

*Oral Questions***RAILWAYS****CROWSNEST PASS RATE—RESOLUTIONS OF LEGISLATURES  
OPPOSING PROPOSED CHANGES**

**Mr. Laverne Lewycky (Dauphin):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Is he aware that the Manitoba legislature unanimously passed a resolution on March 15, 1983, rejecting the Pepin proposal, and is he also aware that this resolution concurs with that of the Saskatchewan legislature which was also unanimously passed on February 22, 1983? How can he possibly interpret this as being a consensus in the West, which the Prime Minister said he would have to have before moving on the Crow rate?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, I am very much aware of that and many other things as well.

**JUSTIFICATION FOR MINISTER'S POSITION**

**Mr. Laverne Lewycky (Dauphin):** Madam Speaker, if the Minister is so aware of it, does he feel it is morally right for him to determine what is most beneficial for the farmers of the West when he is only supported by MPs from eastern Canada? Can he justify this unilateral action with the type of attitude he has displayed that is akin to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, since the Soviets determined what was beneficial for Afghanistan? How can he justify this hammer and sickle approach to the farmers of western Canada?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, I knew I was going to be asked a supplementary question and be given a chance to explain what I meant by my cryptic answer. What I meant by my cryptic answer was that at this moment in the West and the East, many people, groups and associations of all kinds, are in a bargaining position. They are bargaining.

I am sorry that I do not have the quotation from the Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan who said recently, on stating these nine points referred to, "When I negotiate with the feds, I do not show all of my cards." My point is that people are putting forward extreme positions. The nine points expressed in Saskatchewan were one of those extreme positions. In the next breath, the press conference that follows the announcement of those points usually shows more willingness to compromise than was shown in the first statement. That is what I meant.

**RAIL LINE ABANDONMENT POLICY**

**Mr. Laverne Lewycky (Dauphin):** Madam Speaker, the Minister is obviously aware of the falling prices that farmers are experiencing. How can he justify what I would call harassment of the western farmers, since he is giving them a double whammy? How can he justify contemplating the abolishment of the Crow rate while at the same time continuing the abolishment of rail lines under the rail line abandonment policy that his Government has been following? How can

he possibly justify that double whammy action against the farmers of western Canada?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, with respect to the abandonment of branch lines, I believe the record should be well known. Of the branch line system we had in the 1930s, we still have 88 per cent in place with all the technological changes that have taken place since then. If there is one thing that Governments in the history of Canada should not be accused of, it is of having deliberately presided over the destruction of the branch line system. I repeat that 88 per cent of it is still in place.

On the subject of losses that would be incurred by western farmers if the statement that I made on February 1 were implemented while I should not say everyone, since some have more respect for the truth—many have said that there would be tremendous losses to the Saskatchewan farmers, for example, of possibly \$1 billion. They usually forget to mention that there would have been a commitment of an average of \$900 million per year on the part of the federal Government alone for the continuation of this operation. Also, they have neglected to mention that there would have been an investment of \$16.5 billion over the decade by the railways. These are small points that are usually not brought up by those who take the negative approach to the statement I made on February 1.

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● (1425)

**FINANCE****INCOME SECURITY INVESTMENT PLAN**

**Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South):** Madam Speaker, my question, I suppose, is for the Minister of State for Finance in the absence of the Minister of Finance and of the Minister of State for Economic Development. The Minister of State will know that the Income Security Investment Plan protects those who invest in the stock market against inflationary gains. Would the Minister advise us why only the big and the powerful are protected, and why those who invest in small business do not have the same advantages and fairness given to the big companies which have their stocks listed on the market?

**Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of State (Finance)):** Madam Speaker, I would draw to the Hon. Member's attention, if indeed in seriousness I had to, the other provisions of the special recovery tax provisions of the budget that offer, for example, tax relief to small business people. The share purchase provision of that special recovery tax feature of the budget permits Canadians, both small and large investors, to invest in small and large companies in Canada. They get the advantage of a 25 per cent reduction on the amount of their share purchase. In addition, that will assist both small and larger companies to grow. This advantage is generally available right across the spectrum to small investors and to small and large companies.