A

TORNADO PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

F= MAN

1. DATE AND TIME THUR 25·5·1978 1930 CDT

2. LOCATION OR PATH (attach map)
WINNIPEG (GRANT PARK PLAZA)

3. PATH LENGTH ☑ NOT KNOWN ☐ <1mi; ☐ 1-4mi; ☐ 5-10mi; ☐ 11-50mi; ☐ LENGTH IF>50mi

4. PATH WIDTH U 5. TORNADO PART OF SQUALL LINE? ☑ YES; ☐ NO; ☐ UNKNOWN:

6. ANY UNUSUAL COLORATION? ☐ YES; ☐ NO; ☑ UNKNOWN

7. ANY UNUSUAL SOUND? ☐ YES; ☐ NO; ☑ UNKNOWN

8. IF ANSWER TO 6 OR 7 YES, ELABORATE;

9. LIST ANY ASSOCIATED PHENOMENA (Such as hail, vivid lightning heavy rain, no rain, etc.)
Baseball size hail
51 mm of rain in 6 hours.

10. TOTAL DAMAGE ESTIMATE $ 11. TOTAL DEATHS

12. TOTAL INJURED 13. TOTAL HOMELESS

14. LIST ALL REFERENCES
WINNIPEG TRIBUNE. MAY 26, 1978.

15. SUMMARIZE REMARKS PERTAINING TO (a) FUNNEL; (b) INTERESTING OR CAPRICIOUS EVENTS.

(a) An Air Canada pilot spotted several funnel clouds in the Winnipeg area. Funnel also spotted in the Grant Park Plaza area.

(b)

Vicious city storm wreaks havoc

B1492

By Doug Hallett
Tribune Staff Writer

An investigation may be launched to find out why Winnipeggers weren't warned sooner about Thursday's major storm that dumped baseball-sized hailstones and produced tornado sightings in parts of the city.

The first public warning from the weather office came about 6:50 p.m., about 40 minutes before the storm struck parts of the city, despite a new weather watch service set up last year following two deaths when a tornado touched down in southern Manitoba.

More storm pictures on Page 4

The worst reports of damage involved a plastics manufacturing plant in Fort Garry extensively damaged by a lightning strike, and a school in Transcona that may have suffered tens of thousands of dollars damage to its gymnasium.

But the vicious storm also wreaked havoc by flooding numerous basements, breaking windows in homes and knocking out electrical and telephone service to thousands of homes.

Public forecaster Danny Vandevyvere said the first weather watch was issued after weather service radar picked up "echoes" in the Somerset area and a report of hail in the same area was received by telephone.

He said he didn't know why a warning was not issued sooner, and said an internal investigation would likely be carried out to see why there was no earlier warning. Such an investigation would be done by the Atmospheric Environment Service which runs the airport weather office.

"It appears something was missing in the data we were getting," he said, adding he didn't think human error was respopsible for the late warning.

There were a number of unconfirmed tornado sightings, one of them backed up by a weather office employee who lives near Grant Park Plaza where funnel clouds — which become tornadoes when they touch down — were reported seen. Public forecaster Jack McMorran said the employee knew of a garage that was demolished in the area, presumably by a tornado.

An Air Canada captain flying into Winnipeg at about 10 p.m. was said to have spotted several funnel clouds in the Winnipeg area.

A tornado that touched down near Mandan, N.D., ripped apart one home, took the roof off another and destroyed a mobile home. At least four other tornadoes touched down around the state, uprooting trees and damaging farm equipment.

See STORM, Page 5



Tribune photo by Jim Wiley

A city transit bus plows through hub-deep water on Pembina Highway near Grant Avenue.

Winnipeg Tribune, Man.
Circ. 100,949
May 26, 1978
CANADIAN PRESS CLIPPING SERVICE

Storm in city wreaks havoc

(Continued)

In Winnipeg, clouds shifted and darkened ominously, and at 8.10 p.m. hail started pounding down in downtown Winnipeg. Some boards around the Trizec construction site came loose, and huge cranes swayed in the high winds and rain.

