

*Transportation*

system rather than developing it? I do not think it matters whether the CPR is financed privately or in any other way. What is important is that we get the grain moving. I suggest that the minister ignore those stupid comments from the NDP.

If I were to quote the Premier of Saskatchewan or the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan), I would find a very contradictory situation. Let me quote from a speech by the Minister of Agriculture at the Hotel Beauséjour in Moncton, New Brunswick, on February 9, 1982. He said:

They show that in 1979, farmers' average income from farming was only \$7,744.

Which member of the press or which member of the House could live on that? Who could say that is a fair and reasonable income to support one's family?

Regardless of what the rationale is of the Minister of Transport, I would like him to take that into consideration. Does he realize that the number of permit-book holders has dropped from 210,000 to 140,000? Why? You do not stay in business if you do not make a buck. That message should be passed on to the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen). The government must understand that this country will not survive on charity, or this government's version of benevolence. There is only one way this country will survive. I say to the minister that I do not care who it is, including those on the government side, if there is a buck to be made we will reach for that answer.

● (1620)

I have never in my 24 years as a Member of Parliament apologized for the fact that there was a buck to be made in anything. I thought it was good for the government and I thought it was good for the people of Canada. I will never apologize for telling the government that it must proceed in the direction which shows Canadians that they have an opportunity, a chance and a way out of their dilemma. They will find their own way.

When I look at the statistics which the Minister of Agriculture gave in the committee, I find he told us that the simple reason he was zeroing in was that Saskatchewan had a 25 per cent increase in the value of its land. He thought they were rich. At the same time he made a speech like this to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, which I have quoted from and will not quote again.

I ask the Minister of Transport to rationalize and consider his position. I will send statements to my constituents which indicate that the Premier of Saskatchewan is willing to negotiate. My colleague from Kindersley-Lloydminster (Mr. McKnight) asked an important question in the house because the Premier of Saskatchewan wanted to call a meeting of the federal government and other interested parties and he wanted to know what he was going to negotiate. It is important to know that despite all the depredation that he makes in western Canada now, he was willing to negotiate something. He was either prepared to hand over money or prepared to listen to the Minister of Transport. I would like to know from the minister

or one of his spokesmen what it was that the Premier of Saskatchewan wanted to negotiate. Tell us what he wanted to negotiate.

**Mr. Pepin:** He did not want to negotiate anything at all.

**Mr. Korchinski:** I want to know because I believe it is important since he may be planning to call an election. If the minister has any information which would lead us to believe that he was prepared to offer anything, I would like to know about it. I already know about the previous commitment that the farmers had made through the Wheat Board for the purchase of hopper cars and so on but I would like to know where my premier stands on this issue.

Unfortunately, I have used up my time and must end my remarks but I would like to have a response from the minister or one of his spokesmen. I repeat that I want to know the position of the Premier of Saskatchewan on this issue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** I do not know whether the hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) is standing in order to reply to the suggestion of the hon. member. It would have been the Chair's intention to recognize the hon. minister shortly. However, the proper procedure now is that I will recognize the hon. member for Portage-Marquette (Mr. Mayer).

**Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette):** Mr. Speaker, this truly is a historic and important debate for western Canada. Many of us who come from western Canada realize its importance when we return to our constituencies. Personally, I believe I understand the issue somewhat differently from other people because I grew up and lived most of my life in Saskatchewan and have lived in Manitoba for 15 years. I think I have an understanding about what many of the farmers are thinking in western Canada when they hear the prospect of the Crow rate being changed. Before I discuss that, I would like to discuss what has been said about Premier Blakeney.

In many ways, I am surprised by the reaction of the NDP because according to the statements of the Premier of Saskatchewan in January of this year I would have thought that the NDP would be supporting the proposals of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin). I will tell you why, Mr. Speaker. On November 18, 1981, the Canadian Press reported the Premier of Saskatchewan as saying, "The federal government should clarify its position on the Crow rates for moving grain." He proceeded to make some more statements, and at the end he said, "We clearly can't be asked to commit ourselves until the federal cabinet commits itself."

What the premier is saying there is that the provinces cannot be expected to commit themselves until the federal government does. That is essentially what the minister did in Winnipeg on February 8, and I was present at the press conference which was held by the minister.

On January 10, 1982, while speaking on the CBC public affairs program "The Food Show" on a Sunday morning, the premier said: