Ottawa will not do anything. As a matter of fact, the representative from Manitoba says it's too delicate to even say anything about it.

What's he going to do about it, Madam Speaker? We have sent the telexes. We have urged them to immediately get involved with the conciliatory process, a conciliation process to bring them together in a respecting way, to respect both sides and negotiate in a fair way, so we have a fair settlement and we have a recognition that both sides deserve some respect in this issue. But that's not the approach that they take.

I'm very shocked to find that they'd say nothing. When the Federal Government comes along with measures such as Bill C-75, that will result in the Coast Guard charging up to \$900 million worth of their costs back to the users of the system, and that means that the Manitoba farmers, where 90 percent of our grain goes through Thunder Bay, are going to have to pick up the major costs associated with the Coast Guard, Madam Speaker. They didn't say anything about that. They don't complain about that, when the farmers are going to have to pick up those extra costs. They're silent on that because it is a measure introduced by their Federal Conservative counterparts and they're afraid to embarrass them. So they say nothing even though it will hurt the farmers of Manitoba dramatically.

They don't say anything when the Federal Government wants to increase the transportation costs in other areas in grain in this country. They say nothing to the Federal Government on those issues either. They say nothing when they introduce a Rural Transition Program that is designed to get the farmers off the land instead of assisting them in producing food that is so necessary for this world.

They don't say anything when the Federal Government refuses to deal with the high chemical prices, high fertilizer costs and high fuel costs. They say nothing about that, Madam Speaker. They don't go to their federal counterparts and have some action in that area that can be meaningful.

They refuse, Madam Speaker, to encourage their federal counterparts to offer deficiency payments and cash advances that will help a very troubled agricultural industry at this time, nothing from them on that. They'll only start to come alive when they think they can embarrass the New Democrats because of the association with labour. But look at the association they have, \$6,000 to their campaign from Cargill, and they think it's alright. They think it's alright, Madam Speaker, for the grain companies to lock out those workers but, on the other side of it, it's not alright for the grain handlers and the grain workers to strike when they have a grievance.

I very much regret that this is happening at such a critical time. I think it's very regrettable and I, as much

as anyone, want to see the two parties come together, have agreement, at least continue working while the negotiations continue, so that there will be an agreement that is fair to both sides and the grain will continue to move. We want that more than anyone else and we will continue, Madam Speaker, to push for that, not only through the Federal Ministers to have them make conciliation services available and to encourage both sides to get together, but we will also do it through other avenues that we have. I have asked my staff to take whatever action they can with contacts they might have in the labour movement to ensure that they encourage them to go back to the bargaining table to try to reach a settlement on this issue. We're very concerned about it.

Madam Speaker, I have never said that Churchill is a complete alternative to Thunder Bay but certainly there's a lot more use that could be made of Churchill. What bothers me is we have a federal Crown corporation right now, CN, which is not meeting its obligation under the agreement that was signed in 1984 to supply enough rolling stock for 750,000 tonnes through Churchill. Here we have a season at about 500,000 to 550,000 tonnes and they can't even meet that. They're dragging their heels. When they assured us, the President of CN, the Minister responsible, and his colleagues assured us unequivocally that they would have no problem meeting their obligations and that we didn't have to refurbish boxcars in Transcona, that maybe we could do it as a work project and they reluctantly agreed, but they didn't need that rolling stock. Now we are proven right. They don't even have enough to service a season of 550,000 tonnes.

The Port of Churchill, by working more than one shift, as is done in the other ports, could easily handle 1 to 2 million tonnes a year and could be a significant factor when situations such as this develop. That's what we've been saying to the Federal Government, and not this half-hearted support they give, but realistic support that shows and demonstrates they are committed to the future of Churchill, not half-hearted political support simply designed to stave off the opposition and the attack, and to neutralize the attack from our government and from others who realize the true potential of Churchill. These members across the way stay relatively silent on that issue.

They only come to life, Madam Speaker, as I said a few moments ago, when they think they can gain some political points by trying to embarrass this government with an issue involving a labour dispute, to pit the workers against the farmers. Well, they're all of one kind; they are all of one kind, Madam Speaker. The workers are desiring the same thing that the farmers want, just a decent living. We want respect on both sides and not this kind of partisanship that's shown by these members across the way who want to see the workers attacked when there's a labour dispute and they don't look at the other side of it.

What kind of a group are they? Where's their fairness? Where's their sense of fairness for people in this world? All they look at is one side of it, Madam Speaker. Where are those grain companies when it comes to this issue? Why are they shutting it down? It's so terrible for the farmers and we realize that. Why are they shutting it down completely? Why do they want to destroy the working conditions that these people have worked for for so many years?

Madam Speaker, it is clear that they're out simply to destroy the union at any cost, to destroy collective bargaining at any cost and if it means the farmers go down the drain, tough beans; that's what they're saying. These are the same companies that the member proudly says he's the owner of, he's a shareholder of. Why doesn't he get involved in the decisions and assist them and give them good advice?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Thank you, Madam Speaker, we now can understand why this government, especially in the area of transportation, is in so much trouble.

The member talks about both sides being treated fairly and the farmers who own the grain companies who decided to have the lockout, they know that if the prices go up more than they can stand right now, they have to take a cut. You know, you're not talking about the other guy taking a great big cut. He's earning \$36,000 a year. But you say that the farmer has to take a cut. If he has to pay that higher increase in transportation costs or shipping costs, the farmer will end up taking less money. So, really, quite frankly, he doesn't have both sides of the argument, Madam Speaker.

