

Third Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSON, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 30, 2004

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

PETITIONS

Pension Benefits

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Pension benefits for thousands of Manitoba health care workers are being cut because the government has refused to support the front line health care workers in their desire to maintain their existing Health Care Employees' Pension Plan.

The government is doubling the early retirement penalty to 6 percent a year from 3 percent.

There will be no cost-of-living benefits for retirees in the foreseeable future, which means that inflation will erode retirees' pension cheques over time.

The government's refusal to support the existing pension plan will have a negative impact on hundreds of front line health care workers.

The government is demonstrating a lack of respect for front line health care workers by its decision to allow administrative costs in the regional health authorities to skyrocket by millions of dollars.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the provincial government to consider redirecting administrative cost-savings to front line health care workers.

To request the provincial government to treat front line health care workers with the respect they deserve, and to consider supporting the health care employees' pension plan by not cutting pension benefits.

Signed by Michele Schrader, Lynne Steiner, Kathryn Pietryk and others.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our Rule 136(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

Highway 200

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Highway 200 is paved from Winnipeg to the Canada-U.S. border except for approximately a 10-kilometre section between highways 205 and 305 which remains unpaved. School buses, farm equipment, emergency vehicles and local traffic must travel on Highway 200 which is dangerous, if not completely impassable, during wet spring weather and other times of heavy rainfall.

Due to unsafe conditions, many drivers look to alternate routes around this section when possible and time permits. The condition of this gravel road can cause serious damage to all vehicles.

Insufficient traffic counts are not truly reflective of the traffic volumes because users tend to find another route to avoid this section. Traffic counts done after spring seeding, during wet weather or during school recess are not indicative of traffic flows.

Maintenance costs for unpaved highways are high and ongoing. It would be cost-effective to pave this section.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Lemieux) consider paving Highway 200 between highways 205 and 305 to ensure a smooth, safe and uninterrupted use of Highway 200.

Signed by Marie Lapalisse, Matt Gosselin, Eugene Lapalisse and others.

Minimum Sitting Days for Legislative Assembly

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Manitoba Legislature sat for only 37 days in 2003 and 2004 is not much better.

Manitobans expect their government to be accountable, and the number of sitting days has a direct impact on the issue of public accountability.

Manitobans expect their elected officials to be provided the opportunity to be able to hold the government accountable.

The Legislative Assembly provides the best forum for all MLAs to debate and ask questions of the government, and it is critical that all MLAs be provided the time needed in order for them to cover constituent and party duties.

Establishing a minimum number of sitting days could prevent the government of the day from limiting the rights of opposition members from being able to ask questions.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to consider recognizing the need to sit for a minimum of 80 days in any given calendar year.

Signed by Eric Celones, Lorlyne Celones and Hye-Jung Jun.

* (13:35)

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM) provides intervention, rehabilitation, prevention,

education and public information services on addictions for the citizens of Manitoba.

Manitoba's provincial Budget 2004 cut funding to the AFM by \$150,000 and required the organization to absorb a \$450,000 wage settlement.

In order to operate within its budget, the AFM was forced to close 14 treatment beds in its primary care unit and eliminate 10 nursing positions.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health to ensure that his attempts to balance his department's finances are not at the expense of the health and well-being of vulnerable Manitobans suffering from addiction.

To urge the Minister of Health to consider monitoring the waiting lists for addiction treatment and to consider ensuring that timely treatment for Manitobans with addictions is not compromised by the provincial government's decision to cut the AFM's annual budget.

Signed by James Lawrence, Danny Fischer, Pat Fischer and others, Mr. Speaker.

Pension Benefits

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Pension benefits for thousands of Manitoba health care workers are being cut because the government has refused to support the front line health care workers in their desire to maintain their existing Healthcare Employees' Pension benefits.

The government is doubling the early retirement penalty to 6 percent a year from 3 percent.

There will be no cost of living benefits for retirees in the foreseeable future, which means that inflation will erode retirees' pension cheques over time.

The government refusal to support the existing pension plan will have a negative impact on hundreds of front line health care workers.

The government is demonstrating a lack of respect for front line health care workers by its decision to allow administrative costs in the regional health authorities to skyrocket by millions of dollars.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the provincial government to consider redirecting administrative cost savings to front line health care workers.

To request the provincial government to treat front line health care workers with the respect they deserve, and to consider supporting the health care employees' pension plan by not cutting pension benefits.

Signed by Mary Heard, Shannon Connor, Rachelle Leduc and others.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 5—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (Injury Compensation Appeal Commission)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Chomiak), that Bill 5, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (Injury Compensation Appeal Commission); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba (Commission d'appel des accidents de la route), be now read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister of Energy, Science and Technology, that Bill 5, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (Injury Compensation Appeal Commission), be now read a first time.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, that crisply entitled bill will allow an appeal to the Automobile Injury Compensation Appeal Commission to be heard by one commissioner or a panel of three. The chief commissioner is responsible for assigning commissioners to hear appeals. The bill also requires an appeal to the commission to be made in writing. It also specifies how a notice of a hearing or a copy of

the commission's decision or reasons is to be given to the appellant.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

* (13:40)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Gavin Harmacy who is the guest of the honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler).

Also in the public gallery we have Dr. George Licsi who is from the Philippines and Mr. and Mrs. Ross Deciderio who are from Winnipeg with daughter, Natalie, and who are the guests of the honourable Member for The Maples (Mr. Aglugub).

Also in the public gallery we have from Tyndall Park Community School 25 Grade 6 students under the direction of Mr. Emanuel Tavares. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

Also in the public gallery we have from Green Valley School 38 Grade 11 students under the direction of Mr. Ray Schroeder. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you all here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba Housing Authority Allegations of Caretaker Misconduct

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have received a very troubling letter from a few residents of the government's 3100-3110 Pembina Highway, Manitoba Housing complex.

The concerns residents state, and I quote, "We have letters and police reports, incident numbers, first-hand accounts going back to years that document the caretaker's constant partying, drug use, plying underage children with alcohol in the home

for which he was fined, entering tenants' homes without reason or permission, assault against a number of tenants, stalking a female tenant and most recently assaulting a 16-year-old boy. This is not even taking into account the separate action of his adult children who have posed significant threat to the well-being of tenants with their drug use and trafficking. The latest drug to be sold out of his home was crack."

The letter goes on to say, "As a result of numerous investigations, complaints ranging over an alarming number of years during which time many tenants were assaulted, including one child who was allegedly molested by the son of the caretaker, and the involvement of various representatives such as the Residential Tenancies Branch, police and the Public Safety Board, the caretaker in question has finally been evicted from the premises. However, rather than being fired from his post as logic and clear code of ethics would demand, he is simply being transferred to another complex to resume his duties and his lifestyle at the expense of more unsuspecting tenants."

Mr. Speaker, as these concerned residents asked, how can this decision be justified?

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the situation. We have to be very careful around allegations that are being made. There is a process in place within the department to review and take appropriate action.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, we did contact this minister's office about this case, and we were told that in fact, yes, they were aware of these concerns and that the Manitoba Housing Authority had taken action. But because the issues of concerns were, quote, "in-suite issues", the caretaker would be transferred to a different location but just would not be allowed to live in that location.

Mr. Speaker, as the concerned residents stated in this letter, and I ask this minister: It would be completely unethical and irrational to say that this man is fit to continue his duties as caretaker for the Manitoba Housing Authority. How could any tenant feel safe with this person having access to their home and having to deal with him after being assaulted or otherwise mistreated by someone in a position of authority? Why is that possible?

*(13:45)

Ms. Melnick: Mr. Speaker, again we have to be very careful about allegations. We are looking into this. We are following a process, and we are very concerned about the situation and will continue to work on it.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, in 1997, the previous government introduced a strict policy that prohibits crime-related activity at residences owned by Manitoba Housing. We put individuals on notice that violence and misconduct would not be tolerated in Manitoba Housing developments. I just want to quote from that release. "The new house rules prohibit tenants, their family members and guests from crime-related ventures on the property including any drug-related activity, assault, verbal harassment, any activity that threatens the health, safety and welfare of other tenants. Even a single violation of the new house rules can result in a tenant being evicted."

I would ask why do the rules that apply to tenants not apply to this minister's employees. Why are the residents of Manitoba Housing Corporation complexes not being afforded the safety and peace of mind that they are entitled to? Why is it, Mr. Speaker?

Ms. Melnick: Mr. Speaker, again we have to be very careful around allegations. The department is aware of the concerns. We are working through a process, and we are always concerned about the safety of people in Manitoba Housing.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, with a new question.

Hydra House Internal Review

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): On a new question, Mr. Speaker.

In 2000, Jim Small brought forward very serious allegations to this government about the misspending at Hydra House. When the CBC made these allegations public two years later, the former Minister of Family Services, the member from Fort Rouge claimed that he conducted an extensive, thorough and extraordinary review. He said, and I quote, "We have made all the normal and some quite

extraordinary checks into this issue." He also was quoted as saying, "We are satisfied the financial accountability that we receive is adequate."

Interestingly enough, last night at Public Accounts this minister's latest excuse was that he sought the advice of legal counsel who told him he had no right to seek information from a private corporation's financial affairs and that the focus of investigation should be on adequacy of service. If legal counsel told this minister that he had no authority or ability to investigate the financial aspect of allegations, can someone on that side of the House explain why he told Manitobans two years ago that he did an extensive investigation into these financial allegations? Why is it, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, last week it was very clear that both governments share the responsibility for the situation we find ourselves in today. Again, I talk about the disbanding of the agency relations unit in 1994, despite numerous Auditor General's recommendations. What we are concerned about is that we did not clean up their mess fast enough. We accept responsibility for not cleaning up their mess fast enough, which is why we came forward with our five-point plan, the first of which is to reinstate the accountability unit within the department.

Mr. Murray: Two years ago the former Minister of Family Services said, quote, "We did an extensive investigation, not just into the financial allegations, but into all of the adequacy-of-care allegations." Mr. Speaker, if counsel advised that minister at that time he did not have the ability to investigate these financial matters, it begs the question why did he claim that he did.

Mr. Speaker, it is one or the other. Either the former minister did not tell the truth when he claimed to have done an extensive, thorough investigation, or he did not tell the truth last night when he claimed counsel did not have the ability or the authority to do so. The question is very simple. Which is it?

* (13:50)

Ms. Melnick: A partial answer to having the ability, Mr. Speaker, is the fact members opposite, when passing The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure

Act into law in 1996, did not require disclosure of salaries in for-profit corporations. Unfortunately, that tied the hands of the former Minister of Family Services and Housing in learning the extent of the mess that was left by members opposite.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I think was also very interesting out of last night's Public Accounts meeting was the former Minister of Family Services' comment that he referred the Hydra House case to the Auditor General once these serious allegations surfaced in media reports in 2002.

Really. First, he said he did a thorough, extensive financial review when the allegations were brought forward in 2000. Then he said last night legal counsel advised him that he could not do that. First, he said that he could because even though he had information backing up very serious allegations of misspending of taxpayers' money on things like hot tubs, home renovations, exercise equipment, he had no ability. He said he had no ability—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That minister at that time said that he had no ability, no capacity to deal with it. Then last night, he said that he sent it to the Auditor General once the media made it public.

Once the media made it public, Mr. Speaker, why did this minister not send this matter to the Auditor General four years ago when the allegations were brought forward? Why did he not act until the media broke the story?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have taken the matter of asking questions to former ministers, and the way the question was worded, "Why did he not act?" I would take that as the question to the former minister.

I have taken it under advisement, and until I bring back a ruling, I would ask the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition to kindly rephrase his question.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I was simply trying to find out why from the Doer government they were making allegations on one side and then flip-flopping when they were in Public Accounts Committee and then making other allegations about what they said they were going to do in terms of a thorough investigation, and then saying, flip-flopping, that they did not have the ability.

So my question, Mr. Speaker, simply to the government was why was it that they sent this matter to the Auditor General four years ago when the allegations were brought forward. Why did they wait the four years? Why did the government say when the media broke the story: Why did they wait?

Ms. Melnick: It is very interesting to hear the Leader of the Opposition read the account of the events last night. It is very nice to have that recount, but the most interesting quote that I can think of, Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Melnick: The most interesting quote is from the Leader of the Opposition on Global TV last Friday I believe when he said that there were misgivings in the 1990s. If there were misgivings in the 1990s, why did members do absolutely nothing except leave the new administration with their mess to clean up?

Hydra House Public Inquiry Request

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, if the truth will set you free then this Minister of Health (Mr. Sale) must be living his life in chains. Yesterday in Public Accounts, the minister gave contradiction after contradiction after contradiction. First, he said that in 2000 when the allegations of misspending at Hydra House came to his attention, he did an extraordinary investigation. Then he said that he could not do an investigation; then he said that he was not allowed to do an investigation.

Mr. Speaker, the truth has eluded the Minister of Health, and is eluding Manitobans in the face of a government minister who will not be forthcoming about what he knew and when he knew it. The only way to get to the truth for Manitobans is to call a public inquiry. I want to ask the government will

they now do the right thing and call the government inquiry.