Mr. Vandevyvere said it appeared Winnipeg and the area southwest of the city were hardest hit by the storm. The city received 51 millimeters (about 2¼ inches) of rain between 6 p.m. and midnight, and winds gusted to 70 km/h.

Manitoba Hydro spokesman Earl Mills said incoming reports of downed hydro poles and power lines also indicated Winnipeg was hardest hit, although damage was also reported in the Carman and Elm Creek districts.

Electricity was knocked out in at least 8,000 homes, he said, with the Fort Garry area being hardest hit. About 3,000 Fort Garry homes were also without telephone service for part of the evening.

Mr. Mills said electricity might not have been restored to some Fort Garry homes until dawn today, even though all available workers were busy on repairs.

Downed power lines presented a danger to life that prompted police to warn people to stay off the streets, many of which were flooded or blocked by fallen trees or stalled cars.

Despite the hazards and the violence of the storm, police had no reports of serious injuries or major traffic accidents by early this morning. No serious fires were reported.

Lightning struck the Seaforth Plastics Ltd. plant at 1088 Waverley St. at about 8 p.m., causing extensive damage but no injuries. The evening shift of workers was sent home.

A combination of wind, hail and rain caused extensive damage to the gymnasium and a classroom in the Harold Hatcher School at 500 Redonda Ave. in Transcona. The school board, after an emergency meeting, decided to close the school for today.

Mr. Vandevyvere said there were reports of hailstones the size of baseballs — "hardballs, not softballs" — in Winnipeg, while some communities outside the city reported hail as big as golfballs.

The weather office radar system, located on the airfield at the Winnipeg International Airport, was knocked out of service at about 7 p.m., perhaps after being hit by lightning, he said.

But weather officials were able to use the radar equipment in the air traffic control tower to spot signs of more thunderstorms at the Manitoba border and at Grand Forks, N.D., and on that basis extended the weather warning for most of southeast Manitoba well past midnight.

He said drier air should have replaced the warm moist air mass in Winnipeg by today, and weekend weather should produce temperatures in the low 20s and no further storms.

Vicious city storm wreaks havoc

Winnipeg Tribune
May 26 1978
Storm Date: Thurs
May 25 1978

g Hallett
Pe Staff Writer

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Manitoba Hydro spokesman Earl Mills said several hundred Fort Garry residents were still without power this morning.

The storm apparently caused the most extensive damage in the Fort Garry district, knocking down hydro poles and wires.

Particularly hard hit were residents along Waverley Street at the Perimeter Highway and between Wilkes Avenue and McGillivray Boulevard; and at Pembina Highway and Fort Richmond, Mr. Mills said.

Power was also out today for between 200 and 300 customers at Bissett and Manigotagan, a community on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg. Bad flying weather was preventing patrols from surveying the damage to power lines there, Mr. Mills said.

Winnipeg bore the brunt of the storm. Other areas with minor damage were Garson, Pinawa, Somerset, Carman, the north Whiteshell area and Elm Creek district, Mr. Mills said.

The cost of the damage to hydro will take "days, maybe weeks" to learn, he said.

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Winnipeg Tribune May 26 '77

Storm Date: Thurs. May 25 1977

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Tony Bosko, of 31 Whiteshell Ave., believes a tornado struck Transcona. He was in his ten-foot high, one-ton tent trailer when it was picked up, carried 20 feet and overturned in his back yard.

Down the street a wooden shed was picked up and flung against the chimney of a house, he said. "It (the twister) hit in an area two blocks wide."

Rod McRae, director of city operations, said the worst home flooding appears to have occurred in the area west of McPhillips Street and north of Logan Avenue.

"There were spotty reports in the rest of the city, 10-12 reports of flooding per district. The worst street flooding was in the northwest corner of District 3 and that probably affected the homes. It shows the sewer system was loaded."