I hear the Minister of Finance talking about the free enterprise system and he doesn't mind the union system when the union decides that we're going to strike, and we expect all of the other unions to strike with me. That's perfectly fine on that side of the House, but when the grain handlers had a conciliation officer come down with a recommendation that was accepted, but one group would not accept it. It was decided that they would work as a unit to make sure that their position was put across, but no; the members on the other side, it all depends who's ox is being gored. They don't like it when somebody else sticks together, but they think it's rather fine when the unions all stick together. In this case, the company said we are sticking together on this particular subject. The reason the company said it is because they are owned by farmers and the farmers cannot afford to pay anymore than they're paying at the present time and take any less from their crop.

Now, Madam Speaker, they talk about the Federal Government. At one time I remember in this House when the members opposite were saying that it wasn't the fault of the Federal Government; it was the fault of the United States Government. They expanded and expounded on that theory that it was the United States that had caused the problem. And I can remember one honourable member saying, and the Federal Government is doing everything they possibly can to overcome this province; they were praising. Now today, it's the Federal Government's fault all of a sudden.

Madam Speaker, when there is a crisis within an industry, it is expected that all parts of that industry will pull together to come out of that crisis and if members opposite don't believe that the transportation of grain is part of the grain industry, they are desperately mistaken and they're not even looking at the realization of the facts. This is an industry that has been harmed because of world prices, admitted by all members

opposite. Then they turn around and they say that they don't believe that all parties that are in the crisis will have to have some sacrifices to come out of the crisis. And here we have a situation where the farmer's taking less; we have our agricultural industries within this province, such as farm machinery and what-have-you, taking a beating; we have all of those things happening. Yet, the honourable members on the other side believe that one group that is an integral part of that industry shouldn't pull together to make sure the industry remains viable and comes out of the crisis that they're in.

Madam Speaker, there is no question that they believe that one group should have that privilege because they are supportive of the unions; period. There is no question about it. We know it; they admit it; and there's no question about it.

Here we have a situation where we have the First Minister stand up and he says that he was concerned about what my colleague did in '81; and my colleague did plenty in '81 which can be explained to you. If he thought that it was wrong to do nothing then - and he's wrong when he says that - why doesn't he do something now? He stands up and he talks about banks.

We've got the Member for Swan River talking about the overall crisis and the situation of the farm industry. We recognize that it's there; everywhere. We've got other members talking about - the Member for Dauphin, with his one-track mind, talks about Churchill and he knows if we get the expansion of grain going through Churchill that he wants, it's still a minute percentage of what has to be shipped. He knows that right now this very moment Fort William-Port Arthur or the Lakehead or Thunder Bay, whatever you want to call it, because he's not old enough to remember the old names, is in a crisis at the present time. This is today.

Today we have a situation where the farmers are going to be critically harmed in this province. Talk about what you would do. Would you support the Federal Government passing legislation to put the members back to work and the grain companies to take off the lockout? Would you support that while there is negotiation going on? Not one bit. There isn't one of you who would dare get up and say you'd do that because you'd lose your votes from the union.

You want to get up and you change the subject all the time. The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet; he knows very well that the problem is now and he starts to tell us about subsidies from the Federal Government that will probably be worked out over the next few months for the farm community. But now we are in the situation in Thunder Bay.

Madam Speaker, I'm not an agricultural member, but let me explain the reason why I got up very briefly. If the honourable members on that side of the House think that the urban area, especially Winnipeg, and the economy of this province will not be harmed in the long term by what is happening in Thunder Bay at the present time, the urban members better sit down and take a very close look at it, because I'll tell you; when the salesmen from Winnipeg of the agricultural manufacturing community, whether they are in any small community or in the large city of Winnipeg, come home with their order books empty from the rural area, let me tell you the economy of this province will be hurt. You're talking about your No. 1 industry; you're talking

about us being hurt six or seven or eight months down the line because of somebody in the Lakehead who is using their power at the present time and not helping this industry out of trouble.

Madam Speaker, let me tell you that the people in the wholesale business, food business, wholesale food business, wholesale clothing business, or any retail sales that this government brags about being good at the present time, if the agricultural industry in this province is not watched carefully and if this is allowed to happen where we will be hurt eight months down the line, you will have to answer for that problem; because you will not take a stand against one group which is an integral part of the grain industry, the transportation part of it, the grain loaders and unloaders, whatever they may be, are as much a part of that industry as anybody. The whole industry is in a problem. They were offered an increase and you now sit there and you say that this part of the industry should be the one to help hurt it even more than it's being hurt at the present time and to hurt the economy of this province because we are looking at agriculture as our No. 1 industry. The urban members better realize it.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm rising to speak in this debate today because I, quite frankly, can't stomach the political tactics of members of the Opposition as indicated today.

Madam Speaker, I have never seen such puffery in my life. It's obvious today why the present Member for Arthur is no longer critic in the Department of Agriculture. We get some reason from the Member for Virden. All we get today from the Member for Arthur is puffery. Today that member stood and instead of raising what is a legitimate concern about an issue, attempted to set up the classic straw man that the Tories always set up.

Take this scenario that we have here today. We have a strike in Thunder Bay and a lockout. Members opposite frequently neglect to mention that fact. We have a situation where this Minister of Agriculture and this Minister of Transportation have contacted the Federal Government to express our concern about what is happening and urge that efforts be undertaken to get the parties back to the negotiating table. So action has been taken.

Madam Speaker, we have a situation where one possibility of relieving at least part of the problem that will arise because of the strike and the lockout through the expansion of the Port of Churchill, is being thwarted; not by this government, for the benefit of the Member for Sturgeon Creek, but by the Federal Government, which is not even ensuring that the CN lives up to its existing commitment to provide boxcars to move 750,000 tonnes of grain through the Port of Churchill according to a signed agreement. So given those facts, the Member for Arthur still had the gall to get up today and try and create this straw man to suggest that this government is not concerned about the farmers which is not true; to throw in the red herrings that they usually throw in, to suggest that we're somehow defending the unions in that situation, which is not true; and then, Madam Speaker, move for this emergency debate.