* (13:55)

Mr. Speaker: Order. I want to take this opportunity to caution all honourable members because every member in this House is an honourable member. You are skating on thin ice when you start saying phrases as "the truth will set you free," "the truth has eluded the minister."

I am just giving you some examples here. "The truth has eluded the minister." All members in this Chamber are honourable members, and I expect every member in this Chamber to treat each other in such a fashion. We are just getting a little bit on thin ice, and I am just throwing a caution to all the members just to be careful in how you pick and choose your words.

Point of Order

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, we certainly respect your advice that you are giving to the House, but, first of all, let me point out to the House that it was the Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province who used the term, "The truth will set you free," and he has used it on many occasions.

Secondly, we have such contradictory evidence on record now from the former Minister of Family Services that someone over there has to tell us which are the true answers and which are the fictitious ones. That is what this House is trying to get to the bottom of today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable minister, on the same point of order?

An Honourable Member: No point of order.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable official opposition, I was only cautioning all the members because all members in this House are honourable members. As the Speaker, when the member brings information into the House, I treat it as factual information and someone could stand up and show me the opposite, but I have to take the word of all honourable members that it is clear in their mind that the information they are bringing to the House are the facts as they understand them. So I am just throwing a caution.

I am giving a caution to all members of the House because I do not think we want to get to the point where we start using unparliamentary language. I just throw a caution because we are very early in Question Period, and I just wanted to caution all honourable members. That is all I was doing.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader does not have a point of order. I would say it is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Several moments ago, Mr. Speaker, the opposition asked us to do the right thing. In contrast to the Auditor's Report in 1990, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1998, where they were recommended to do the right thing and did nothing, we are doing the right thing. We are implementing the Auditor's recommendations. We are building capacity in the department. We are further ahead on service purchase agreements than any other government has been in the history of this province, and we will continue to move in that direction.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, yesterday members of the government, of the NDP government, twice, not once but twice, voted against allowing witnesses to come forward to Public Accounts so that Manitobans could learn the truth about the NDP Hydra House scandal. Twice the government voted against accountability. They voted against transparency, and instead they decided to build a political moat around the now-Minister of Health.

The Auditor General, a non-elected representative, Mr. Speaker, a non-elected representative, has said that the best way to find out about things is not through Public Accounts because Public Accounts is not effective in this forum. We are calling for a public inquiry. Why do they not call for the inquiry today?

Ms. Melnick: Mr. Speaker, there was an independent inquiry. It was the Auditor General's investigation. All the information in the department was made available to the Auditor General. He even set up an office in the department for a number of months.

An independent inquiry investigation has been done. We received the results of those. Unlike the

opposition who ignored everything through the nineties while all of this brewed, we have accepted the recommendations and are implementing them. That is the truth. That is how we are moving forward.

* (14:00)

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, last week on "Global News," and I know the minister watched the report, the Minister of Health said that in relation to his role in the NDP Hydra House scandal, he said I do not think I have anything particularly to be sorry about.

Mr. Speaker, vulnerable Manitobans were denied funding that was given for their care because this minister ignored the allegations for four long years, and he has the audacity to go on TV and say that he has nothing, nothing to be sorry about. It is clear that the minister is too arrogant to care about this issue and to take responsibility.

The only way we will find out about the truth is to have a public inquiry. Why do they not call the public inquiry, Mr. Speaker?

Ms. Melnick: Mr. Speaker, since we seem to be reading the proceedings of last night, line by line, I will take my turn at it. I will read a quote from the former minister. "My regret is that we were not able to find out the truth, but in the end the Auditor did."

The problems are being fixed. It will be a non-profit agency in the future and the lives and well-being of those it serves are being protected. We are doing our job, Mr. Speaker, and I will add, as the current minister, we will continue to do our job.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy U. S. Border Closure

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): We learned today that Hong Kong announced that they would be opening their borders to Manitoba beef. We know that the Premier (Mr. Doer) is in Ottawa today meeting with the Prime Minister and the President of the United States, and we know that the U.S. border is still closed.

What I find most interesting is that I found in the press release today that the chief issue, the premier issue that the Premier is going to be raising with the President of the United States, is the Devils Lake

issue and the water flowing out of Devils Lake into Manitoba. "That," he says and I quote, "will be important that Canada keep Devils Lake front and centre." We find it absolutely interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier of this province will meet with the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada and not raise the beef issue and the opening of the borders with the Prime Minister.

When will this Government of Manitoba take the initiative to ensure that we have developed an industry in this province that can process and ship beef to other countries than just the United States?

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing the honourable minister, I would just like to remind all honourable members when making reference to members' presence or absences, that we do not allow that. So I ask honourable members not to make references to the presence or absence of members in the Chamber.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased also that the border to Hong Kong is being opened. I can tell you that 10 days ago I was in Hong Kong and had discussions with their government about how important it was that the border is opened to Canadian beef, because based on science our beef is safe. They agreed with us that Canada has a safer system than the United States has, and that is why they are accepting Canadian beef into their market.

When the Premier meets with officials such as the Prime Minister, he raises many issues. I told the Manitoba Cattle Producers today, and the member was present when I told them that the Premier would be raising the issue of BSE, softwood lumber and other trade issues, as he has on many occasions in the past, as he will continue to raise.

Mr. Speaker, our producers are not going to stand waiting for the border to open only to the United States. We are going to look for new markets, and we are going to work for our producers to have processing capacity in this province so that we can meet those demands no matter where they are in the world.

Livestock Industry Slaughter Capacity

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I wonder—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): —outgoing with North Dakota and Washington on other matters.

In light of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that Hong Kong is opening its borders to Canadian beef and to Manitoba beef, is this government going to commit today to the funding of a major upgrade and expansion of existing and newer abattoirs to export standards in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Well, thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased that the member has finally raised the issue of BSE and slaughter capacity in this province; particularly when they had their annual meeting they did not talk about BSE or the need for slaughter capacity in this province, and particularly when we see that the opposition is even criticized in editorials where they are not really supportive of increasing slaughter capacity in this province.

Our government has made the commitment. Our money is on the table, Mr. Speaker, and we are working with many people who are interested in increasing slaughter capacity in this province.

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, it is quite obvious that the Minister of Agriculture has also contracted Tim's disease. I would suggest today that the minister should reflect on what actually happened at an annual meeting, the discussion on BSE and the five-point plan that we have put in place.

Will this government today, will this minister today commit to accepting and implementing the five-point plan to assist in building enough processing capacity in the province of Manitoba to accommodate all the ruminants produced in this province and put them out as finished product and into the world market as the top quality beef in the country?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I would like to read into the record a quote from the editorial in the *Farmers Independent Weekly*. "The provincial opposition party has been equally unhelpful using the ups and downs of Rancher's Choice only as an excuse to issue press releases to criticize the

government when it should have been taking a non-partisan position to encourage the producer commitment to make the plan viable to lenders."

As we noticed last week, the member from Emerson last year said that investing in processing was not a good idea. But when the Province announced additional funding for Rancher's Choice this month, he fired off a press release saying that it was a year and a half too late.

Mr. Speaker, they cannot have it both ways. They cannot be critical of investing in slaughter capacity and then say we are too late. We are committed to the producers. We are committed to slaughter capacity in this province.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

**Department of Agriculture
Staff Meeting (Brandon)**

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the applause.

On April 30, this Doer government called the staff meeting in Brandon through the Department of Agriculture. Would the Minister of Agriculture share with this House the intent of this meeting? What occurred during this meeting?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, yes, I did invite all of the staff from the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives to a meeting in Brandon. We began a process, a very open process of a discussion of how we can improve services to farmers and to rural communities in this province. I really value the input from the staff of this department, and I value what they see at the front lines. So the front line workers have had an opportunity to have input. The commodity groups, the farm organizations, have all had an opportunity to have input on how we might be able to improve the services for the farming community and for rural Manitoba, and we are still working on that process.

* (14:10)

Staff Vacancies

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): In April, this Minister of Agriculture stated in this House, and I

quote, "We have put into the budget there will be 400 jobs that will be reduced through attrition and there will not be layoff announcements." Would the Minister of Agriculture tell us how many vacancies are due to attrition, retirement, resignation or other means which currently exist in her department and how many of these positions will remain vacant?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, last year we did announce in the budget that there would be up to 400 positions reduced through attrition without any layoffs. We are more than halfway toward that commitment. We are in the process of doing that. We are protecting front line service to make sure that all Manitobans get the services they need, and we will continue that practice as we go forward until we reach the goal.

Regional Offices

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, the minister announced her plans to relocate agricultural representative offices. Producers are concerned that offices will be closed in rural areas, taking away jobs, services and economic development from our rural communities. Would the minister take another step to eliminate rural communities in our province?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): I am not quite sure where the member is going with this question. I have absolutely no intention of eliminating rural communities. Absolutely none.

Our intention is as we have been going through a process, Mr. Speaker, of improving services to rural Manitobans, there has been a change in the department. We have new responsibilities with rural initiatives, and we want to put in place the best service that we can to reach the producers, the rural communities and enhance the service that we provide to them.

If the member is talking about closing offices, that is something that he has—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

**Physician Resources
Pediatrician Shortage (Brandon)**

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, once again today, residents of Brandon and western

Manitoba are without the services of an on-call pediatrician. Will the minister today rather than put his best foot forward in saying that he will be recruiting doctors, will the Minister of Health now put his best foot forward to ensure the residents of western Manitoba are not treated as second-class citizens? Will the Minister of Health ensure that pediatric services are available to the residents of Brandon and western Manitoba?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, we have always been committed to trying to support the regional authorities in recruiting the staff that they need. I just tell the new member, through you, that during the previous government there was an 18-month absence of pediatricians in Brandon, two pediatricians short in 1997-98.

We have had no women transferred to Winnipeg in the last nine days. We have a pediatrician from Saskatoon, two pediatricians from Winnipeg, and the two remaining pediatricians in Brandon rotating to provide on-call coverage. We have a couple of days in December that are still not covered, but we are working very hard to make sure that those are covered as well. The Brandon authority is actively recruiting and has spoken at the community level with one new pediatrician. We are confident that they are doing the very best they can to fill this gap, and in the meantime on-call coverage is being covered by support from Winnipeg, Saskatoon and the Brandon doctors themselves.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, how long will it take the minister to resolve the issue? He has had five years now.

For the minister's information, in December this year there will be another 10 days without on-call pediatricians. The minister has stated here that he is not in the position of waving magic wands, meeting with people and solving problems. Western Manitobans are not asking for him to wave a magic wand. When will the Minister of Health end the serious issue of highway medicine?

Mr. Sale: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I have met with the Brandon RHA and with the doctors in Brandon to speak with them not just about the pediatrician question, but about how we can strengthen the ability of that very important regional referral centre to fill all of the vacancies that may arise either currently or in the future. So we are working directly with them.

Secondly, there are 139 more physicians in Manitoba, approximately 50 of them in rural Manitoba, than there were when we formed office after the loss of 116 physicians during the years when that previous government was in power. Thirdly, as the member may know, there is a shortage of physicians at the level of specialty and general practice across this country because previous governments, namely that previous government among others in Canada, cut enrolment in medical colleges. We cannot wave magic wands because it takes seven years to train a doctor. We have moved the enrolment back up—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Minister of Health Meeting Request

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, concerned mothers have contacted both the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the Minister of Health requesting meetings to discuss the doctor shortage in Brandon. They did not get the meeting with the minister on November 17, and they have been told that they will be getting a meeting, but not until January of next year.

January is not good enough for these mothers. They are making the journey to Winnipeg to discuss the issue immediately. Will the minister now do the right thing and meet with the concerned moms of western Manitoba?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, I was in Brandon meeting with the health authority that is responsible for the recruiting. The Premier has spoken on this issue and said that when he was next in Brandon, he would be pleased to meet with the mothers. I have been in Brandon eight times since I was the minister. I have been in that community. I like being in Brandon. If the mothers have chosen to come to Winnipeg to meet, I would be delighted to meet with them.

Aiyawan Corporation Financial Statements

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Family Services suggested I read Hansard. I did. She said the information I provided about Mr. Archie Lafrenier making a large income and living in low-income housing was not

new. Why then is he still living in low-income housing this past weekend?

Mr. Speaker, I tabled today a copy of the financial statements for the Aiyawin Corporation for the year ending March 31, 2004. These statements show a dramatic drop in the replacement reserve from more than \$450,000 in 2003, to only \$72,000 in March 31, 2004. I ask the minister when her government first became aware of the corporation use of reserves to fund ongoing operating expenses, and it would appear, generous and untendered contracts to the brother of a general manager.

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, as I stated, we had concerns which is why we began the operational review at the beginning of this year. We, in fact, had quite a challenge in getting the audited financial statements from the corporation that we are discussing. We learned of the specific allegations that I believe the member has raised only about a month ago, and we had not yet received the audited financial statements. When we received them, we quickly completed the operational review and carried on with referring to the AG for his help in this matter, as well as serving notice to the corporation that there is a plan in place and if they do not meet the requirements of the plan in place, that they may, in fact, lose their funding.