Mr. McRae said the flooded area apparently received more rain than other parts of town which contributed to the situation.

Murray Sutherland, tower chief at the airport, said planes were taking off during the storm. "Normal operations weren't restricted as far as we were concerned."

"Unless there is actual damage to airport services, such as flooded runways, we can operate and it is the pilot's prerogative if he wants to take off or not," said the regional manager of air traffic services.



Tribune photo by Jim Wiley

A city transit bus plows through hub-deep water on Pembina Highway near Grant Avenue.

Storm Date: Thurs. May 24 '78

Free Press May 25/78

Weather watch

Manitobans, who watched the severe weather warnings on their television screens this week were witnessing the first efforts of the new weather watch. This department has been established by the weather office in co-operation with the provincial Emergency Measures Organization.

There will be those who will take the opportunity, since the bad weather did not cause severe damage over most of the telecast area, to dismiss the value of this program. But these are likely to be the same people who last year were clamoring for the establishment of just such a service following two deaths caused by a storm.

The southern part of Manitoba received a severe weather warning. U.S. residents to the south received a full-fledged tornado warning.

Manitobans will do well to heed the warnings that are now being broadcast. It is better to take precautions a dozen times when they are not needed than to ignore a warning that comes true.

Weather no-warning

Winn. Free Press May 31/78

The weather watch, instituted for Manitobans this year, undoubtedly is a good thing — as an editorial on this page last week noted. But what good is a weather watch if the warning comes too late for people to do anything about it?

Last Thursday's storm — or storms — that caused much damage to Winnipeg by heavy rain, high winds, golf-ball-sized hailstones and, some reports have it, a couple of small tornadoes — was predicted by the local weather office only when the storm was almost on us.

At 5:50 p.m. a local weather forecaster was talking to a radio station about "cells" around Ashern which were moving north and expected to dissipate during the evening. Other forecasts on radio and TV continued to predict "mostly clear tonight." Even then, the sky in the West was as black as the ace of spades and everyone with half an eye could see what was in store.

The storm struck some areas about 7:30 p.m., but there was no public warning until 40 minutes or so before then. Presumably somebody at the weather office in the meantime had looked out the window and noticed what was happening.

There is an old bridge saying to the effect that a little peek is worth two finesses. So in weather warning, it would appear, a visual sighting is a sight more accurate than all the paraphernalia the weather office uses to reach its too-often inaccurate and late predictions.

Motorists line up to file claims

Winn. Free Press May 31/78

Lineups are still the order of the day at Autopac claim centres as motorists continue to file for compensation after Thursday's hail storm.

The manager of west Winnipeg claim centre says lineups are twice as long as usual, with drivers reporting hail damage to hoods, roofs and fenders as well as broken windshields.

A spokesman for the provincial insurance corporation said all the claim centres are overworked because of the damages, but there are no plans to extend their normal working hours. Of 67 claims reported in the claim centres' first hour of operation the day after the storm, 40 were for hail-related damages, he said.

Officials say they will have a better idea by the end of the week of the total number of claims and dollar damage caused by the storm.

Winnipeg Free Press: Fri. May 26 78 Storm! Thurs. May 25 78

Power interrupted, streets flooded

Widespread damage reported in storm

A brief but violent rainstorm with high winds, hail and lightning caused widespread damage Thursday night in the Winnipeg area.

No serious injuries were reported as a result of the storm, but the Fort Garry area was hard hit with broken hydro poles and power and telephone interruptions which are continuing today.

The public weather forecaster said about 38 millimetres of rain fell on the city during the storm and winds gusted from the south from 56 to 70 kilometres per hour.

Visibility was reduced to near zero in open areas and driving in the city was hazardous because of flooded streets and underpasses.

Manitoba Hydro spokesman Earl Mills said about 8,000 homes were without power during the storm. The main power cuts occurred in Transcona and Fort Garry.

