

This interim payment, along with strengthening grain prices, is a reason for optimism among western grain producers, although unfavourable weather conditions have prevailed since last fall.

The lack of spring runoff is particularly evident throughout most of central Saskatchewan, and could be crucial to livestock producers, as a continued shortage of water on grazing land could require the movement of large numbers of livestock.

Hope does spring eternal from the human breast, and Saskatchewan people realize only too well that, although we are dependent on the weather, we have never lost a crop in April, and particularly one that is yet to be planted.

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CHILD CARE

CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, along with many Members of the House I had the opportunity, earlier today, to meet with the members of the Child Care Advocacy Association, the representatives of which were on the Hill today to talk to Members of Parliament. In addition to the sympathy that I would normally provide to such a group, I have a special interest in that I, too, have a child in day care. As well, I am a member of the board of a child care institution.

An Hon. Member: A conflict of interest!

Mr. Axworthy: In terms of sympathy for the concern expressed by the Child Care Advocacy Association, I felt that I was on their side of the table. The concern, of course, is that the present proposals on child care are totally inadequate to meet the need. There is no more vital responsibility on any parent than the handing over of the care of one's child to another person for six or seven hours of the day. That is a function that demands the best of care, the best of facilities, and the best of education.

Given the low wages in the child care field, and the sometimes spurious conditions under which child care is offered in this country, we must do much better than we are doing now, and much better than is proposed.

I stand today in the House not only to support the case made this morning by those very strong and very eloquent advocates of child care in this country, but to say that it is time that we went back to the drawing board for the purpose of coming up with a much more effective child care program than that which is being offered by the Government today.

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FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

ASIA-PACIFIC INITIATIVE—PARTICIPATION OF FEDERAL AND BRITISH COLUMBIA GOVERNMENTS

Mrs. Mary Collins (Capilano): Mr. Speaker, if one relied only on the media, one might think that the federal Government and the Government of British Columbia engage more in confrontation rather than co-operation. In fact, the opposite is true. A shining example is the Asia-Pacific Initiative, jointly established and funded by both levels of government and chaired by a Minister from each Government, and involving over 100 volunteers on its various committees.

The Asia-Pacific Initiative is working on proposals to make British Columbia flourish as a Pacific centre for trade, commerce and travel. One proposal already announced is a business and environment conference and trade show, to be held in Vancouver in March, 1990. This conference will contribute to establishing British Columbia as a world-class environmental centre of excellence.

Last Friday the Pacific Council of Ministers, a unique council composed of Ministers from both levels of government, announced agreement to work toward the transfer of the management and development of the Vancouver International Airport to a local authority.

It is this kind of co-operation between the two Governments which will ensure promotion of economic opportunities for British Columbia, and a bright future for all British Columbians.

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THE ECONOMY

INTEREST RATES—EXCHANGE VALUE OF DOLLAR—EFFECT ON FARM EXPORTS

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, this Government's persistent policy of high interest rates is hurting people in rural Canada. The Government says that it has to strengthen the dollar and increase interest rates. Yet, this is a policy which creates great problems in respect of farm products that are exported, at least those exported from my part of the country. These products are sold on the basis of American dollars, and as we strengthen our dollar the value of those exports drops.

High interest rates, together with the lower value of the product, force land prices down.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) says that his policies are aimed at fighting inflation. Yet, in my region of the country, in the last four years, land prices have decreased to approximately half of what they were when this Government took power.