Mr. Gerrard: Manitobans deserve action, not just talk.

The dramatic drop in the amount in the replacement reserve over a one-year period should have been a red flag. The government should have acted quickly. Manitobans know that the NDP have treated the Province's reserve, the rainy day fund, in a similar fashion, spending wildly and drawing down the reserves. But for most people, it is an important principle to maintain the reserves for when they are truly needed, in this case, by the corporation.

My question is to the minister. Why did the government not act immediately when they saw these financial statements? Was it because they see drawing down rainy day funds as standard practice instead of inappropriate stewardship?

* (14:20)

Ms. Melnick: Again, I will just reiterate, Mr. Speaker, our operational review was near

completion. We had a challenge in getting these statements. We received these statements a few weeks ago. We completed the operational review directly. We referred the matter to the Auditor General. We sent a letter to Aiyawin. There is a plan in place. We acted appropriately. We followed a process, and we will continue to follow that process.

Immigration Family Reunification

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans have brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces who live abroad, who work in areas, everyone should take this question seriously, of health care and other areas in which they would like the opportunity to be able to apply for a Provincial Nominee certificate, yet the family support stream disallows them to do so.

My question to the minister is will the minister exempt the family support stream from having to comply with the restricted occupation list.

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration): This is really quite interesting because the MLA for Inkster asked this question yesterday, and I answered this question. If he would like to try to book a meeting with me so he could get a full understanding of the question, I would be more than happy to. But this is what is really interesting. This MLA had a sit-in in this Legislature so he could get in here and ask some questions, and now he is recycling them. Maybe what he could do, Mr. Speaker, is do some real research and ask some real questions.

Protected Areas Update

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Waiting for this all week, I know.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Attempt No. 2.

It has been my sincere pleasure and honour to know, both personally and professionally, the work of Doctors Jennifer and Tom Shay. It has come to

my attention recently that our government has included some of their legacy of their proud work for our province and our citizens in its new natural preserves and ecological reserves system. I wonder if the Minister of Conservation might care to share with all members of this House the new work that is going on in protected areas and protected spaces.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): The member from Wolseley and others in this area know and have participated and been to many absolutely beautiful, pristine parts of our province, and Manitobans want our government to protect these areas. I want to assure the House, we are moving forward and protecting areas that are important to Manitobans as we have over the last number of years.

We have created six permanent, provincial parks, one that is a protected provincial forest. We have added nine new park reserves to our list, and we have extended park reserve status for an additional five years for four more park reserves.

Of the 21 wildlife management area designations in our time in office, Mr. Speaker, 15 were newly protected. We have added to our ecological reserve sites just recently at Little George Island, which is an island in the middle of Lake Winnipeg, and, as the Member for Wolseley has pointed out, yesterday I had the privilege of—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Before I move on to members' statements, I want to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us Dr. John and Kathy Schellenberg who are the guests of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Peter W. Enns

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to a long-time resident of the Pembina constituency, Mr. Peter W. Enns.

Although his formal education was limited, P. W., as he was affectionately known to his family and community, was an extraordinary visionary individual who pursued his love of learning throughout his long life.

He apprenticed as a shoemaker, held a gas-fitter's licence and was a self-taught plumber, electrician, builder, welder, musician, carpenter, woodworker and inventor. He obtained his pilot's licence at age 58 and flew small planes for many years. If he had the opportunities for further formal education, P. W. would probably have excelled as a structural engineer or architect. Yet he never let his lack of schooling hold him back from following his passion to create, build and solve problems which others often found insurmountable.

In 1956, he and Helena left the farm because of her health and moved to Winkler, where he established Enns Plumbing and Heating. He continued his backyard tinkering, and inspired by travel trailers that he saw on a trip to Elkhart, Indiana, built a prototype in a friend's garage. At 53, at an age many would consider too old to start a new business, he channelled his entrepreneurial and visionary spirit into establishing a recreational vehicle manufacturing company with his two sons-in-law, Pete Elias and Philipp Ens.

This business, now known as Triple E Canada, was originally intended to provide winter work for the employees in his plumbing shop, but the manufacturing company grew rapidly, and by 1968, the plumbing business was sold. P. W. served as the company's first president from 1965 to '69. His sons-in-law took over active management of the company, but P. W. continued to provide ongoing guidance and inspiration for many years. Triple E Canada is still a family-run business with his oldest grandson serving as president.

I would like to offer my condolences to the family and thank Mr. Enns for the contributions he made to the community. Thank you.

Tommy Douglas

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, with great pleasure and pride I rise today to acknowledge Tommy Douglas, the Greatest Canadian. It is not only my opinion but that of Canadians from across our nation. Last night's vote count confirmed what many of us in the NDP already

knew that Canadians want their heroes to be idealist visionaries and leaders, but above all, the Canadian definition of greatness depends much on humility and compassion.

Mr. Speaker, Tommy Douglas was renowned for his oratory skills, courage, wit and humour, but most importantly, he was respected for his compassionate leadership and desire to put humanity first. He displayed this philosophy as a young Baptist minister in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, during the 1930s, and he carried it into his political career.

It was in the political arena that Tommy Douglas found the way he could help to change the society of Canada. In 1944, after serving nine years as an MP, he took over leadership in the Saskatchewan CCF, became head of the first democratic socialist government in North America. Once in power, Tommy swiftly enacted numerous progressive policies to improve the lives of workers, single mothers, children, the aged and infirm. He accomplished all of this while still maintaining balanced budgets.

Tommy Douglas governments were instrumental at the national level by paving the way for universal health care, the universal old age pension, unemployment insurance, rights which Canadians cherish and hold close to their heart. It is because of Tommy that Canadians have one of the best health care programs in the world.

The vision of Tommy Douglas runs parallel to this year's Throne Speech and the work of this NDP government. Tommy Douglas' journey is the NDP journey.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I just want to remind all honourable members that when I stand, your mike is automatically cut off. The appropriate thing to do if you want to get more on record is ask the House for leave, and if the House is generous enough to give it to you, then you will be able to add that on, because even if you continue, your mike is off and nothing will be recorded by Hansard anyway.

So I just want to remind all honourable members the appropriate way is to wait till I call order and then ask for leave, and it is entirely up to the House.

The honourable member for Rossmere is seeking leave. Does the honourable member have leave?

Leave has been granted. The honourable member for—did someone say no?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Can I have order, please. I need order. Does the honourable member for Rossmere have leave to continue his member's statement?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: I heard that the House has given him leave, so the honourable member for Rossmere.

Mr. Schellenberg: Tommy Douglas is proof that we need not build monuments to truly great men, for their greatness can be seen in the legacy they create and in the good that remains after they depart.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be associated with the work of the Greatest Canadian, who wanted to build a better society and who made a difference to our country. Thank you.

* (14:30)

Lois Forsythe

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise today to bring the attention of the Assembly to an outstanding individual from Portage la Prairie, Ms. Lois Forsythe. While some seniors think that they are too old for change, Ms. Forsythe has explored and successfully completed a new pathway in her life. She was recently awarded the Ageless Heroes 2004 Love of Learning award from Creative Retirement Manitoba, acknowledging her pursuit of post-secondary education. Ms. Forsythe demonstrated her love of learning when she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Manitoba and followed that up by a Certificate in Theology from the University of Winnipeg.

She was a central figure in making the University of Winnipeg's Certificate of Theology available to citizens of Portage la Prairie, her own community. Mrs. Forsythe has a solid commitment to education, demonstrated when she received her last diploma despite a period of illness. While in hospital, she surveyed her fellow patients of the Portage and District General Hospital for her

practicum, thus using her circumstances to benefit others.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Lois Forsythe is a stellar model for seniors and all Manitobans. May I offer congratulations on behalf of myself and all members of this Assembly to Ms. Lois Forsythe on her achievement, and encourage all seniors to pursue the challenge of higher learning. Thank you.

St. Norbert Collegiate

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I would like to call your attention to a noteworthy program at St. Norbert Collegiate, designated as a demonstration project, a component of the Technical Vocational Education initiative of the Government of Manitoba.

St. Norbert Collegiate's demonstration project, the Senior Years Apprenticeship Option, integrates technical-vocational learning for students at the collegiate with on-the-job apprenticeship training. This program enables students an opportunity to explore careers in the trades, providing career paths not otherwise available for our students to explore.

Combining vocational training with other compulsory coursework, the program is open to Senior 3 and Senior 4 students, and builds upon the schools' technological education diploma which has already graduated several students over the past four years.

The goals of the current demonstration project are to expose students from St. Norbert Collegiate and their middle-years partner schools to the benefits of the senior years apprenticeship option. It is important that we strengthen links between the high school, apprenticeship and post-secondary education systems. In addition to helping increase student awareness of career options and educational choices, the initiative will encourage new teachers to enter the technical-vocational field and help existing teachers to enhance their skills.

Mr. Speaker, the staff, parents and students of St. Norbert Collegiate are to be commended for their commitment to promoting technical-vocational careers in St. Norbert. On November 23, I was thrilled to be able to congratulate and commend students, Michelle Bertrand and Garret Wood, Apprenticeship Co-ordinator Bruce North, School

Trustee Greg Reid and Principal Tony Fiorentino for their efforts in making this program a success. Thank you.

Immigration

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity just to remind the government of a commitment that it made back in 1999, and that was a commitment to bring up Manitoba's immigration population to an annual 10 000.

I truly believe that if the political will of the government of the day was to increase it up to 10 000 that we should have done that 10 000 by now. I am somewhat offended, I must admit, by the Minister of Immigration's (Ms. Allan) response in the last couple of days. Yesterday I thought I came up with a very positive suggestion that the government could, in fact, act upon and if it did act upon it, it would be able to achieve that 10 000 goal.

It is a very serious issue in the sense that you have the family support stream which is a critical support stream. It is one of the most successful streams, Mr. Speaker, and I would suggest to you that, in order to even make it that much more successful, what you need to do is you have to exempt those that are applying through the family support stream from having to comply with the restricted occupations list.

In reality, what it really does in essence is let us say, for example, you are a nurse in the Philippines. The only way in which you can actually get the opportunity to be able to come to Canada is that you are going to have to be guaranteed a job in advance. Well, Mr. Speaker, we know you cannot be guaranteed that job in advance unless you get qualified here in the province first. So, as a result, whether it is this job or other jobs, we lose a great deal of people being able to come to Canada. It is all through the family reunification, if you like, because we are not agreeing to exempt that family support stream from having to comply with the restricted occupation list. That one gesture would go a long way in doing what Mr. Doer or this government have talked about for years, and that is to try to get the immigration levels up. The real benefit, I would argue, is the benefit for the reunification of family members from abroad to here in Manitoba. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Before moving on, I would like to remind all honourable members that, when making reference to other members in the House, do it ministers by portfolio or other members by their constituency.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ADJOURNED DEBATE (Sixth Day of Debate)

Mr. Speaker: We will move on to Orders of the Day.

We will resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), and the proposed amendment of the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray), in amendment thereto standing in the name of the honourable Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

Before recognizing the honourable Member for Steinbach, I would just like to recognize the honourable Government House Leader to deal with some House business first.

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, there are just a few things to still wrap up, but would you please canvass the House to see if there is an agreement for the House to deal with the second reading motion of Bill 4 at 3:30, to be followed by debate by leave on a resolution dealing with the events in Ukraine with the understanding that today will still count as a day of debate on the Throne Speech?

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement for the House to deal with second reading of Bill 4 at 3:30 p.m., to be followed by debate by leave on a resolution dealing with events in Ukraine with the understanding that today will count as a day of debate on the Throne Speech debate? Is there agreement?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? I heard a no. Okay, I am going to try once again here.

Is there agreement for the House to deal with second reading of Bill 4 at 3:30 p.m., to be followed by debate by leave on a resolution dealing with events in Ukraine with the understanding that today will count as a day of debate on the Throne Speech debate? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

Okay, there is agreement on that.

I am going to call—*[interjection]* Order.

* (14:40)

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, to deal with the loss of time on the Throne Speech, would you also please canvass the House to see if there is leave for the House to sit on Thursday morning as an additional sitting, as part of the Thursday sitting, with Routine Proceedings at 1:30, but the House to sit from 10 a.m. to twelve noon to deal with the Throne Speech debate?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for the House to sit on Thursday morning from 10 a.m. to twelve noon to deal with the Throne Speech debate? Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Now we will resume debate on the proposed motion, the honourable Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), and the amendment of the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Murray), standing in the name of the honourable Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), who has four minutes remaining.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I am sorry to hear I have four minutes remaining. I really only just started going on my comments yesterday and I got through the preamble of my speech. I know the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), I think, he is offering leave for me to go further. I appreciate that because I know he really understands his government has missed the ball on this Throne Speech, and I know that the Member for Wolseley is eager to hear more of my comments and more from the good constituents of Steinbach on how the government has dropped the ball on this issue, where there is short-sighted vision.

