

*Western Canada Drought*

Assiniboia is a gregarious, happy-go-lucky, good Member of Parliament who understands and knows farming very well.

**Mr. Foster:** On division.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Nystrom:** I am sure his report was a lot better than what the farmers of western Canada received in drought assistance. I see him nodding his head in the affirmative.

**Mr. Gustafson:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I just want to clarify that I was nodding very affirmatively that the task force recommendations were followed. The Government did respond affirmatively to the recommendations.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I regret to tell the Hon. Member that that is not a point of order.

**Mr. Nystrom:** Mr. Speaker, on another supplementary point of order, maybe he could tell us why the task force report was not tabled. What is the Government trying to hide? I have been here a while, Mr. Speaker, and I have seen great Members of Parliament like Ged Baldwin, Walter Baker and others campaign for years for freedom of information in the House. They talked about how secretive those terrible Liberals were. The Hon. Member remembers that. He was voting Liberal in those days. My friend from St. Catharines agrees that they campaigned hard for openness, freedom of information, and for access for the public to what goes on in the Government. In fact, when Joe Clark was Prime Minister of the country he tried to change some of that. He brought in a Bill for more freedom of information. Yet, with the new Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) from Baie Comeau in office it is more of the old Liberal Trudeau-style of government.

• (1720)

**Mr. Boudria:** Whoa, whoa, whoa.

**Mr. Nystrom:** Somebody says: "Whoa, whoa, whoa". I ask you, what is the difference? They are probably even worse. At least the Liberals did not promise freedom of information and more openness in government. The Conservative Party promised that. I am sure that Ged Baldwin, a very distinguished member of the Conservative Party, as he watches this place now, must be upset to see that his Party will not even make public a report made by the very distinguished Member for Assiniboia. The people of the country have a right to know. They have spent thousands and thousands of dollars helping the Member for Assiniboia prepare that report. I think they have a right to know what is in it. If they do not have the right to know what is in that report, why did the Party across the way campaign so hard for openness and freedom of information? It is no wonder, when the Government breaks promise after promise, that it is falling faster in the polls than any Government in this country has fallen since the Gallup poll first started many years ago.

**Mr. Towers:** You went down four points yourself in the last poll. Don't talk about polls.

**Mr. Nystrom:** The last poll issued on the weekend showed that the New Democratic Party is at 24 per cent, which is up 5 per cent from the last election campaign. The Conservative Party is at 38 per cent, which is down 12 from the last election campaign. I do not mind that kind of mathematics. Unfortunately, the Liberal Party is going up as well.

**Mr. Foster:** What do you mean by "unfortunately"?

**Mr. Nystrom:** One reason for this shift away from the Government is that it is breaking its promises. When you stand for something in opposition you should make sure to bring it in once you are in government. I am really surprised that an Hon. Member like the Member for Assiniboia, who is a progressive red Tory, a positive Tory, would stand for the Prime Minister of the country not making his report public when he stood for freedom of information in opposition. I am really surprised. I know that he must be embarrassed by this kind of secrecy by the boy from Baie Comeau who seems to be so afraid of making things public. It is time for members of the Conservative Party from Saskatchewan to get up on their hind legs and show some leadership and courage—

**Mr. Gormley:** We have been for years.

**Mr. Nystrom:**—and insist that this report be made public. My friend, the Member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake (Mr. Gormley), is an outspoken man. Perhaps he will get up in a few minutes and insist that this report be made public. His constituents have the right to know what is in that report. His constituents have a right to know whether or not the Prime Minister followed the advice of the Member for Assiniboia. Perhaps I am defending the Member for Assiniboia a little too much, but I think that he, too, after doing the work, has the right to have his report made public. That is all we are asking for in the House today. That is not too radical.

I understand that the Member for Assiniboia made a number of recommendations in his report which were not listened to, but I do not know that. I do know that about \$150 million was or is being made available to farmers through drought assistance. About one-half of that, approximately \$70 million, is in the Province of Saskatchewan. In the fall there was an initial payment of \$39.8 million. A second payment of \$29.9 million is now being made.

In my province approximately 40 per cent of the wheat-growing area is designated as being able to benefit from this special drought assistance. There is an argument that that is not enough, that the Government was too severe. A lot of farmers that had problems with drought are not receiving payments, and other farmers who had drought assistance are receiving payments. My understanding is that the average pay-out per acre is \$6.88. If that is not correct, perhaps the Member for Assiniboia can put some facts on the record. The average pay-out per farmer is approximately \$3,800.