Well let's talk about a couple of those issues very quickly. I mentioned in the Port of Churchill, there is a classic example of the real federal commitment to this province, to the farmers of this province, Madam Speaker, a signed agreement is in place and they're ignoring it.

Let's talk about the issues that the Member for Swan River raised, the Minister of Natural Resources raised; let's talk about some of the other major farm issues and the silence of the members of the Opposition on those issues, the drop in the grain price, the need for deficiency payments. Where are the statements in regard to those issues? Where have the statements been in the last several weeks? I mean there's been virtually no questions, not only about those issues, but about agriculture, in general. So where is the concern?

Let's talk, Madam Speaker, bluntly, about the kind of tactic the Tories are trying to use, such as suggesting that our views in this are clouded by our support for working people. Madam Speaker, let there be no doubt, we do support the rights of working people; we do support the rights of collective bargaining, and we're proud of that.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair.)

But would the members opposite also like to include in their statements, reference to the money they received from Cargill - more than \$6,000 from Cargill - one of the grain companies that has participated in the lockout? Are they ready to talk about that? Well, Madam Speaker, I'm not suggesting that their stand is being clouded by that, and I would hope that they would not suggest that our stand is any way affected by some of the ridiculous insinuations put forward by the Member for Arthur. I mean this side is concerned about that. I'm concerned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I know my constituents are concerned.

We have many people from rural areas who now live in Thompson. They've got families, they've got friends who are being caught in this situation. They know what it's like, and they also know something else, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because we have gone through strikes in Thompson. In fact, before I was elected, I was on a picket line myself, and I remember when I got elected that I wanted nothing more than for that strike to be resolved.

I remember what this government did. This government, the present Minister responsible for Industry, Trade and Technology, who was Minister of Labour then, sat down with both parties, got them back to the table, at the request of myself and many people in Thompson, and the strike was resolved and that is the proper way to proceed in the present situation; not as the Member for Arthur suggests for the Province of Manitoba to be doing that, but for the Federal Government.

It's their jurisdiction, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's their responsibility to attempt to get the parties back to the table. All this talk about supporting back-to-work legislation is again a red herring, because the Federal Government itself, for the Member for Arthur, has not made any public statement calling for that, and yet the Member for Arthur wants us to interfere in the negotiations, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I would say, having some knowledge, and my constituents having some knowledge of the collective

bargaining process, will see through these statements. They will see that really is not what the members opposite are really trying to do by this debate today in their expressed concerns. Really what they're trying to do is set up a straw man and somehow try and blame the Manitoba NDP for the strike in Thunder Bay, Ontario, for the lockout in Thunder Bay, Ontario, for the fact that the Federal Government is failing to do what they've said, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So let's call a spade a spade. Let's put the onus where it lies. It does not lie on this Provincial Government. We have taken action in expressing our concern about the situation, calling for negotiations. We have expressed our concern with regard to the Port of Churchill, and the need for action there. We have taken the responsible course, not the course of cheap, political action taken by the members opposite, and we stand by that and we're going to continue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to raise our concern; not only about this issue but other issues of concern to farmers about the decline in grain prices, about the need for deficiency payments, and for some real commitment from the Federal Government towards the farmers, not the kind of artificial statements from their provincial colleagues trying to come to the defence of their federal cousins in Ottawa. We're going to stand up for the real issues.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm delighted that we are having an emergency debate on the grain handlers' strike in Thunder Bay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to deal first of all with a couple of issues. Our honourable friends in the government from time to time make the point, that they want to get on with the other business and other issues that are important to Manitobans.

But I only want to remind honourable friends opposite that when we were debating Bill 4, a bill that this government claims to be very important to the farm community, we moved adjournment of the House because only six members of the government had the courage to sit in here and listen to the legitimate arguments of what we were saying. Where was the importance of Bill 4, when all but six of the government members were absent for the debate on it? Where's the care and concern?

The Minister of Agriculture is turning into one of the best bafflebaggers in -(Interjection)- you now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for St. James ought not to open his mouth. He's in enough trouble as it is with his incompetence in the handling of the MTX affair without having to show his total ignorance and comments from his seat on this issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the grain handlers' situation in -(Interjection)- oh, we're going to have the bafflebag Minister of Agriculture.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There's a point of order being raised.

HON. B. URUSKI: I raise a point of order. The point of order I wish to raise is that there are more government members in the House now than there are Conservative

members in the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on this debate, on their own resolution. Where are your members?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: A difference of opinion is not a point of order.

The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: That was not a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture, from time to time will stand up and he will talk about all that the New Democratic Government is doing for the farm community. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reality of this government's action . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Pembina has the floor.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members opposite and the Minister of Agriculture believe that the way to resolve this strike in Thunder Bay is to call upon the Federal Government to initiate conciliation. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's exactly what they've had, a conciliator report has been offered, and apparently - and I only go by news reports and after all of the condemnation we hear from government sides about news reports and how inaccurate they are, I almost hesitate to use it - but it's my understanding that the grain companies are reluctantly willing to accept the conciliator's report and prevent a stoppage of the flow of grain through Thunder Bay. But what won't happen? Well apparently the union, according to the union leader on CBC this morning, is not interested in accepting that conciliator's report and that is backed and supported wholeheartedly by the New Democratic Party.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I make no bones about it. In this debate, in this issue, I am solidly on the side of the farmers at home, my constituents. I'm solidly on the side of the farmers in the constituency of Dauphin, where their member prefers to support the labour union. I prefer to support his farmers, and I prefer to support the grain companies, Manitoba Pool and the United Grain Growers. Do you know why I'm supporting those two companies? Because it just so happens I own a portion of them and I have a vested interest, and I'll declare that anyway because I own a portion of United Grain Growers and I own a portion of Manitoba Pools. Both of those companies are my companies as cooperatives.

When they are out trying to negotiate on my behalf because I pay for the salaries, the wages in Thunder Bay of the grain handlers - I pay the basic salary of \$36,000 for the man who starts sweeping floors in a terminal. That's more money than any MLA in this House makes. I support the grain companies when they say, enough is enough. No farmer is making that kind of money, and he's working hours upon hours longer. He has an investment of hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars, and he maybe can farm good enough so that he only loses \$36,000 this year, if he's lucky.

I say, enough is enough, and I speak for my farmers and I speak for the grain companies that I own. I say, the labour unions in Thunder Bay have gone too far. They have got wages that are way out of line, given the circumstances in the farm community today.

We have those evil oil companies that New Democrats constantly want to bash, lowering the price of oil to the farm community. We have the banks trying to deal very very effectively with farm financial problems. Those are the banks that this New Democratic Party set up as the straw men to hate so that they can develop the issue. That's the purpose of Bill 4.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the farmers of this province are not fooled by that flim-flammy from the mouth of the Minister of Agriculture. They're not fooled whatsoever. They know in Manitoba that, in the Province of Saskatchewan, the Devine Progressive Conservative Government has put their money where their mouth is. They have put money in direct support of the grain farmers in Saskatchewan. They know, the farmers in my constituency and in the constituency of Dauphin, the constituency of Swan River, the constituency of The Pas, the constituency of Lac du Bonnet, those farmers know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Getty Progressive Conservative Government of Alberta have put their money with their mouth is, and they are supporting the grain farmer to the tune of about \$450 million.

What have we got in the Province of Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Absolutely no direct support to the grain farmers in this province. They are left out on the clothesline to dry. This New Democratic Party Government that has millions to put in the hip pocket of Saudi Arabian wealthy sheiks, this government that has had \$165 million over the years to support some jobs in Flyer Industries in Transcona has not 5 cents of direct support for the grain farmers of Manitoba. This government that has had \$200 million to \$275 million of direct support to support jobs in the constituency of The Pas at Manfor has not 5 cents for 30,000 farmers and all of the industry and all of the jobs in rural Manitoba supported by those 30,000 farmers.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

What do they do, Madam Speaker? They use this crisis. The Minister of Agriculture and his colleagues use this crisis in agriculture as a vehicle to bash the Federal Government, to try to blame everything. We heard today and we heard yesterday the Minister of Agriculture stand up and say that grain prices have been lowered by the Federal Government, as if the Federal Government is responsible for the international price of grain. That's the clear impression he's trying to leave on television, not to the farmers because the farmers understand why the price of grain is down. But he's playing to his labour union friends and the people in the City of Winnipeg by blaming the Federal Government. It doesn't wash with the farm community, Madam Speaker. They know that the Minister of Agriculture is nothing but baffle-gabbing and flim-flamming in terms of support for the agricultural industry.

So, Madam Speaker, I make no bones about it. If this Minister of Agriculture and this Premier screwed up their courage and sent a telex to Ottawa, asking

the Federal Government to pass legislation, back-to-work legislation while the conciliation process is ongoing, I would sign that telex after the Minister of Agriculture, after the First Minister. I would sign it. I believe that is a necessary course of action.

But, Madam Speaker, we will not see that kind of forthright action that the farm community wants and demands of this government from a labour union-backed and oriented government. If it wasn't for the labour unions and the organizers and the contributions, this party would not exist. The New Democratic Party would not be a viable political party. They are the only political party I know of, Madam Speaker, that has a block of delegates dedicated to the labour union movement, preferential treatment to one group in society. They have to do it, because they owe their existence to the union bosses. That's why, plain and simple. When they have to make a choice, Madam Speaker, between whether they support the farmers of Manitoba, 30,000 strong, and the tens of thousands of people who work in the fertilizer industries in Brandon East, who work in Versatile in Fort Garry, who work in cereal implements in Transcona, who work in the various chemical outlets and warehouses, who work throughout this province . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member's time has expired.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, I will endeavour to ignore the chatter of the Honourable Member for Emerson, because it is chatter. The words he uses are like the chaff. It's better left behind, Madam Speaker.

I must declare my conflicts as well, Madam Speaker -(Interjection)- I trust that these interventions will not be recorded against my time. Madam Speaker, I trust that this noise will not be deducted from my time. I'm not going to endeavour to shout over that sound.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. The Honourable Minister of Labour has the floor.

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, I want to declare my conflicts as well. I also am a member of the Manitoba Pool Elevators. I'm a shareholder. I also want to indicate that I worked for some years for Saskatchewan Pool Elevators, and I also want to indicate that I worked for the Canadian Pacific Railroad and that I have money in banks. I'm not ashamed of that.

I want to also put some other facts on the record, Madam Speaker, that the grain handlers, they have been without an agreement for two years. Negotiations have been going on for 18 months. Madam Speaker, the Saskatchewan Pool and other pools had offered the workers a renegotiated agreement with a 20 percent pay reduction. Madam Speaker, when workers struck at Saskatchewan Pool, the other grain companies locked out their employees.

Madam Speaker, the present grain-handling system is virtually plugged because of the fact that there was a rush to deliver finally the grain that was available under the old pricing system. The system is virtually loaded.

Madam Speaker, the concern that we have is that the government responsible take the initiative to try and get the parties together to come to a satisfactory agreement. That's a reasonable course of action for any government. The Federal Government has the responsibility clearly, and when the Federal Government has been asked by this government to deal with the matter on an urgent basis, the Federal Government apparently is taking a ho-hum attitude. That should be of concern to honourable members opposite. It really should.