Transcona's power returned by 11 p.m. but 2,500 homes in the Fort Garry area were left without power overnight because of a heavy work load on Hydro crews repairing downed poles and wires.

Several hundred Fort Garry residents were still without power as of 8 a.m. today, despite all available hydro personnel working through the night, Mills said.

Manitoba Telephone System says 3,000 Fort Garry residents were still without telephone service this morning. The other major telephone interruption took place in the Inkster Park area, where 1,500 residents were cut off. All service is expected to be restored by 5 p.m. today.

More than 100 telephone lines were felled by the storm and high winds.

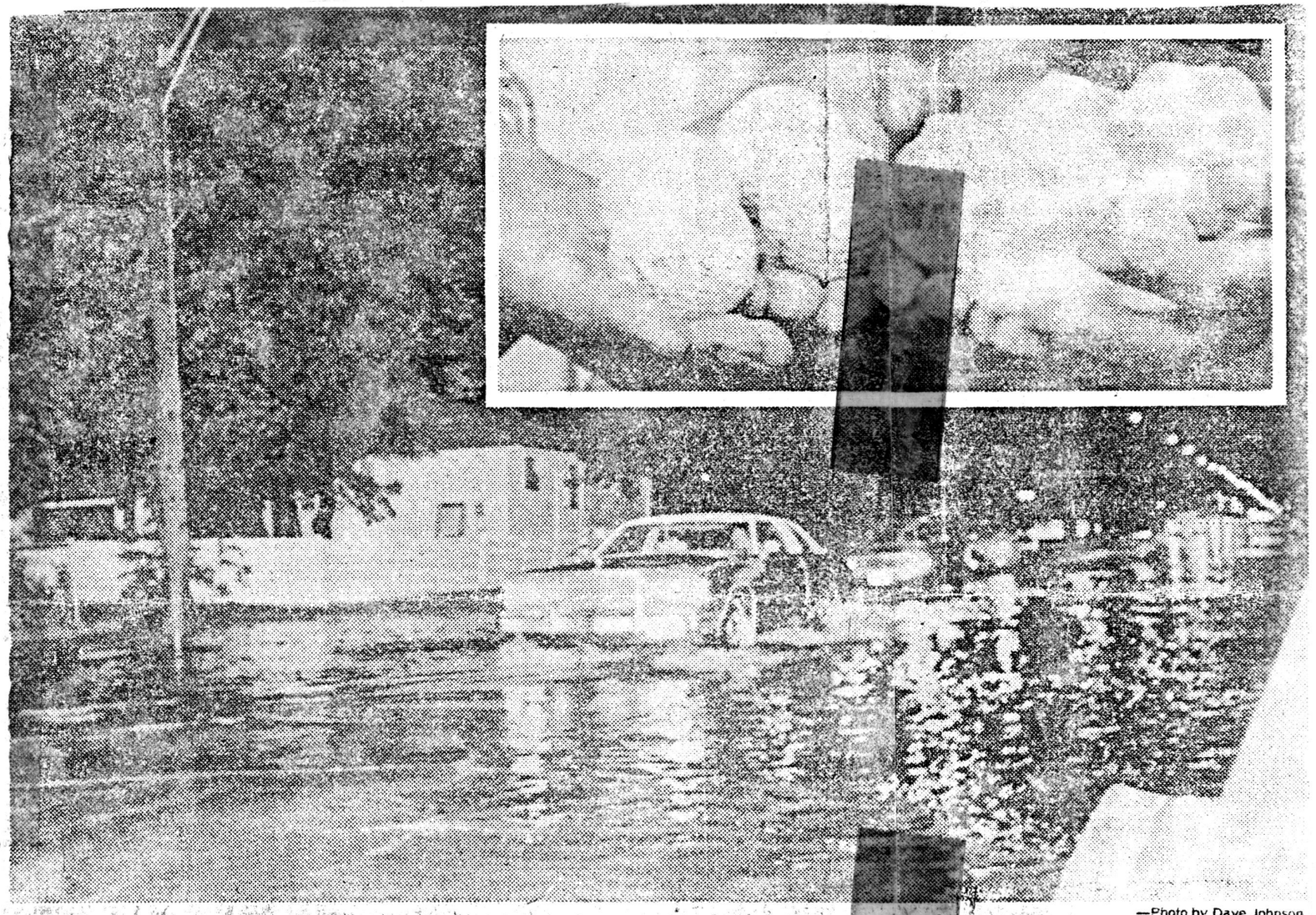
A spokesman for Winnipeg Hydro said several hundred residents lost their power supply for periods ranging up to 75 minutes during the storm. But there were no reports of downed hydro poles or major property damage, he said.

City works and operations officials say the Tyndall Park area west of McPhillips Street and north of the CP Railmainline suffered the most serious damage as a result of Thursday night's storm.

City Engineer Craig Som-

—Continued

Typewriting



—Photo by Dave Johnson

Rain, hail and high winds flooded several city streets Thursday night, including Academy Road between Waverley and Oxford Streets. The magnitude of the storm is illustrated (insel) by a handful of golf balls compared with a fistful of hailstones.

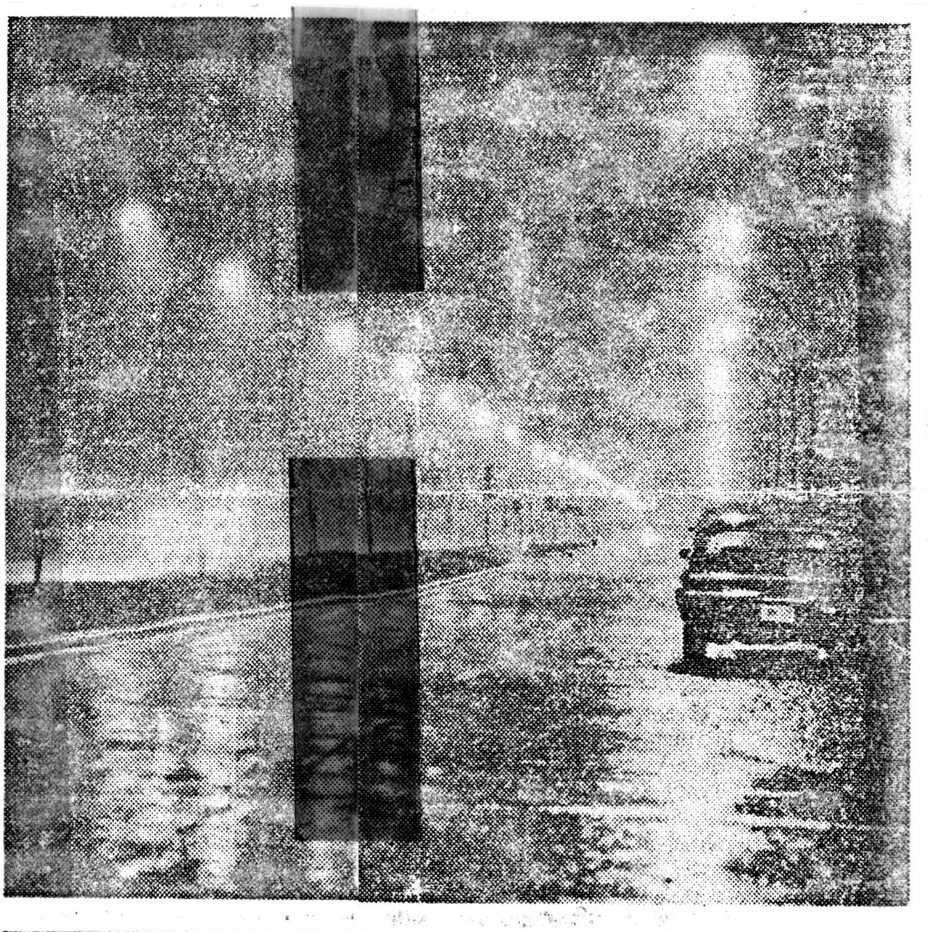
Winnipeg Free Press Fri May 26 78
Storm Date: Thurs May 25 78