The Minister of Family Services (Ms. Melnick) now wants to speak again, and you know, it is interesting because after a few days of deflection on

the whole Hydra House scandal, she now decides she wants to say something. I wish the Minister of Health (Mr. Sale) had had that same motion or had that same willingness to speak about the issue in a way that would make him a friend of the truth, Mr. Speaker. I do not know that Manitobans will see that when they read the transcript.

But I do want to, while I have just a few minutes left—Amos Wiebe, who is a page here in the Legislature, was not here yesterday when I was giving my remarks on the Throne Speech. I know Julene Bays was, from Niverville, but I want to say to Amos that we welcome you here to the Legislature. I mentioned yesterday it was great to have a resident of Grunthal back in the Legislature. It has been a while since the former member, Albert Driedger, was here that a resident of Grunthal sat in this Chamber, and I know that all of Grunthal is proud of you. We had the opportunity to see a number of students here today from your class. I met with them just a few minutes ago, and I know they are very proud of you and the work you are doing here in the Legislature, as am I. I know you have a very bright future ahead of you, and we look forward to seeing you in politics in the future, Amos, but not for a few more years, of course. Give it a few more years, and then we will be happy to see you run in the great constituency of Steinbach, Mr. Speaker.

I do want, in conclusion, to encourage the members opposite, the government, to take some of the words of advice that have come forward from members opposite here in terms of having a real plan and a real vision for the future and not just to have these kinds of half steps and start steps and then one step forward and two steps back. That is not what Manitoba is about.

We believe Manitoba can have a bright, bright future. We can be a have province and we do not have to limit ourselves to going to Ottawa with hat in hand. I know the Premier (Mr. Doer) is in Ottawa today, and he probably brought his tin cup with him so he can put it out in front of the Premier and say, "Please, sir, can I have another dime? Can you give Manitoba another penny because I cannot do it myself? I cannot ensure we have that economic prosperity." I hope he comes home with a new vision for Manitoba and realizes we need to pick ourselves up and do not have to go hat in hand to Ottawa every year, begging for more soup, asking for more handouts. That is not what Manitobans are about.

The real Manitobans are about, average Manitobans, like the Manitobans who are in Grunthal and Niverville and Blumenort and Steinbach and Mitchell and Kleefeld. Those are Manitobans who are making things happen in our province, and they would encourage the government to do so as well. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to give my response to the Throne Speech. I would like to begin by, as have others, welcoming the new members from Minto and for Turtle Mountain on their elections and entry into this Chamber. I think it is an understatement to say that they have some pretty big shoes to fill. Their predecessors, Ms. Mihychuk and also Mr. Tweed on the opposition bench, were very formidable speakers and good representatives for their parties and for their constituencies.

I welcome our new pages and pay compliments to the Clerk and her staff for doing a wonderful job. I wish to welcome Tonia Grannum from the Ontario Legislature as well. I hope you enjoy your stay with us, madam.

Mr. Speaker, I want to offer my condolences to you, sir, on the passing of your mother. She lived a long life, if that is a consolation to you. I know we had her presence up in the Speaker's Gallery one day, and I think I speak on behalf of all of us in offering our condolences.

I also want to say that our prayers are with the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) and his family. His son suffered a grievous injury and has trying times ahead of him. Many of us experience death, all of our families, of course, go through this at times, but when somebody is injured to the extent that he is, it is pain that will be endured for a long time. I want him to know that all of us are thinking of him.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin my comments on the budget by offering my heartfelt thanks on behalf of the ranchers in our province, on behalf of the agricultural producers, the farmers, to the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), the Premier (Mr. Doer), our Cabinet, for putting forward the reduction on the education tax on farmland, something that has been a long time coming in this province. I know that the previous speaker mentioned that since 1939 the

Association of Manitoba Municipalities and its predecessors have had resolutions to this effect, and it is this government, at long last, that has finally taken action on this front with its retroactive 33% reduction in the special levy on farmland, which will be followed in the budget in April by a move upwards to a 50% reduction on the special levy on farmland.

This is something that is absolutely critical at this point in time. Our ranchers have and are still experiencing the negative effects of the BSE crisis and the border closures. Our grain producers have gone from drought last year to monsoon this year, to the point where they are at their wits' end what to do. Education tax on farmland has always been a true burden for them, and I want to recognize and acknowledge our government for addressing this serious situation.

Of course, over the course of the last five years we have done a number of things to address this as well. Our increase of the property tax credit from \$250 up to \$400, which gives roughly fifty-some million dollars in relief to taxpayers annually, is a giant step forward, as is the commitment and the staged phase-out of the provincial support levy as well. That amounts to probably in excess of \$40 million as well. So all of these factors combined have given in excess of \$100 million in tax relief related to property, related to education, to our producers, to our ranchers and to property holders in general.

*(14:50)

Now the opposition has gone on at length about this and I think they are a little disappointed that we actually did this. I think they were probably planning to base a good percentage of their rhetoric on this particular topic and are somewhat taken aback by this brave move on our part. But I look to the Conservatives, and I think back to the dark days of the Filmon regime. I look to what exactly was their record on this issue. In fact, I think they were the ones that reduced the property tax credit. I think the previous NDP government had had it at an acceptable level, and their government ratcheted it down, as well as addressing the portioning issue. Here, for a party that purportedly represents farmers, for them to actually raise the portioning on farmland up to 30 percent is unconscionable and beyond comprehension, I have to say.

Now, our government, when we came to office, recognized this, and one of the things that has already been accomplished is the reduction of the portioning on farmland from 30 percent back to 26 percent. I think it is noteworthy that Keystone Agriculture Producers, the body that represents all of the different farming lobby groups in the province, has endorsed this move, and I just want to quote from a letter that they sent to our government in this vein. I quote: "The recent announcement will certainly provide assistance to farm families in Manitoba who have been shouldering a significant financial burden under the current taxation system. We thank you for your support of Manitoba's farm families through this important commitment."

Now, in the last election campaign, the Conservatives were talking about reducing it. They were going to eliminate it altogether, which is fine to speculate, but where the money was going to come from they were not overly specific on, although I think I do recall the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) letting slip one day, in regard to the elimination of property taxes, he referred to "schools of excellence." I am not sure exactly what he meant by that, but I would speculate that what that means is that some schools were going to do quite well in the process, but a lot of schools, probably out in rural Manitoba, maybe out in the Interlake, Fisher Branch, Ashern, Ericksdale, whatever, would have been experiencing cuts to programming and would have been pushed back to the three R's, reading, writing and arithmetic, because why do they need that extensive education so?

It is interesting, just grains of the truth were coming to light, and I think we should bear that in mind. It is easy to make big promises, monumental tax cuts, but if we are going to adhere to balanced budget legislation, then the pinch is going to be felt somewhere.

Our approach is to make realistic steps, Mr. Speaker. I have described a few of them in the last few moments. We are moving towards this goal. We are the first government, I think, in Manitoba history to address the education tax on farmland, and if we are allowed to do so, if the economy continues to grow as strongly as it has under the tutelage of our Leader, then possibly, in future, there will be room for more.

When I think of the Conservative agenda, something else comes to mind as well. We all

remember YNN. Some of the newer members may not recall that. So, just to refresh their memories, this was the classic, old-style Conservative agenda, privatization, letting large corporations come into our schools and start pumping their commercial methods across to our children. That is rather insidious, but that is their mindset. They want to do it to the health care industry, and I think their next target would probably be education. They look at those two budget lines in between education and health, you are talking several billion dollars. I think a lot of them on that side of the way and a lot of their supporters are probably salivating at the mouth at the opportunities to muckle onto some of that money.

That is not our way of doing business, Mr. Speaker. We will maintain public systems. We will make sure that all Manitobans have equal access and equal opportunity. We are not going to sell out to big business in this province. There has been a lot of talk on the expansion of slaughter capacity in our province. We realize with this BSE crisis that we have to do two things: we have to diversify our markets and we also have to expand on the slaughter of cattle.

I recall when this debate began roughly 18 months ago, we realized the gravity of the situation. We realized that we were in an extreme crisis in rural agro-Manitoba and all of us stood up and we were supposed to try and move forward, move through this crisis in a non-partisan way. I was gravely disappointed that, very soon after the debate began, that good spirit of non-partisanship fell by the wayside. Immediately, members of the opposition were leaping to their feet, accusing the government of inaction, of not caring for farmers and so on and so forth ad nauseam, Mr. Speaker.

That is not the case. We have always had the interests of our ranchers at heart, and our Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (Ms. Wowchuk) has worked above and beyond the call of duty over the last 18 months to try and resolve this most difficult situation.

I am disappointed, to be honest with you, in the opposition party's critic for Agriculture, the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner). His response to this has been typical. Criticize, criticize, criticize, and go with whatever, I guess, comes into his head at the moment, because his position has gone from one extreme to the other over the past 18 months. When

we were beginning this process with the Ranchers' Choice coalition, a group of producers from my constituency, the Interlake, what was his position?

I quote from a newspaper article in August of 2003. He said, "It is one thing to kill them, but it is another thing to sell them, and that is what a lot of the farming industry does not understand. I think there is a time and a place to rebuild the packing and processing industry in this province, but that is not now. You never throw a whole bunch of money at an initiative during a crisis. We should be casting our emphasis on No. 1, opening the border, and No. 2, providing support for the primary industry to keep it alive until the borders are open."

Mr. Speaker, that certainly is not his tune today. Then it was a mistake to invest in the packing industry, and, frankly, that is not surprising to hear because, in the time that they were in office, the Filmon government has a deplorable reputation in how they dealt with the packing industry in our province. We were at roughly 300 000 animals a year being slaughtered annually in Manitoba when Gary Filmon and his team came to office in 1988. When they left office in 1999, those numbers were down to a 10th of that, down to some 30 000 animals instead.

So we need no lessons from the members opposite when it comes to maintaining or expanding upon the slaughter industry in our province. They failed to do it while they were in office. In fact, they were in charge when we saw the slaughter industry virtually disappear in this province, so, to listen to them today lecture us on how we should go about reconstituting it is ironic, to say the least.

*(15:00)

The Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), who is notorious for flip-flopping on issues, in regard to the Rancher's Choice proposal, his position reversed 180 degrees. I refer to a quote from the same newspaper, the *Independent Weekly*, I believe, in November of 2005 when he said, "The Doer government could have saved livestock producers from some of the hardship and losses if they had provided additional funding to Rancher's Choice earlier." Well, if that is not a contradiction from the statement he made roughly a year ago, I do not know what is. He continues, "If all goes according to plan the abattoir is expected to open next summer, but this still is not

soon enough for our producers. The Doer government needs to act quickly when a crisis arises."

Well, I am sorry, but I have to say to the Member for Emerson that you cannot have your cake and eat it too. If you take a position against investment in the slaughter industry, then your words will come back to haunt you, sir, and I think, in this case, they certainly have.

Mr. Speaker, in that same article that I referred to a few moments ago, which was an article in the *Farmers' Independent Weekly*, I believe it was the editor that was writing it. He also made mention of the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association. I want to acknowledge their efforts. They have lobbied extensively over the last 18 months, and our minister and our Cabinet have consulted them constantly throughout this. The last thing we want to do is act in isolation. We have listened to what they had to say, but I am a little disappointed that they have not actively supported proposals such as Rancher's Choice. They have taken the position that they will not support one proposal over another. I guess that is all fine and dandy to take positions such as that, but in times of crisis when individuals, when entrepreneurs are making moves to correct the situation, then I think the lobbying organization that is publicly funded through the check-off should do all that they can to assist in that venture. Yet they have been virtually silent on the Rancher's Choice proposal.

That is my assessment. It is also the assessment of the editor of the *Farmers' Independent Weekly*. I would like to quote him in an article that he wrote which was entitled, "Okay to be tough but not stubborn," where he said, "The MCPA has been aggressively lukewarm toward Rancher's Choice, never giving it outright support but never coming up with any suggestions as to what the heck else might be done with over 30-month cattle for the next five years at least."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the MCPA takes his words to heart because they are the entity that has access to all of the cattle producers, whether it be cow-calf producers or whether it be the feedlot operators. They are the ones that have access to the mailing lists. They are the ones that publish the *Cattle Country* news. I think that they have a responsibility to do their utmost to assist not only us the provincial government but the producers and the

entrepreneurs themselves in getting these things off the ground. If they sincerely want to see an expansion of slaughter capacity in our province, then when somebody puts a good proposal on the table, and I do not think anybody could question the efficacy of the business plan of the Rancher's Choice group in Dauphin, then put their money where their mouth is and support it. Use their mailing lists, use their journal, the *Cattle Country* newspaper, and get the message out to our producers to get behind these projects because we do need some form of producer commitment.

Now this is another thing that the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) has been going on about. Recently, in Question Period, he is demanding that we capitalize huge slaughter facilities in our province. What is he suggesting? That we should spend 50, 100, \$200 million? After all, the economy of scale dictates that any plant designed to slaughter fat cattle will have to be competitive with the major multinationals, Xcel, Cargill and so forth. These plants are huge, worth probably a quarter of a billion dollars, so if we are going to compete at that level, at that economy of scale, it is going to require a sizable investment.

To listen to the Member for Emerson go on day after day in Question Period that the provincial government should just put all this money on the table, build a plant. Is there any equity from the producer side of things? He has not made reference to that. Is there supposed to be some type of accountability mechanism? Is there supposed to be some type of mechanism where producers can commit their cattle to this plant so that we know we are not building a big white elephant? Is any of that in his line of questioning? Not that I have heard in the last couple of days, and I have listened very closely to his words. After all, he is the opposition critic for the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, so I assume he speaks for his caucus.

In the Rancher's Choice proposal, when they initially started, they were very firm. They wanted to have a part of it. They wanted to have ownership of the plant eventually, and they were very secure in their thinking that they could raise \$3 million to \$4 million in capital. They came to us with that promise and we said fine, if you can, then by all means. We are going to have money on the table through cash or MIOP loans or loan guarantees or whatever, but they

did want to have their money on the table as well and have a mechanism in place where they could take ownership of this plant over time.

Given the financial crunch on the farms, it was eventually determined that a lot of producers just did not have that spare cash so what did we do? Our government was responsive to that. After we had our retreat in the Interlake, and our Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) has been to the Interlake on a number of occasions in the last 18 months. I thank her for that. She has listened.

Last summer, we were in the midst of a drought, and cattle producers were in a bind like you have never seen before in the history of Manitoba, where their pastures were finished by the end of June. Grasshoppers were as thick as sand on the beach. They were feeding their winter hay to their cattle already, and by the end of July their winter hay supply was gone. Those people were one step away from bankruptcy. Those people were bordering on suicide. I talked to constituents of mine who were saying they were going to go out to the back 40 and put a gun to their head.

Our Minister of Agriculture came out. She heard, and our government delivered on a feed assistance program which facilitated the movement of straw into the Interlake from sometimes as far away as 150 miles to address the feed shortage. It was thanks to that program in particular and the attentiveness of the minister that the cattle producers in the Interlake, which was the region most seriously hit by the drought, because of her diligence and the programming of our government, are still in business today. So I take my hat off to her on that front.

In order for this Rancher's Choice proposal to go ahead, we still do need some commitment from the producers. We cannot just be building plants using taxpayers' money, and it is up to \$11.5 million now that the provincial government has committed to this plant. We cannot just put that money on the table, build plants, unless there is some commitment of cattle to this plant. I do not think that is too much to ask, Mr. Speaker.

* (15:10)

Still, what position does the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) take? Again, rather than thinking in a non-partisan mindset, rather than

thinking proactively, trying to be part of the solution as opposed to part of the problem, which he has been since the very beginning of this crisis. Rather than thinking positively, what does he do? He is referring to it as a poison pill, a poison pill, that the ranchers should be expected to make a commitment of their stock to this plant is a deal breaker as far as the Member for Emerson is concerned. They should not be required to do so. Is that a responsible position to take? I think not. In fact, it is very irresponsible, and I do not even think the ranchers themselves would agree with the Member for Emerson.

Ranchers, I know because I represent a great number of them, are very entrepreneurial, business-oriented people and they do not expect something for nothing. If the government is going to step up and capitalize this plant, I do not think they would hesitate in the least to make this commitment. I would call upon the Member for Emerson and all members of the Conservative caucus to go out there and talk to their constituents, to talk to the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association representatives and all of them together should be endorsing this plan, to make sure that it gets up and running and off the ground and is running in the black so that, in the years to come, we do have slaughter capacity in our province.

Now, we know the market is there, Mr. Speaker, because a lot of the product that this plant will be producing will be going into the domestic market. In fact, it is my understanding that all of it will be sold within Canada and a lot of it will be replacing or displacing the supplemental imports which are currently being, or have been, filled by other countries, the Australians, the Argentineans. These people are importing beef that our producers could be processing and putting into our own market, so I really think it is ironic the flip flopping that I have seen by the Member for Emerson, and I call on him to change his ways before it is too late.

I can point to the Leader of the Conservative Party, the Member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Murray). He wrote a letter, sent it out to my constituents, I have seen it, Mr. Speaker, where he said the provincial government should flow cash advances or low-interest loans. Those were his words, or low-interest loans, and when this government did that, and we flowed \$100 million in low-interest loans into this industry, all of a sudden that was the bad thing to do. Right? That is no good. Oh, I did not

mean low-interest loans; I actually meant cash advances. Well, what is a cash advance? Again, no description of how this money was going to be collected back, so on and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, my little red light is blinking. I have to sit down and I am only on page three of my notes here, but other members want to speak so I will respect that. I thank you for this opportunity, and sit down on that note.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand to put some words on record in regard to the Throne Speech that was just introduced by the government. Firstly, I would like to welcome the pages that are going to be with us over the next short while, with their running around and being involved with the parliamentary procedure here in the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

It is a great honour. It is a privilege, and I think that they will enjoy the time that they spend here and the times that they will remember as they go back into the community. It is a great learning process. Sometimes, though, when you are close to the product, like they will be, sometimes they may feel a little bit disenchanted with the way government works, but it works very slowly at times.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Throne Speech that was brought in is something that I think all members like to have their little time to talk about and get some thoughts on the record. As the Member for Southdale, firstly I would like to say that I am always very honoured to be able to represent that area. I represent an area of the city that is a very, very dynamic area, in the sense that it is growing very significantly. It is growing significantly with new homes, new development, new families going in, young families, children. The amount of pressure that is put on the so-called social infrastructure in my constituency is growing continually every year. In fact, it almost grows on a monthly basis when you look at some of the development that is happening in my area of Southdale that I represent.

I represent various components of Southdale. It is a constituency that comprises itself of the community of Southdale. There is a portion of Windsor Park. There is another area called Niakwa Park, Niakwa Place, Southland Park, Royal Wood

and Island Lakes. Those are the areas that I represent in the so-called constituency of Southdale. Each one of the areas that I mentioned has its own unique character and its own unique ability for me to try to solve or to work with the residents of the area.

Windsor Park, theoretically, is an older area that was developed quite a few years ago. But what is happening in that area is there are new families moving into there because of the fact that the housing is fairly reasonable and moderate in price. What is happening is some of the people that are selling in there and moving into that area are young families with young children, and they are also getting involved with the schools in the area and in the community centre.

We have two very active community centres in my constituency. One is Winakwa Community Centre and the other one is Southdale community centre, both growing, both expanding, both involved very, very heavily with volunteer people who are working with the community centres in those two areas. I am very fortunate that that growth is reflected in the sense of community that is projected from the community centres.

We have schools in the areas that are enjoying, if you want to call it, some significant growth in population. In fact, some of the areas that are growing, particularly Royal Wood, Island Lakes and Southland Park, where there are a lot of new homes going in, I think that the social infrastructure for schooling and for recreation facilities is something that has to be addressed by government. I know we say that government should be involved because of the fact that they control the purse strings in regard to a lot of the schools that are going up in the areas.

I know I have lobbied, and the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) has heard me say this quite a few times, that with the number of children, particularly in the Island Lakes school which was just opened a few years ago and is at capacity and over-capacity in the sense of crowding in that school, the need for new facilities in that area is very, very severe. In fact, I think the parents and a lot of the residents in that area are very, very disturbed that there is no movement towards new schools or replacements or additions of schools in that particular area.

It is going to be more severe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of the fact that in Royal Wood,

through the joint-use development between the provincial government and the developer in the area which, like I mentioned, the Province has a direct hand in, over 700 new homes will go in there, but there is no provision, no looking at schooling facilities in that area. There does not seem to be a recognition by the Minister of Education that there is a problem there. It is becoming quite evident in phone calls that I get and in conversations with people that I meet from those particular areas that they are very, very concerned about it.

What prompted a lot of response was the fact of a new school being just announced in West Kildonan. I believe it is a \$10-million school that will be going in there. It was mentioned by the Seven Oaks school superintendent, Mr. Brian O'Leary, who just happened to be chairperson of the NDP campaign in the last election, that a new school will be going in there for \$10 million. There was also just the announcement, I believe, in East Selkirk for another school in that area. I do not begrudge the fact that there are new schools going in that area if there is a demand, and there seems to be a demand because of the recognition of new suburban growth.

* (15:20)

It was recognized by the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) that one of the reasons was because of the growing communities. In fact, he mentioned the communities of Riverbend and West St. Paul, and that is a recognition on his part, that the new growth demands more facilities. Now, I guess, you could extend that logic to say, well, if there is new growth in south Winnipeg, like in Fort Whyte and in the Fort Richmond area there, that that should be looked at very, very critically. If there is new growth and new expansion in my particular area of Southdale, which represents Royal Wood and Island Lakes, they should be looked at more seriously, but the minister has said, if they can be bused out of the area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the commitment by this government right now, and they have said that they are committed to families and communities and the growth of the family unit, one of the things that is very, very important to family growth is a sense of community. You do not get a sense of community, especially with young children, if you are bussing them out of the community when their friends are

going to different areas. Now I know that there is always the argument saying, well, you have to bus them to where there are empty spaces, further down into the community. I guess I could use that same argument by saying, well, maybe they should be bussing the children out of West Kildonan, into a different area. I am not recommending that, because if West Kildonan can get a collegiate, most likely, because of the expanded need, they need it.

I am just saying that there seems to be a discrepancy in where the funds are going and how the so-called glitch got unknotted. When there was talk of schools in other areas, well, there is a glitch. We cannot do it because of the glitch. All of a sudden the glitch got unknotted and, bingo, we have a school in West Kildonan, we have a school in East Selkirk. Those are the unglitched ones, so we still have to work to get the glitch off for south Winnipeg and Fort Whyte and that area and my area also.

I would ask the minister, I know that they will always say that the Public Schools Finance Board has the final word, but he has been in government long enough to know that that is not true. There is always the ability to bring forth a strong case for certain areas, especially when he recognizes that it is good for the community and it is good for what can build a stronger area. I just wanted to get that on the record. I know that he has heard that before from me, but I will continue to lobby for my area. I will continue to lobby for schools or expansion in my constituency and other constituencies in south Winnipeg so that there is a recognition of that. When the budget looks at it again, they can look at a priority of possibly even expanding or adding on to some of the schools in some of the other areas. I just wanted to get that on the record in a sense before we get too far.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that it is hard to say that a member is not in the Chamber when we are talking about individuals, but I think that it is well known that the Premier (Mr. Doer) is down in Ottawa, so I do not think that I am straining too far by saying that he is not in the Chamber here, when we know that he is—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. There should be no reference to the absence or presence of members of the Chamber. That is a well-known rule. Thank you.

Mr. Reimer: I will only say that when the Premier is away from this Chamber after session, and he is down in Ottawa where he is meeting with Mr. Bush sometime today between 10 a.m. and 6:30, that he would still be here. I recognize that he is here in the Chamber, but he is meeting down in Ottawa between 10 a.m. and 6:30. He is truly a remarkable man, truly, that he can do that. Not only that, we have an agenda here. I am just wondering when the Premier, who is here, who is down there, is meeting between 10 a.m. and 11:05, there is a meeting, that is when the plane arrives, so I imagine he, theoretically, might be there, meeting and talking to the President of the United States about the water and the BSE, because that is what he mentioned were very important. Maybe he is meeting with President Bush between 11:05 and 12:15. That is when he has this big meeting with President Bush. That is when President Bush is being listened to, or our Premier is talking to him. Maybe it is between 12:15 and 2:05, that is most likely when he has a private meeting with him, or between 2:05 and 2:55 or 2:55 to 3:55 or 3:55 to 6:30. I know that President Bush has made time on his busy agenda, where he is having dinner with over 400 people, that the Premier of Manitoba will certainly have a front-row seat to spend a lot of time with him and really bring forth his issues at a gathering of 400 people, with a reception line that goes by like an assembly line.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

So I am sure that he will come back with glowing reports, and a huge report that he will be able to table in the House. He will be able to table in the House volumes of information and conversations and positions and recommendations that he will have got from the President of the United States. It is truly, truly amazing what Premier Doer can do when he is not here but he is down there. As mentioned, we cannot allude to him not being here. So I look forward to these great revelations when the Premier comes back with all these new documentations of agreement with President Bush, because it is always interesting to see how the Premier can sometimes do these double-takes at times.

I would like to point out there was an interesting little exercise done on the Throne Speech, in regard to the various words that were used in the Throne Speech, in regard to where the government felt its priorities were. Their repetition of certain words was noted. I would just like to read into the record the

words and the numbers that were used in the Throne Speech. The word "health" was used 38 times; the word "Aboriginals" was used 24 times; the word "northern" was used 23 times; "education" was used 23 times; "taxes" was used 21 times; "water" was used 17 times; "rural" was used 15 times; "police" was used 3 times; "justice," the word was used once; "highways" was used once; "agriculture" was used once; and "BSE" was referred to once.

Now, we have the Premier, who is here but down east at the same time, saying that the BSE is still a high priority. In the Throne Speech, it was alluded to once. Just once did this Premier allude to the BSE crisis in the Throne Speech.

So the members across can say all kinds of glowing things about this Throne Speech, but I can tell you that I will not be voting for this Throne Speech. I think that the fact that it is something that is a lot of wind and rabbit tracks is something that we should all be recognizing. We have to keep looking at what this government is doing and try to bring them to task, so that there is a recognition that as we go forward, we have to be more aware of what the priorities of the province are and not what the priorities of individuals and the Premier are in regard to how he makes up this budget.

* (15:30)

So, Mr. Speaker, it is something that I look forward to as we go further on, and with that I will end my comments on the Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House the debate will remain open.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 4—The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act (Differential Business Tax Rates)

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, the hour being 3:30 p.m., we will now deal with the second reading of Bill 4.

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 4, The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act (Differential Business Tax Rates), be now read a

second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Smith: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the second reading of Bill 4, The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act (Differential Business Tax Rates). Bill 4 proposes an amendment to the City of Winnipeg Charter, the act which guides the relationship between the City and the Province. The present City of Winnipeg Charter only allows for a uniform business tax rate. The amendment would enable the City to have the ability to apply differential business rates to businesses based on criteria determined by City Council.

Mr. Speaker, this change will allow the City of Winnipeg to make changes based on their priorities. I certainly welcome any discussion on this bill.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, I just want to put some words on record in regards to Bill 4 that was brought forth by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs in regards to the City of Winnipeg.

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to just point out that here is another example of where the City has to come, if you want to say cap in hand to the provincial government, to let them have the ability to make their decisions. I can relate back to having the fortunate position to be in Cabinet as the Minister of Urban Affairs. One of the initiatives I know that our government looked at was to try to give more permissive legislation to the City of Winnipeg because the City of Winnipeg act is very, very proscriptive in its nature.

This is just another example of how the wording of the City of Winnipeg act should be changed. In fact there should be a total revamping of the City of Winnipeg act. It was initiated under our government to happen. In fact it was on its way to be implemented within a year, pardon me it was scheduled for somewhere around 2000 to be completed. Since that time it has been shelved. There has been no initiative by this government to try to have a serious overview of The City of Winnipeg Charter. This is one of the reasons that this bill has to come to this House for the City of Winnipeg to act on it.

We are in favour of the act. We feel that giving the City the ability to set its own tax rate is something that the City of Winnipeg and the councillors still have to decide as to what amount and where and everything, but that is their right and that should be their right. They should not have to be able to come to the province because they have the idea of making our city more competitive in its direction with business and the fact that business taxes are charged.

I should point out I think that Winnipeg is one of the few cities that still has a business tax. It was recognized by the new mayor, Mayor Sam Katz, that this is something that is regressive in nature. His initial direction is to try to eliminate that. I believe that is something that all government should be doing, not only in the City of Winnipeg but, I think, the Province of Manitoba can surely learn a lesson here in trying to make Manitoba more competitive by a more competitive tax rate.

When you look at Manitoba's tax rate now, we are the highest west of New Brunswick, I believe, and it is certainly not conducive to attracting business and holding our people in Manitoba. It is something the Province of Manitoba can learn from by the fact that the efforts brought forth by the mayor and the council of Winnipeg to try to get this differential tax rate into different classes and move on the way, I believe, as the mayor has indicated, an elimination of the business tax in Winnipeg. Mr. Speaker, those are just the few words I wanted to put on record in regard to the City of Winnipeg act that is brought forth. I look forward to it going to committee to see if there will be presenters on the bill, and with those words, I will let some of my colleagues also speak to the bill.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): I do appreciate the opportunity to put some words on the record regarding Bill 4. I was kind of hoping the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Smith) would have a few more substantial words surrounding this bill in terms of the purpose of it. It is fairly self-explanatory, but it astounds me a little bit that once again—it does not astound me, given the nature of this government—but here we are, having to interrupt the Throne Speech debate, to try and get through a relatively straightforward and simple piece of legislation that was asked for by the City of Winnipeg months ago.

It simply speaks to two things: the lack of organization by this government, in terms of process and their complete and overriding desire to avoid sitting in this House for any length of time in order to give the members of this Legislature and those outside of this building, an opportunity to review legislation and come to committee in a properly organized fashion. If this was such an urgent bill, as we are hearing today—the government seeks leave of the House to interrupt the Throne Speech debate to try and get this piece of legislation dealt with in this session—we could have been here in September dealing with this. We could have been here in October dealing with this. We could have been here any time in the last three months dealing with this piece of legislation. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever for the government to have to take the relatively unprecedented step of seeking leave to interfere with debate on a throne speech in order to deal with this piece of legislation.

Having said that, it is a relatively straightforward piece of legislation, one that we are, as the member from Southdale indicated, looking forward to moving on to committee and dealing with in an expeditious fashion. I would hope the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs would come a little more prepared to committee with a little more detailed explanation of the rationale behind this bill, the specific requests that came from the City of Winnipeg and how his department has been interacting with the councillors who are responsible for shepherding this bill through the legislative process. By then, we will, hopefully, have gained a little more insight into what the City is actually thinking in requesting this bill.

I have to admit, from my perspective, it is good to see the city finally on the right track and at least one level of government that has authority understanding the necessity of making our city competitive. As the member from Southdale spoke, we are one of the last cities in Canada to have a business tax. It is good to see the mayor and his council are bound and determined to reduce it in stages that will eventually, I believe, see the elimination of business tax in the City of Winnipeg. Their initial thrust, from what I understand of this bill, is to apply those decreases in business tax to the city centre to help encourage private investment to help encourage private-sector growth in our downtown.

* (15:40)

I think we all must understand, Mr. Speaker, that if our downtown is to be revitalized, it is going to be led by the private sector. We have tried in this community, we have tried in the city of Winnipeg, for over 20 years to revitalize our downtown. The problem is the NDP governments always get it wrong.

I remember back in the late eighties when the now-Premier was the minister responsible for urban development. His grandiose solution was to build Portage Place. His vision was that if we simply bulldoze all the retail shops on north Portage that were—maybe we could argue about the nature of the consumers that they were attracting. At least they were attracting people to Portage Avenue, and there were consumers on Portage Avenue who had a place to shop.

In his wisdom the Premier decided, well, that is not right. I am going to take the big, bold step and create Portage Place. All he managed to do was take all of the traffic off Portage Avenue, and for a temporary period, because that shopping centre happened to be owned by the same development company that was in the midst of expanding Polo Park, a very successful privately funded, privately driven shopping centre, in fact, probably one of the most successful in western Canada, if not Canada. They were able to convince some pretty prestigious retailers that if they wanted to have space in the Polo Park expansion, it would be in their best interest to take space in Portage Place.

That is what happened. That worked for a couple of years. There used to be a Holt Renfrew store there. There used to be some other premium retailers in Portage Place that attracted business, but eventually, as always happens when the public sector tries to take over the role of the private sector as the NDP government is so wont to do, we saw Portage Place deteriorate, disintegrate to the point where, we just read in the paper yesterday that if you want to buy crack or you want to buy crystal meth you can buy it any time you want in Portage Place. You simply have to walk in the front door, and you can find numerous people there trafficking in the drugs.

That is the unfortunate result of misguided NDP policies that think they know how to spend money

better than the private sector. It might work in the short term.

An Honourable Member: Win the next election.

Mr. Loewen: The member from Flin Flon says, "Win the next election." I can assure him, we will. Then the province will get back on the right track.

An Honourable Member: Are you going to rip down Portage Place?

Mr. Loewen: The member from St. Boniface, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), asks, "Are you going to rip down Portage Place?" You know what? That might not be a bad idea. I will confirm to him that I have no intention of doing that, but what might be an even better idea would be to do the right thing and sell the parking lot back to the private sector because what happens now is we have north Portage, then we have the parking, and what happens with the parking? The parking, well, I would think the minister would know from his experience with The Forks North Portage organization.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Loewen: What really happens is we have a transfer of wealth. We have a transfer of wealth from North Portage to The Forks because about \$1 million a year gets taken out of profit. *[interjection]*

The member from Wolseley just indicated he is still in a fog from the summer, but if he would take the time to listen, he would understand a bit that what happens each and every year is that—

An Honourable Member: That man is not in a fog. It is only Fort Whyte that is in a fog.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Loewen: I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, the member from Wolseley does not need to have mosquito fogging to be in a fog. We have seen that time and time again.

I really would appreciate it if the members opposite would just listen for a tiny minute. I will try to make this short and sweet. Just a simple lesson in economics, and that is that we have a drain from

North Portage every year of over \$1 million to The Forks. While The Forks is a wonderful and a glorious location, I believe now it has enough of a sound footing to stand on its own. Instead of taking money from North Portage and transferring that wealth to The Forks, we should be taking the money that is generated on Portage and reinvesting in Portage. We need to find a way to turn the shopping center inside out to get more people on the street, just as Mr. Axworthy, a former member of this House, is championing the cause of turning the University of Winnipeg inside out and getting more of its students visible and an integral part of downtown.

It is unfortunate that the members opposite do not have a clue when it comes to this type of economic development. They still think that, somehow, if you build a new office tower that that will change downtown.

An Honourable Member: How do you spell "arena"?

Mr. Loewen: Well, and the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Chomiak) wants to talk about the arena, and there is no doubt that it is a lovely building. The trouble with the arena is—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Loewen:—it is on a site that is too small, and if the members opposite would have taken any time to do any studies, they would understand clearly that it is going to create, over the long run, a doughnut effect in downtown. In other words, there is going to be a black district around the arena.

I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that finally someone at the City has had the good sense to understand that the way to economically revitalize our downtown and our downtown centre core is to do it by inviting the private sector back, by encouraging the private sector to grow. It is the private sector, when you look at any redevelopment of downtown across North America, any city you go to that has been successful in revitalizing their downtown has done it on the backs of the private sector.

There have been private-sector enterprises that have been willing to locate. It has taken tax incentives. It has taken grants, and that is where the

government fits in. The government should not be in the business of building buildings. The government should not be in the business of taking money out of one section of downtown and putting it into another section of downtown. The government should be in the business of getting out of the way, reducing and eliminating barriers so that the private sector can come in, establish the businesses that need to be established, and change the focus of downtown so that people want to go there because it is a destination place, because it has destination retailers.

As a matter of fact, you know, the members on the back bench there, I would encourage the member from Wolseley or the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson), who is waving his hand frantically, recognize me, recognize me, I would encourage them, go to Cleveland, go to Chicago, go to Minneapolis, spend some time in the downtown in any of those cities. Go to Seattle, see what has happened. What has happened down there, there have been transformations and the transformations have been driven by the private sector. I would encourage the City to continue on this track of lowering tax rates and encouraging the private sector to lead in the redevelopment of our downtown. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise just to comment briefly on Bill 4. We in the Liberal Party support an approach which will provide the larger framework and a smaller bill, which would give the City of Winnipeg the ability to make its own decisions, permissive legislation, as it wills, so that the Province is not micromanaging things for the City of Winnipeg, but rather that the City of Winnipeg makes its own decisions with regard to tax policies and so on.

There is a continuing need to decrease the volume of the City of Winnipeg act and to make it more permissive. The Conservatives had an opportunity to do this when they were in power in the 1990s but failed to do it. The NDP had an opportunity and they shortened it up a little bit, but they did not really tackle the major task that was needed which was to create a shorter City of Winnipeg act, which would provide a framework for the City to make its own decisions. So in general, and on principle, we support this bill. We wonder that it actually takes more words and there might have been a better way to frame this, but we will certainly support this bill.

* (15:50)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief on the bill. I did take the opportunity to talk to both the mayor's office and the deputy mayor's office just to get their comment on the bill. It is something that is very positive, but I just wanted to pick up on something that the member from Fort Whyte had talked about and that is the bill itself.

This is a bill that, in fact, could have been brought in earlier had the House been in session at an earlier time, but it is with that concern having been expressed, I just wanted to lend my support to seeing this bill go into the committee stage. We see it as a progressive piece of legislation, as the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Gerrard) has said.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I am pleased to put a few comments on the record on Bill 4, which enables the City of Winnipeg to divide business premises into different classes and tax the classes at different rates. Certainly, there has been a flaw in the City of Winnipeg act, where Winnipeg has had to come cap in hand to the Province for support. This, I think, has prevented them from becoming more competitive in the city. This bill will allow Winnipeg to make its own decisions, which will certainly, I think, go a long way to strengthening our city. I believe strongly that Winnipeg needs to have the tools at hand to make it more competitive in Canada, and I do believe that this bill has that opportunity to make it so.

Mr. Speaker, this particular piece of legislation has been requested by the City, and it is their intent to move Winnipeg in the direction that it becomes a strong, thriving city in Canada, quite capable of competing with any other city in this country. It is one of the last cities in Canada to still have a business tax. The City is prepared to work toward removing this, and I think we need to get behind and support the mayor and council who have come forward. We have a new mayor, we have a new vision, and it is an opportunity to take advantage of this momentum and move aggressively to help Winnipeg reach its full potential. I do believe we need to get behind the mayor and council to support this. By supporting this legislation, it will encourage private-sector growth in downtown, as has been mentioned. It will help to lead to further downtown growth, because that is where we want to see growth

occurring. We want to see a private sector that has a strong hand in moving our economy forward, making Winnipeg more competitive, because that is going to be what has the best advantages for this city long-term.

Mr. Speaker, it was interesting the other day when I was driving to work, and on CJOB radio the head of the Mennonite University was speaking about coming to Winnipeg. I believe he said that a year ago he was moving here, and people from where he was from in Ontario said, "Why would you want to move to Winnipeg?" He came here, and the comments he made on CJOB radio certainly, I think, lent itself to a great pride in what this city has to offer.

Here we had a person moving here for the first time indicating that, maybe, those of us who are here do not always appreciate the kind of opportunities, the diversity of this city, the great opportunities to be someplace fast. He talked about a great city park, walking trails, all of the cultural events and the length of time it takes to get from point A to point B, which is not a disincentive in this city to move around and to make things happen. He had such a glowing account of this city in his one year here. During his one year here, they have had, and I think he indicated, numbers and numbers of guests to his home, and they took them all over Winnipeg. The people who, before he moved here, had indicated, "Why would you want to come to Winnipeg?" totally changed their tune once they were here and once they experienced the city.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I think that is something that we need to be cherishing much more. This is a wonderful city to live in. There are many opportunities for people here. I am glad to see that we can have some legislation that will continue to move this city forward, so that we can reach a lot of the potential and opportunities that are before us. What I do find a little bit strange right now is the lack of commentary by the Doer government's city MLAs, that they are not standing up and speaking to this particular legislation. It does concern me a little bit. We know that this particular government does not like to cut taxes, and I am sure the Premier has muzzled his city members from speaking up, but when you have an opportunity to stand up and comment about the wonderful city we live in, I am really surprised that the city members on the other side are not taking advantage of that opportunity.

With those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I am certainly, as one member here, prepared to move this legislation forward expeditiously, and look forward to any comments that are going to be made in committee.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the second reading of Bill 4, The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act (Differential Business Tax Rates).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

House Business

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): On House business, Mr. Speaker. Would you please canvass the House to see if there is leave for the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs to meet concurrently with the House Thursday morning, and that there are no quorum calls in the House for Thursday morning?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs to meet concurrently with the House on Thursday morning and that there be no quorum calls in the House for Thursday morning? Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Mackintosh: I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs will meet on Thursday, December 2, at 10 a.m., to deal with Bill 4, The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment (Differential Business Tax Rates) Act.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs will meet on Thursday, December 2, at 10 a.m., to deal with Bill 4, The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment (Differential Business Tax Rates).

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to announce that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Wednesday morning, December 1, at 10 a.m., to deal with the

issue of the recruitment process for hiring a new Ombudsman and a new Children's Advocate as, due to retirement and term expiration, these positions will become vacant early next year.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Wednesday morning, December 1, at 10 a.m., to deal with the issue of the recruitment process for hiring a new Ombudsman and a new Children's Advocate as, due to the retirement and term expiration, these positions will become vacant early next year.

Resolution—Events in Ukraine

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, we will now deal with the resolution dealing with events in Ukraine.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach):

WHEREAS it is the right of all citizens to participate in free and fair elections as outlined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights; and

WHEREAS hundreds of thousands of opposition supporters are gathered in central Kiev waving large banners and singing after spending more than a week on the streets; and

WHEREAS several thousand international observers, including observers from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, NATO and the United States have reported massive electoral fraud in the recent Ukrainian elections; and

WHEREAS these observers include approximately 100 Canadian observers and two Canadian parliamentary delegations; and

WHEREAS the Ukrainian Supreme Court suspended the presidential poll result on Thursday to consider the opposition's complaints; and

WHEREAS Ukraine's parliament declared the country's disputed presidential election invalid Saturday and also passed a vote of no confidence in the election commission; and

WHEREAS the Ukrainian Supreme Court is now considering the claim of massive fraud in the presidential elections, stopping the inauguration of Mr. Yanukovich; and

WHEREAS based on the above mentioned observations, the electoral commission does not have a legitimate basis for declaring Mr. Yanukovich the winner of the presidential election.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial government to join the people throughout the world and particularly Manitobans of Ukrainian heritage in marking unity with the Ukrainian people.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba to work in co-operation with the Canadian government in support of measures they may undertake to uphold democratic processes in Ukraine.

* (16:00)

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Chomiak), seconded by the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach)

WHEREAS it is the right of all citizens—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I consider it an honour to have the opportunity of moving, together with the Member for Russell and with the Liberal Party, this motion. I think it speaks volumes, Mr. Speaker, of what the intent of this motion is. It speaks volumes of what the benefits are of democratic, responsible government, and the opportunity we have here in Canada.

I had the honour of speaking in front of the Taras Shevchenko monument with several hundred other people, including members of the Conservative caucus, members of the Liberal Party, members of the NDP caucus, members of the Ukrainian community, members of all communities, the other evening. I would just briefly repeat the comments

that I made, Mr. Speaker, because I know there are many individuals who wish to speak to this motion.

To sum up, what I said is that, essentially, the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the people of the Philippines, the people of Georgia, of both, were able, by taking democracy in their own hands, to have a peaceful revolution and bring about democratic and free elections. That is what is happening in Ukraine today as we speak, as we stand in this Legislature, and have the opportunity to unanimously, and I said this in my comments, to all members of the Legislature, to speak freely our viewpoints, democratically. We can express our viewpoints. As we do this, people are in tents, people are lighting candles, people are in protest in the streets of Ukraine, trying to do the same thing. We are very honoured to have the opportunity here, as legislators, to express our viewpoints and our differences in opinion, and to have an orderly transformation of government when that orderly transformation takes place at election time.

Further, Mr. Speaker, it speaks volumes that this motion is brought by the government and brought equally by the opposition and by the third party in this Legislature, that we are all bringing this motion together. It speaks that democratic rule of law and freedom are above individual interest and above partisanship in this regard. I had the occasion to make those comments at the Taras Shevchenko monument and pointed out that the monument, in fact, reflects those particular viewpoints.

I want to, at the same time, indicate that when we brought this resolution, we did it with the complete co-operation of the other parties in this chamber. It was done not only with their co-operation, but with their encouragement. This is a resolution brought on behalf of 57 members of this Chamber. It is brought on behalf of the Ukrainian community, it is brought on behalf of, effectively, the people of Ukraine. It is brought on behalf of all democratic institutions and people who seek freedom in the entire world. So not only is it a symbolic gesture, but it is a real gesture that not only speaks in words, but speaks to the point. In bringing this resolution, in both the government party and opposition parties together bringing this kind of resolution, we are demonstrating both in fact and in spirit what can happen in a democratic and free society and what we hope for and pray for will happen in Ukraine.

I would like to add further to the comments that I made in front of the monument, because I wanted to point out that my comments last week are consistent with what we are saying in this Chamber. I pointed out that all members of the Legislature would and could support the activities in Ukraine, Mr. Speaker. We all hope and pray that, as a result of this worldwide opinion, and I pointed out that demonstrations, protests and supports all day they were taking place all around the country and all around the world as they stand as one with people of Ukraine, to see free, adequate and proper democratic procedures followed. I indicated it at the time that I had the honour of speaking as an individual, as an elected representative, as someone of Ukrainian heritage, and as someone who believes and entrusts the role of democracy and freedom in our day-to-day lives.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that many members of this Chamber want to speak so I will not repeat. I will not speak much further, other than to thank members of the Legislature, particularly the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), who has worked with us directly on bringing forward this resolution and urge that the spirit with which this resolution is brought forward will be reflected in developments in Ukraine. That is that partisan interests can be put aside and the benefit and the freedom and democratic rights of the individuals and the people; in this case the people of Ukraine, should prevail above all and above all else. Thank you.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I am pleased to join the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology in this resolution this afternoon. I thank the government for allowing us to present this resolution in a joint fashion where we could second it, because I think this is a resolution which not only reflects the views of one particular party in our province, indeed, I think it is one that can be unanimously endorsed by all members of this Legislature. That is important.

Our province is made up of a significant portion of people whose heritage is Ukrainian as the minister has said, and when you have that kind of percentage of your population that is represented by people who emigrated from Ukraine, it is important for us to keep in mind that this country where our ancestors came from is one that has undergone turmoil over the last 400 years. It is not something that is new to the country, but over the last 70 or 80 years this country endured one of the most severe hardships that any

country could ever be exposed to. That is the rule of a Communist government where the will of the people could not be exercised. Neither could their dreams or aspirations or the visions of people there. It is for that reason that many people left the country and sought a home in this country to exercise their individual rights and their freedoms.

I think the opening line of the national anthem of Ukraine is *Sche ne vmerla Ukraina*, which translated simply states that the freedom of Ukraine has not died yet, or Ukraine has not died yet. The reason the anthem was developed or composed was in respect of the strong values, the strong will of the nation's people to survive and to endure despite the many times that this country endured the hardship and the overcoming of their strength by other nations. We saw Ukraine go from rule under the Germans to rule under the Russians over the years and, finally, in 1990, the freedom of this nation was realized. Canada, I am proud to say, was one of the first countries to recognize the freedom of Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, I stand proudly today as a person whose heritage is of Ukrainian descent. I can say that, like me, the people of Ukraine desire the same kinds of democratic freedoms that we enjoy in this country. I think there is a responsibility on all of us, not only as a province, but as a country and people who have a strong linkage to Ukraine, to stand up and to let people who are in the place of authority know that we stand with those people who today are demonstrating without violence for their rights for democracy and for democratic freedoms. If this is lost, we then erode everything that has been worked for over the course of the last 10 years in building a democracy in Ukraine.

* (16:10)

Mr. Speaker, while we were in government, I had the opportunity to meet President Kuchma, also at that time the prime minister of the country, some of the M.P.s of the country and some of the leaders of the nation. To my surprise, to be honest with you, I also met and found a relative who worked right in the president's office, and the connection was close. As a matter of fact, one of the president's bodyguards happened to be a "Derkach" as well.

When President Kuchma came to Canada here, he did in fact have that entourage with him. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, it just shows you that our

connections to that country are even closer than sometimes we think they are, because I had never imagined that I had any relatives that were associated anywhere close to government in Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, when I spoke with those people, you could see the desire in their hearts and in their souls for achieving the same kinds of democratic freedoms that we have here in this country. Their affinity to Manitoba was not only because of the people here, but because of the lifestyle and because of the achievements that we have been able to accomplish over the course of time.

Mr. Speaker, I think the people there wanted to see their country enjoy the same kinds of privileges, freedoms, and exercise them in the way that we can here in Canada and in our province. So we should all be very proud, but we should also join with the Government of Manitoba, the Government of Canada, and all of the nations who have condemned the fraud that occurred in Ukraine in the election, that it was a fraudulent election, that it was indeed an invalid election, and that that election should be held, at the very least, again.

Mr. Speaker, it is amazing that people, thousands, hundreds of thousands of people, have stood in the streets of Kiev and have demonstrated, not only there but in other cities, to demonstrate the strong will of the people and the desire of the people to achieve those individual freedoms that we enjoy in a democracy. So the intent of the resolution, I think, is fairly clear.

I just want to read the last THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED portion, which says "that the Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government"—and we do so in earnest, and I go back to the quote—"to join a people throughout the world and particularly Manitobans of Ukrainian heritage in marking unity with the Ukrainian people."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the government of Manitoba to work in co-operation with the Canadian Government in support of measures they may undertake to uphold democratic processes in Ukraine."

Mr. Speaker, I know there are other members in this House whose heritage is of Ukraine, and I encourage them to also stand up and put a few

remarks on the record to let people, not only in this country, but people in Ukraine know that we stand solidly with them.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I stand up to speak to this resolution and to support the people of Ukraine in their quest for fair and legitimate democratic processes, including a fair and legitimate and democratic election.

Ukraine is a wonderful country. It has phenomenal fertile soils. There are many similarities between Manitoba and western Canada and the Ukraine. That may be part of the reason why there were many people from the Ukraine who came to Manitoba and to western Canada and have played such an important role in our province and indeed in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the events of the last few weeks in Ukraine have been of very considerable concern. They are of concern because the history of Ukraine, as we all know, has not been an easy history. One of the very worst human tragedies in the history of our planet occurred in Ukraine in the 1930s with the famine. The heartrending stories of what happened during that famine, the incidents of what we would see today as terrible abuses of fundamental human rights, are a very important story for all of us to remember, and a story that we hope will, in the not-too-distant future, be told through the involvement of Ukrainians from Manitoba and elsewhere in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, which we hope to build, as I say, in the near future here in Winnipeg. It is very important that that story and the depth of feeling and emotion that relates to it is told and is seen in the context of what has happened recently, because in recent weeks, the eyes of the world have been on what is happening in Ukraine.