Why shouldn't the Federal Government insist that the parties meet again with the conciliation officers and try to work out an agreement, because it is an important matter. It's an important matter not only to the farmers. It's an important matter to everyone in Manitoba that we get a satisfactory resolution of that impasse, and get the grain moving again in the system.

But what we're seeing, Madam Speaker, is a Federal Government that appears to be indifferent to the plight of western agriculture. I say that what astounds me, Madam Speaker, is the fact that members opposite continue to try and act as a screen for the absolute abject poverty of initiative on the part of the present Federal Government to deal with the crisis in western agriculture.

Members opposite even refused to grant our Minister of Agriculture a pair so he could go to a conference of Agriculture Ministers in Victoria and demand equity for Manitoba farmers. That's the kind of cooperation our Minister of Agriculture has received from members opposite.

Madam Speaker, Ministers of Agriculture in Western Canada had one mind about the crisis, a determination to demand that the Federal Government change its policy, and what is that policy? The honourable members will not even criticize that policy. They know what the policy is; downsize the number of farmers in Western Canada, push them out of the system. That's the policy, and I have yet to hear one member on that side of the Chamber stand up and say that policy is wrong.

Madam Speaker, what we have is a party, is a group who are prepared at any cost to continue to support policies designed in Ottawa that are callous and cruel, that are based on the fact that we're going to have to go through a rough period. There's going to have to be a number of farmers who are wiped out in Western Canada, but tough luck; that's what's going to have to happen. A Federal Government that says, look, when a bank is in trouble, we've got the money; when oil companies are in trouble, we've got the money; but when farmers in Western Canada are facing a crisis, we haven't got the money.

That's been the position of the Federal Government in Ottawa, and I've yet to hear the Honourable Member for Pembina and the Honourable Member for Virden or the Honourable Member for Morris stand up and say I disagree with the decisions of the Federal Government that have taken an attitude that they're going to downsize western agriculture. They're going

to let western agriculture suffer the crisis that is occurring because their friend, the friend of the Conservative Party in Canada, Ronald Reagan, has decided to downsize world grain prices. That's the situation.

He's decided that the real enemy is no longer the Soviet Union; it's the Democrats in the grain producing areas of the United States. That's the callous, political force that is at work in the world. That's the callous political force that is playing with the lives and the destinies of farmers in Western Canada and honourable members opposite don't speak out against that. Madam Speaker, I would expect that honourable members opposite, when they heard that eloquent invitation from my colleague, the Member for Lac du Bonnet, that for once, just for once, let us agree to call upon the Federal Government, to exercise their prerogative, their right, force the parties to get back together and talk about resolving the issue that has separated them, and ask the Federal Government to play fair with Western Canadian agriculture.

That is the message. Surely, the Federal Government should be prepared to do that, but honourable members opposite continue to play politics. Up until today, they had no concerns. I have been in this House and sat through day after day after day when there were no questions about the plight of Western Canadian agriculture, no concerns about the plight of Manitoba farmers, not at all.

Madam Speaker, it is obvious that the members opposite are not prepared to use the political force they have, because the Members of Parliament for their party come from their areas. They can talk to them. The Honourable Member for Arthur can talk to the Honourable Minister who is responsible for the Wheat Board, and say, for goodness sakes, look, my constituents are in trouble; we need help; we need money; we need a government in Ottawa that's prepared to spend money in Western Canada; not just in Quebec where we have seen a Prime Minister say, well, I have to spend this kind of money in my riding - \$150 million, Madam Speaker, and the concerns about regional disparity, they're real. Western Canadian agriculture is in peril. According to the reports, there's a probability of 11,000 farmers. Well, I see honourable members smiling; they find this funny. I remember honourable members opposite, last year, laughing when the former Member for Ste. Rose described the plight of farmers in the United States, farmers who were committing suicide at a very, very horrible rate and members opposite were laughing then. They thought it was funny, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina on a point of order.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I object strongly to the Minister of Labour's last statement that members on this side of the House were laughing about the plight of farmers in the United States and their committing suicide. That is not a truthful statement; it is a misleading, incorrect, untrue statement, typical of the Minister of Labour. I object to it; I want him to withdraw that statement, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

The Honourable Minister of Labour has one minute remaining.

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, the crisis that has existed in agriculture in North America has not come upon us in the last two days. The crisis in agriculture has been developing for years and we've had in office in Ottawa . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Did the honourable member have anything that he wanted to say on his feet?

MR. D. ORCHARD: Madam Speaker, on the point of order. I indicated to you that I was offended by the remark, personally offended by the remark of the Minister of Labour. I recall an incident Tuesday, Madam Speaker, where the Member for Kildonan was personally offended by a remark of a member of the Opposition. And, Madam Speaker, on Tuesday you insisted that remark be withdrawn; today you didn't.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. M. DOLIN: On the same point of order. There is a very distinct difference between the two circumstances, as the Member for Pembina well knows.

One is a dispute about facts which the Honourable Minister has stated his position; the honourable member has stated his position. They are disputing the factual matters where the calling of a name that imputes, that reflects upon a member, is a totally different circumstance. Madam Speaker, this is a dispute about facts; you have made a ruling.

I would also suggest that I think the Honourable Member for Pembina is reflecting on the Chair, and I would suggest that is unparliamentary and that he should withdraw that and accept the ruling of the Speaker.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Madam Speaker, on this same point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: I have made a ruling on the point of order. Is the honourable member criticizing my ruling?