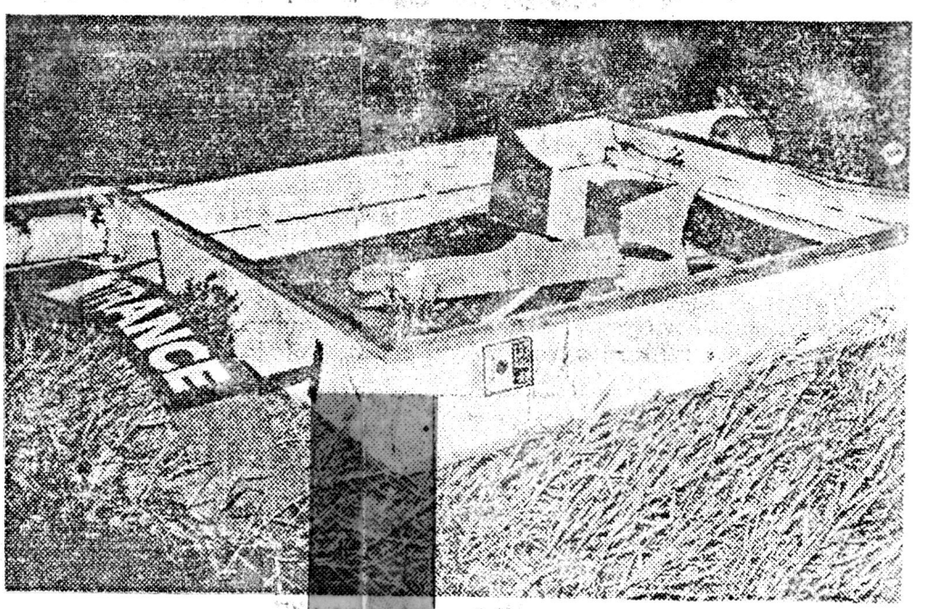
Suddenly the sky turned black, violent



It was unexpected and it was violent. Almost without warning, a raging wind and giant hailstones arrived to batter Winnipeg. The storm didn't abate until early today leaving behind a trail of damage and flooded basements. Most Winnipeggers watched the storm from inside their homes but a few ventured out including city workman Robert Bassington (left) who unplugged a drain on Stradbrook Avenue. Most streets were deserted like Grant Avenue (top right) where the lights were still shining. The wind left a predictable

Winnipeg Free Press: Fri May 26 '78
Storm Date: Thurs May 25 '78





Tribune photos by Jim Wiley

array of debris behind it. Trees were blown down and signs, like one outside a drive-in on Stafford Street (bottom right), lay shattered on the ground. The clean-up today promised to be hard and long for many Winnipeggers.

(over)

Winnipeg Tribune: May 27 '78
Storm Date: Thurs May 25 '78

The latest crop report

Tribune Sat. May 27/78

Hail, rain delay seeding

Seeding in the Red River Valley could be delayed by as much as 10 days following a series of thunderstorms which has dumped up to 126 millimeters (five inches) of rain in some areas since Tuesday.

Al Martin, crop sections chief for the Manitoba Department of Agriculture, said Friday there had been no reports as yet to the damage or flooding in rural areas from the severe thunderstorm Thursday night, which dumped 51 millimeters (2¼ inches) of rain in the city accompanied by strong winds and hail.

"But if the country got what we did in Winnipeg, they'll be in rough shape," said Mr. Martin.