MR. D. ORCHARD: Madam Speaker, I am simply responding to the point of order raised by the Member for Kildonan.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Madam Speaker, there is no distinction between the ruling on Tuesday afternoon of this week and now. I am personally offended at being included, as the Minister of Labour included all members on this side of the House, as being part of a group who laughed at the plight of American farmers. I was not part of that group; I don't know of any member

on this side of the House that laughed at the plight of American farmers last year.

I am personally offended at being included in that and I want the Minister to withdraw that allegation because I was not part of his accusation. That is the personal offence I take and I would prefer you, as you did on Tuesday, to rightfully ask him to withdraw that offensive remark against me personally, because I did not laugh at the plight of American farmers last year. I am personally offended that the Minister of Labour would make that accusation of me.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I, as well, was present at the time the member referred to, in the House in that debate, and I was not laughing at any time at the plight of American farmers committing suicide.

I would ask, Madam Speaker, that unless he is asked to withdraw that broad generalization, he at least be asked to name which members he accuses of laughing at the plight of American farmers who are committing suicide. I believe that it is our right to ask for him to either name the member or withdraw.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. A. MACKLING: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the fact there may or may not have been members in the House now when I rose in my place during the course of the speech from my former colleague, the Member for Ste. Rose, when there was a general laughing attitude that was being exhibited during the course of my former colleague's speech. I rose on a point of order. I was hurt and troubled by that laughter.

I recall that when I made the point of order, there was some concern opposite and there was some indication - they excused themselves in a way that indicated they didn't intend to laugh at the subject matter. If the honourable members are now offended by it, are now offended by that reference, I withdraw that.

Madam Speaker, I know that honourable members want to continue in debate and I won't prolong the debate. The point that I want to make, Madam Speaker, and it is clearly this, that the Federal Government has within its jurisdiction the authority to ensure that the parties are brought together quickly to endeavour to resolve this matter. This isn't an occasion to attack organized labour. This is an occasion when the parties in this House should stand together, demanding that Ottawa, that has responsibility, exercise that responsibility, bring the parties together to resolve the dispute and furthermore, once having resolved that dispute, resolve the real crisis in western agriculture. Because with this crisis, with the kind of money that is going to be received by western farmers, including Manitoba farmers, there will still be no salvation for western farmers. There will still be thousands of farmers who will be forced off the land. What is needed today is a common will in this Chamber to demand fairness from the Federal Government. That is what I ask, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to speak on this very important topic but, as usual, I rise with mixed feelings because while the last few phrases of the Minister responsible for the Telephone System talked about the need for a common will, that has not been the theme of this afternoon's discussions. What has been the theme? Oh, words like dummy and stupid and fool and puffery, and we hear those words going back and forth across this room, and we ask what do they contribute?

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet on a point of order.

MR. C. BAKER: I'm sure the honourable lady never heard me use those words. I don't like a blanket covering all the people who spoke because I never used those words. The situation is too grave for me to use those words.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Madam Speaker, I did not make reference to any individual saying those. I said those words flew around this House and I think that everyone will agree that they have flown around this House this afternoon.

What we have failed to do is to try and come up with that common will, that desire to approach this problem which faces our farmers - and those farmers belong to that side and to this side - with a common purpose. But could we have done differently in approaching this situation? We know of telexes which have been sent by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and by the Honourable Minister of Transportation, but did they ever approach the critic or the leader or myself to send them with common purpose so that we could represent a Manitoba position to the government in Ottawa? Why was that not considered as a possibility?

I believe the government cares about the farmers and I believe that the Opposition cares about the farmers. I certainly care about the farmers. Our farmers have been through, in the last few years, perhaps the greatest crisis that they have had to face outside of the great depression. If they had not been through drought, they had grasshoppers. Now they are faced with devastatingly low prices, which had nothing to do with their making and nothing to do with the government's making and nothing to do with the Opposition's making. It has to do with the foreign markets and primarily determined by the United States and the European Common Market. Our farmers are suffering and we must speak on this issue with commonality of purpose and commonality of voice.

We fight about whether it is a strike or whether it was a lockout, which happened first. Does it matter? What matters is that the grain is not being loaded onto ships. That is the issue, and what does that mean for the future of agriculture in this province and across the west? It will mean, Madam Speaker, major damage, because what we are in danger of losing yet once again is those export markets. Our reliability to service those export markets is absolutely paramount. We know that

we are facing very stiff competition from south of the border. They will undersell us every single opportunity that they can get and if we don't meet those export markets today and tomorrow and next week, then the Americans will, and we will lose that market into the future and then we will not have the opportunity to meet the grain sales of the future.

Madam Speaker, 78 percent of Manitoba's population understands that our farmers are in difficulty - 78 percent. It is an issue upon which we can all unite. Let us, instead of making comments about one another, let us instead of arguing as to whether it is the Federal Government's political stripe which is causing them to neglect the farmer - why do we continue to ask this side, the Opposition, why their party in Ottawa fails to respond? They weren't elected to the Federal House; they were elected to the Provincial House and they are trying to stand up and speak for Manitoba farmers just as are those on the other side.

Madam Speaker, if we can come to some commonality of idea, let it be that our farmers are in difficulty. Let it be that we want conciliation to take place. I would like to see a further resolution legislating the workers back to work until such time as the conciliation report is tabled and then, hopefully, they will remain with satisfactory terms. We probably cannot get the government to agree to that, but we can surely present a united front by telling the Government of Canada that all Manitobans want this problem solved and we want it solved now.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: I see, Madam Speaker, that the Minister of Agriculture wants to have the last word. Madam Speaker, I don't think that his last word will be any different than his other words throughout the question period on the issue, so I am quite prepared to give him the last word.

Madam Speaker, I begin by saying that in entering this debate, I don't intend to reach the high pitch of frenzy and desperation that the Premier reached in his remarks, or that the Minister of Labour did in his remarks, or many members opposite did in their remarks on this issue. That flurry of fed bashing that we've been having from members opposite all afternoon hasn't added anything of substance or value to this debate here this afternoon.

Madam Speaker, I take exception to members such as the Member for Dauphin saying that this is the first time we've shown interest in agriculture also, nor the Member for St. James saying the same thing. Madam Speaker, I know that any reference to Hansard will see the hours and hours and hours that were put into debate on the Estimates of the Minister of Agriculture throughout the course of this Session, probably more hours that have been put in on that matter and on Bill 4 than almost any other issue that we've covered.

Madam Speaker, in the last few weeks, I find it absolutely incredible that the Minister responsible for the Telephone System should choose to criticize us because we haven't spent sufficient time in question period in the last few weeks, when it has been his gross incompetence that has blown everything else off the

agenda in this Chamber over the MTX scandal that he has presided over, and that has been the reason why members on this side have not been able to get in questions on agriculture, because his gross mismanagement has wiped everything else right off the agenda.

Madam Speaker, in talking about this issue, I think that members opposite have totally missed the point, because the issue and the concern that has been raised has to do with the fact that for months and months and months, probably than even more than the past year, members opposite have been talking about agriculture in crisis, have been mouthing the words of concern, saying that there is such a big problem in agriculture and something has got to be done about it, except that the only reason they have been doing it - the Minister of Agriculture and the Premier and others - has been as an opportunity to bash the feds.

Now when we see an opportunity for them to do something substantive, something very, very important which wouldn't cost them a dime, they won't make a move on this matter, Madam Speaker. They won't even lend their voice of support in any way to the farmers of Manitoba. Madam Speaker, what hypocrisy! The Premier can march with the strikers at Gainers, workers in a different province, he can march with them, but he won't stand up for the farmers of Manitoba with respect to this issue, the dispute of the grain handlers.

Madam Speaker, indeed there is a crisis in agriculture in Manitoba, as there is right throughout the West. Madam Speaker, the crisis has to do with the fact that farmers have suffered from the cost-price squeeze, have seen world markets shrinking, both in volume and in value for their grain over a period of time, while their own costs continue to rise. They have been pushed to the brink in so many different ways, and now, even though world prices are depressed and the price on their commodities are so depressed, now what's happened is they have the potential for a bumper crop and that potential is the only thing that may keep their heads above water for yet another year, but the big flaw in the whole game right now is that they may not be able to move that product to market.

So despite the fact that they have one possibility of keeping their heads above water this year, their grain may not be able to be moved to market because of the blockage in the grain handling system over the grain handlers' dispute. That, Madam Speaker, is a crisis upon a crisis, and yet these people opposite say that isn't a problem for us, it's a problem for Ottawa. They won't stand up for the farmers and agree to the fact that we must have, if necessary, back-to-work legislation, and as soon as it's needed, put through, in order to ensure that the grain can get to market; the only method that we have of assuring the farmers that this year they might be able to keep their head above water, and yet these members opposite will not go with it. I find it incredible.

The Member for Dauphin says that because we are supporting the farmer-owned cooperatives, the pools, and the UGG and those organizations supporting them now, he says that we are supporting the lockout. But what hypocrisy that he should suggest that because of our support for those pool companies, those cooperative companies, Madam Speaker, what hypocrisy, because he suggests that we are supporting

those grain companies that are producer-owned, the farmers, in their desire to have their product get to market, that we're supporting the lockout.

Well, Madam Speaker, then by comparison, because their Premier supported the Gainers people on the picket lines, he's supporting the strike, and when they tore up their Eatons cards, they were supporting a strike and that's exactly the parallel. Madam Speaker, that's the stupidity of what they're saying. They will support strikes, but they say that it's wrong for us to support the pool companies and the farmers who own those pool companies in wanting to have their grain go to market. Well, Madam Speaker, they have no idea what the issue is.

Madam Speaker, they say that we ought to be working together to solve the problem, but the Minister responsible for the Telephone System's idea of working together is to work to solve the problem of world prices, when the problem today, the crisis today is to get the grain to market so we can sell our grain. Let's work together to solve that. We can work together later to work on world prices. We can work together - (Interjection)-

Well, Madam Speaker, the Member for The Pas says call in the army. He'd rather call in the army than he would to settle the strike and the dispute at Thunder Bay, that's absolutely incredible. I don't know where his head is at, but I tell you it's typical of every member on that side. They totally want to ignore the problem and they want to talk about working on long-range issues, but they will not work cooperatively to solve the grain handlers' strike and to enter into support for back-to-work legislation if it's necessary, in order to ensure that our farmers survive, because the crisis is now, the problem is now, and the need for survival is now and the need for cooperation is now - not later, but now.

Let these members put their money where their mouth is and enter into cooperative agreement with Ottawa to support the legislation that may be necessary in order to settle this strike now. Madam Speaker, that's what the issue is and it doesn't matter whether they see this as a wonderful opportunity for a fedbashing, let's let them show the farmers of Manitoba that they really want to support them. They said that they would stand up for Manitoba during the election campaign; this is the first chance they've had to stand up for the farmers of Manitoba and they're failing miserably, Madam Speaker.

So, Madam Speaker, let members opposite get off this opportunity to fed-bash, get off this opportunity to bash the banks and everybody else, the big corporations, because that's not the issue. It's the farmers today who are earning less than one-third of what the grain handlers are earning, who want desperately to survive today. Let this Minister responsible for the Telephone System, who is yelping from his seat, get his act together and start acting like a Minister of Labour, instead of a lackey for the unions, and start supporting the farmers of this province.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, I will be very brief.