Early seeded crops that already have come up would sustain some damage. But anything seeded more recently won't be hurt from the excess water on fields.

Farmers in the Red River Valley aren't likely to get back onto the fields for some time because the heavy clay soils are "getting pretty saturated." Mr. Martin estimated that it may be a week or more before they resume seeding.

Loamier soils west of the Red River Valley should be dry enough to seed in four or five days.

Farmers in the Selkirk area had just resumed seeding operations earlier this week after heavy showers a week ago sent them off their fields. And Mr. Martin expects that this week's heavy rainfalls will saturate the ground again, to cause further seeding delays in eastern regions.

Meanwhile, Mr. Martin said that reports earlier in the week from the northwest region, including St. Rose, Dauphin, Roblin and Russell, indicated that the areas are dry and could use some moisture.

The excessive rainfall so far this Spring will keep farmers in the southwest part of the province in the fields until mid-June, Mr. Martin estimates.

That's getting a bit late for seeding since most farmers look at the beginning of June as being the time to wrap up seeding, he added.

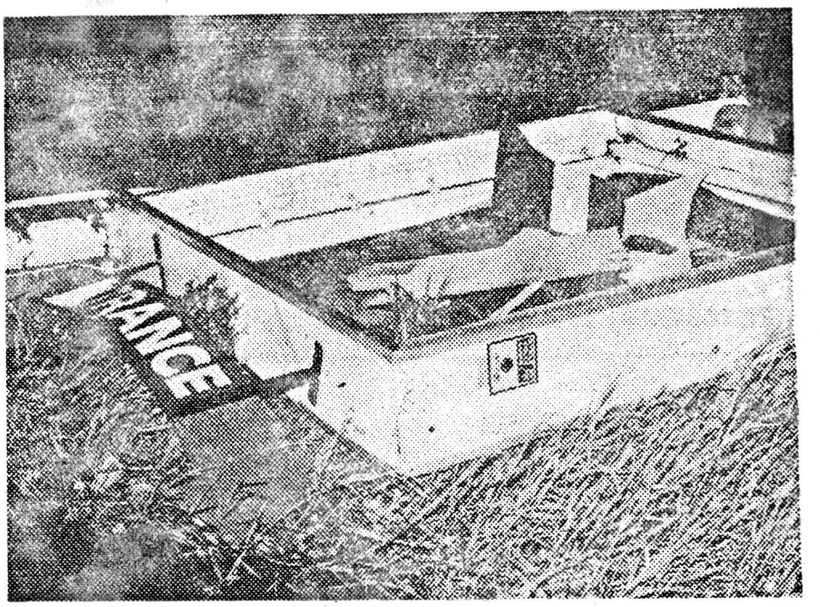
In 1974 heavy spring rains prevented many farmers from starting until June 1. By comparison, this year anywhere from 30 to 75 per cent of the seeding has been completed.

However, farmers who still have crops to seed in mid-June may be making some last-minute crop adjustments. The risk of frost damage or reduced yields increase when some crops are planted too late, said Mr. Martin.

Manitoba

City pounded by hailstones

It was unexpected and it was violent. Suddenly the Thursday evening skies turned black, the winds raged, and giant hailstones battered Winnipeg. Windows were broken, trees shattered, signs torn loose and dashed on the ground, buildings damaged. Accompanying rain flooded basements. Power and phone lines were downed. And it seemed the weathermen were caught short. First warnings came about 6.50 p.m., only 40 minutes before the storm struck. This despite the weather watch service set up last year after a tornado killed two in southern Manitoba. Earlier in the week, Sunday, hail warnings had been issued for a threatened storm that night, but little developed. Thursday night there were no such advance notice. There were several unconfirmed tornado sightings in the city and province. In North Dakota, near Mandan, a tornado ripped one home apart, took the roof off another, and destroyed a mobile home. Other tornadoes in the state ripped up trees and damaged farm equipment.



Sign lays shattered on ground.