Madam Speaker, I have never seen a more desperate group than I have seen members on the other side today. Madam Speaker, what is the issue? Here we are, we're trying to manufacture an issue that is out there, that in the next couple of days -(Interjection)- Manufacture, an issue. Madam Speaker, what is the situation? The entire grain system is plugged; the Lakehead is plugged. Downstream ports are filled so that any commitments we have in the next while should be able to be met. I say in the next while, and I preface my remarks in that vein.

Madam Speaker, instead of trying to get both parties to the table and really in fact asking the Federal Government to live up to its responsibility for agriculture, we have a bunch of apologists on the other side. A bunch of apologists.

But what is the issue? The lonely Liberal member in this House, did she send a telex to her own leader to ask them what their position was, Madam Speaker? No, she didn't.- (Interjection)- We don't know; I'm not sure. Madam Speaker, I'm not sure whether she did.

Madam Speaker, why are members opposite wanting to divert attention from their federal colleagues? Madam Speaker, they are embarrassed and ashamed because of their Prime Minister. They are ashamed and totally cannot comprehend why the Prime Minister, first of all, hires Dalton Camp to try and get the party out of difficulty, appoints a new group of Quebec Ministers to bolster their power base in Quebec because they're sagging, taking Western Canada for granted. His sole issue is a new constitutional accord with Quebec. What's going on?

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order please.

HON. B. URUSKI: They are so sensitive about the lack of action at the national level by the Prime Minister in terms of Western Canadian interest, they will do anything to try and deflect any criticism of them. Madam Speaker, even their own Members of Parliament for Manitoba, the Member of Parliament from Dauphin-Swan River, is pleading with this Federal Government, saying please help Western Canadian farmers; you cannot leave them alone. Western Canadian MP's are begging for action and what is the Prime Minister doing? Nothing. One hundred and fifty million for Quebec, for his own riding; western farmers, you wait.

Madam Speaker, the Federal Minister of Agriculture from Ottawa says if we're going to give western farmers aid, 50 percent has to come from the provinces. That's the federal position for Western Canada.

Madam Speaker, Canadians threw out a corrupt Liberal administration. They had enough of the insensitivity toward agriculture in this country. They thought that there would be a new deal for Western Canada and for agriculture in this country. Madam Speaker, we do not have a new deal. The ghost of Diefenbaker is dead. Western agriculture has been forgotten by the Conservatives in Ottawa and here are their apologists. Offloading onto agriculture - everything that the Federal Government has done has to be offloaded onto the provinces.

Madam Speaker, I want to go back in history. For the record, we had a strike in 1981 when the Member for Arthur was Minister of Agriculture in this province. We searched high and low through all the press clippings in September of '81 during that strike. We found not one word from the Minister of Agriculture, from any Minister in that government saying let's get those strikers back to work. Not one word, Madam Speaker.

I challenge those members to come up with clippings saying, yes, we spoke out on behalf of farmers. Madam Speaker, not a word. A strike in Thunder Bay. Not a word from you people.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry on a point of order?

MR. C. BIRT: Yes, on a point of order. I wonder if the Minister of Agriculture would advise the House when he found out that the debate was going to take place this afternoon, and how long he's been searching the records?

MADAM SPEAKER: The honourable member does not have a point of order. If he wants to ask the honourable member a question at the end, he can ask the honourable member a question at the end.

HON. B. URUSKI: Madam Speaker, we have a research staff in caucus and we asked the research staff to pull every clipping -(Interjection)- When? How much time? Madam Speaker, the clippings came in after the debate started. When the debate started, we asked them to pull all the clippings.

Not only that, we went back to Hansard, into 1980. We went back to Hansard, Madam Speaker, and the former Minister of Transportation, during the embargo debate, he was asked by my colleague, the former Member for Lac du Bonnet, and I want to quote from that, of July 14, 1980. "I wonder whether he can enlighten us on whether his government is prepared to pressure the Canadian Government in order to recover any damages to Canadian farmers as a result of the embargo and, in particular, would he take up the case of Jack Murta, who says he lost \$30,000 because of the Russian Embargo?"

Madam Speaker, the former Minister of Agriculture, the Member for Pembina's response: "Mr. Speaker, from time to time, people in the free world make sacrifices and I submit that Mr. Murta, if he did lose \$30,000 because of a grain embargo, as the Member for Lac du Bonnet indicates, his government supported, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that that is the supreme sacrifice that any freedom fighter can make in the preservation for democracy."

Madam Speaker, is the Government of Canada, the Conservative Government of Canada, now going to say in the fight for freedom, we will put up \$1 billion and more to Western Canada so that their incomes are protected. If it was the Member for Pembina stating: No, take your chances, gentlemen; you lost on the free market; take your chances. That would be his position, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, they have apologized for the Federal Government throughout this entire Session, rather than supporting the farmers. Yet, they will go around and

Thursday, 4 September, 1986

say, we fought for you. Madam Speaker, they will go around and say, look how times are tough; banks are foreclosing on you. They will not support meaningful legislation to try and keep farmers on the land, Madam Speaker. That is a shallow position, political opportunism if I ever saw it with no substance or actions behind their words, Madam Speaker. That's the members opposite.

But I want to say they were shocked today, Madam Speaker, that we, by leave, accepted their resolution, because that is how shallow their proposition was. They thought and they knew that this issue is out of our hands. It's really in the federal domain. But it was by leave that we accepted this resolution and that's why

it is debated today. That's how shallow their position is in this respect. Political opportunism, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The hour being 5:30 - the Honourable Member for Lakeside on a point of order?

MR. H. ENNS: No, I wish to be recognized in the debate, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The hour being 5:30, I am leaving the Chair, and will return at 8:00 p.m., at which time the debate will stand in the name of the Honourable Member for Lakeside.