Indeed, there have been a significant number of Manitobans including, I believe, people like Terry Duguid, John Petryshyn, and quite a number of others who were in Ukraine overseeing as observers what happened in the recent presidential election. Indeed, it was Manitoba observers as well as others, who made observations of the major irregularities that occurred during the presidential election in the way the election was conducted.

We in the Liberal Party join the members of the other parties in this Legislature in an all-party effort to show solidarity with the people in Ukraine and

raise grave concern over what has happened there in terms of the democratic processes. The Ukrainian people deserve better.

Mr. Speaker, I had the occasion, as did the member from Russell, to meet President Kuchma when he was here, and I was impressed by him at that time. I am pleased to see that he has called for new elections in the last 48 hours and, hopefully such new elections will occur, and we will proceed to a democratic resolution of this great difficulty which is occurring, as we speak, in Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, this is clearly an issue of human rights. In our resolution, we reference the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the importance of all of us as Manitobans, as Canadians, and indeed, people who have ties or connections with Ukraine from around the world to stand up, to rally, to support the reassertion of democratic processes in Ukraine, the need for a new election which is conducted in a much fairer, more legitimate and more democratic way.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be among those standing today in an all-party effort to support the people in Ukraine, to support their strive for human rights and democracy, and to push not only the Government of Manitoba, the people of Manitoba and the Government of Canada, but others around the world to help those and to offer support for the people in Ukraine.

* (16:20)

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, I want to put a few comments on the record with regard to this resolution. I want to commend the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Chomiak) and the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) for moving this motion, and for all members for their unanimous support of putting on the record Manitoba's support for the people of Ukraine in following with the support that we have, this in co-operation with the resolutions that we have seen come from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, this is one of those issues that has grabbed the attention of people around the world as they look at what is happening in a democratic country where people have been working for many years to have the democratic right to vote and be sure

that their vote counts. I have to say that the media on this event is gripping all of our attention, and I have to say that, for me, it is especially important given that I still have family members who are living in Ukraine. I have been in Ukraine and been in Independence Square under different circumstances, but to see this tent city set up there and to see the number of people that are there protesting in a very orderly fashion, fighting for their democratic life, is very moving.

When you think about it, it is not that long ago, it was in 1991, that we saw the break-up of the Soviet Union and Ukraine gaining their independence, something they had fought for, for many years. Now, in just a little over 10 years, they have an election, and we see all of the fraud that went on. To hear about reports where there are extra ballot boxes coming in, to hear about places where there is 110 percent of the people in a particular poll coming out to vote, obviously, there are serious irregularities.

As we look at it, there are people from around the world that are recognizing this is not the way things should be. There are outcries from people from many parts of the world, and I am pleased that Canada is part of that group of people that is speaking out against this election. I am pleased President Kuchma and others are speaking out against it. I hope the Supreme Court will rule that there will be another election very soon, and it will be a fair election, one that will follow the rules, and we, indeed, can see democracy work in Ukraine.

I say to you that this means a lot to me. I have been to Ukraine. I have had the opportunity to meet with many people who have come to Canada, who have come to Manitoba, in particular, to look at our legislative system, how we disburse land, how we offer protection for farmers. They want to build the kind of system we have here. They recognize what we have here in Canada and in this province, is the way things should be done. We have played, as a province, an important role in supporting them as they move forward in this new democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that I had the opportunity to talk to some of my relatives over the weekend. We had not been able to reach many of them, and we have been concerned. My relatives, one group of them come from the village of Zelechyka. It is a small town, so I had the

opportunity to talk to them. There are people from that village, or town I should say, who are in Kiev. Busloads are going. One group is there, and they hope that busload will go back and change different people. Maybe some of my relatives will be on that next bus. They talked about how they will give everything. They do not have much there, but they are collecting money. They are collecting supplies. They are sending food into Kiev because they know how important it is that they have representation in that Independence Square and on the steps of their government building.

I can tell you they will do anything, outside of violence, to be sure their voice is heard and they can move forward for the true independence that we often take for granted, because we do. We take for granted this Legislature that we are sitting here many times. We are here. We have been elected in an honourable way, and we have the ability to speak freely on any issue we want. Sometimes we do take it for granted, and sometimes we probably do not even pay enough respect to this Chamber because we have been so lucky to have such freedom. But people in other countries, people in Ukraine are being denied that ability to have their rightfully elected people come into their Parliament buildings. They are being denied having their votes count.

I am very proud to be able to speak on a motion that offers our support to the people of Ukraine and encourage them to move forward. It is my hope that the support they receive not only from Manitoba, not only from Canada, but from the United States, from the United Kingdom, from the European Union, that all of these will put pressure on the powers that be to move forward with another election.

I think it is having an impact. I think the messages that are coming from around the world will impact the Supreme Court and help them move forward to another election. It is my hope that there will be another election. It is my hope that the next election will be a fair election, and that the voices of Ukrainians across the country will be counted, and that they can move forward to grow their country because if this election does not go forward, and if there is not another election, there is going to be tremendous upheaval, a divided country and tremendous pressure. That tremendous pressure will destroy the hopes that my relatives have. We talked about some day having the kind of country where they could earn a fair living, where they could send

their children to school, where they could have the kind of things that many of us take for granted.

Ms. Marilyn Brick, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

So, Madam Acting Speaker, I want to say that on behalf of the people of the Swan River constituency, and on behalf of my relatives who are in Ukraine and in fact, on behalf of all Ukrainians whether they be in Canada or Ukraine, I am pleased that we can take the time today to put these kinds of comments on the record.

I would like to say in closing, *Sche Ne Vmerla Ukraina*; Ukraine has not died.

Ukraine will not die, and we will be there to support them as they fight for democracy. Thank you.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Acting Speaker, I take a great deal of pride to be able to rise in this House and speak upon a matter that I think is of extreme importance to all of us that serve in this Legislature. That is the matter of democracy and what it means to the people around this world.

That democracy in my view, Madam Acting Speaker, is a demonstration by people such as we are in Canada, and how we have and why we have come to this country because of the atrocities that have happened in some other countries, where many of our people have chosen to make their homes and call their homeland.

Those of us that are Mennonites and immigrated from Poland or Prussia at the time, to Ukraine, and whose families such as ours spent more than a century living in Ukraine, to the point where we were known as the German-speaking Ukrainians. I took a great deal of pride when I was asked to be part of a delegation that travelled to Ukraine and had the opportunity to meet with President Kuchma, the President of Ukraine. Indeed, I was also asked for an audience to meet with the Premier of the Province of Zaporizhzhia, nine members of his Cabinet, and a few days later, a group of 18 farmers in the Province of Zaporizhzhia in Ukraine, which, I understand, is one of the most productive areas in the world. It had topsoil of a 17-foot-depth in that region of Ukraine, and when I compared that to what we have on our farm, anywhere from six inches to a foot and a half, it just made one recognize how dramatically they

could impact the agriculture and the food production of the world if they were allowed to do so, if they were given the free rights to do so.

* (16:30)

The reason I rise today is because I represent an area of the province that also has a very large Ukrainian community, the Vita area, Sundown and Arbakka in all those southeastern part of the province's communities. They came to this country, and they sought out again the freedom that they saw they could gain in this province because of the tyranny that was virtually forcing them out of their homeland. They came to Manitoba and settled in southeast Manitoba and made a living out of the stones and rocks and the poplar trees that were very prevalent in the area from Ridgeville east to the Ontario border. One need only travel through Stuartburn and Vita and that area to recognize how difficult it must have been to try and eke out an agricultural living in that part of Manitoba when those settlers came here.

But I think it is important for us to recognize what the situation the Ukrainian people face today is something that we should be very cognizant of and guard very fiercely against. Therefore, I stand and support the resolution that is before us today commending our federal government for the stand that they have taken and the position that they have put forward on the results of the election in the Ukraine.

I believe that because many of our people still exist and live in cities such as Zaporizhzhia, in other countries in the Balkan areas, and in many regions of the Ukraine, we respect as a community, that they be given the right to elect their representatives, be they presidents, be they representatives to their parliament and/or their provincial legislatures, that they have those rights and that those rights be respected for the results that are drawn from them.

However, I think it is also important to note that what we have seen on television, the large crowds that we have seen gather in Kiev and other cities such as Lviv, which we visit and indeed most of the larger urban centres opposing the kind of corruption that obviously took place during the election and the polling in Kiev not be allowed again, and that the results should be set aside and another election called as has been demonstrated or initiated by those crowds that we have seen.

So, Madam Acting Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to stand and support the resolution today on behalf of all the people, descendants of Ukraine in Manitoba and indeed southeast Manitoba, and support their efforts to see that their relatives and friends in Ukraine are treated with the same democratic respect that we have in this country.

Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker, for allowing me the time.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Acting Speaker, it is a pleasure to take part in this debate today, and I thank the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) for introducing this resolution and the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) for seconding it. We appreciate the fact that the official opposition and the third party, the Liberal Party members, all support this resolution. We are allowing time for a number of people to speak on it, and we hope that it will be passed unanimously.

I think the most important part of this resolution is in the first WHEREAS which says, "WHEREAS it is the right of all citizens to participate in free and fair elections, as outlined in the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights." It would be very easy to get into the internal dynamics of what is happening in Ukraine, but time does not allow. I think that we need to be focussed as people from outside the country of Ukraine to concentrate on what would be a democratic and fair election. We know that there is a stalemate in Ukraine at the current time, and we believe that the only way to solve that stalemate is by having another election, rather than having the government impose the results of an election that is widely believed to have been unfair and corrupted.

For example, on Sunday, I was at St. Mary the Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and we listened to Mr. Eugene Hyworon, who happens to be the president of the parish. He had just come back on Saturday from Ukraine where he was an election observer. He gave many, many examples of how unfair the election was, based on his observation and the observation of election observers.

On Saturday night I was at a Laotian Buddhist social event at St. John Cantius hall. There is something wonderful about representing Burrows constituency in the North End where I could be at a Laotian Buddhist event in a Polish hall talking about the election in Ukraine as a Canadian. I had no

warning that I was going to be asked to speak. I spoke about the election in Ukraine. I said why should we as Canadians, or why should you as Laotian-Canadians, care about the election in Ukraine. I said it is important to people all over the world that there be a fair and democratic election there. It is something that we believe in as Canadians.

We believe that it can be resolved peacefully. The people in the streets are protesting in a peaceful manner up to the present time, and it would be a shame if that deteriorated and the nation was plunged into the black abyss of violence. We certainly do not want that to happen.

The fact that the Canadian government has sent observers, Canadian parliamentary delegations, including a member of parliament from Manitoba, Judy Wasylycia-Leis, the M.P. for Winnipeg North Centre, is important. I think that we as legislators can be important as well by passing this resolution to show our support.

In fact, the last, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, says that "the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urges the Government of Manitoba to work in co-operation with the Canadian government in support of measures they may undertake to uphold democratic processes in Ukraine." Not only should we encourage the government to do the right thing, but I think there are opportunities for us as legislators. For example, I got an e-mail from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, and they are looking for observers to go to Ukraine if there is a run-off election. So I have been asked to go as an observer. It is something that I am seriously considering doing. I hope that other members will join in doing that from all sides in a non-partisan way. I look forward to hearing about that shortly.

In conclusion, I support the resolution. We support the resolution. I am sure that it is going to get all-party support.

I think this is sending an important signal to Manitobans of Ukrainian descent and also to the Canadian government and the government of Ukraine that public opinion is in favour of only a fair and democratic solution to the stalemate, which at this time we think the best solution would be to have a run-off election, a fair election with international

jurors present to determine the future government of Ukraine. Thank you.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Madam Acting Speaker, I am honoured to be able to rise today and put a few words on the record about this all-party resolution.

Our democracy in Canada allows us this opportunity to stand here and to be able to speak freely without any reprisals for what we say. I am so appreciative of living in a country that allows this and that promotes it, a country that values free and fair elections. It is very distressing to hear of the massive electoral fraud in the recent Ukrainian elections. So I am pleased to add my voice, with the people throughout the world, the all-party voices here in this Chamber and, particularly, the Manitobans of Ukrainian heritage, to add my voice to what they are also saying and marking the unity with the Ukrainian people.

* (16:40)

Madam Acting Speaker, I am from the Swan River Valley, and I grew up in a small village called Benito, where a lot of the families that I knew there were Ukrainian. A lot of my friends were Ukrainian. My in-laws immigrated here from the Ukraine. With the Russian background that I have, I value the similarities between the Ukrainians and the Russians, and the similarities that the two cultures shared, and the many, many experiences and wonderful opportunities I had to share in a lot of the cultural aspects of my Ukrainian friends.

A friend of ours lives in Kiev and just prior to the election he sent us an e-mail and he said, "We have here in Ukraine presidential elections. Yesterday, for the first time in our new history, we have watched TV debates of two candidates," and he says, "I am looking for changes." I cannot imagine that we would never have an opportunity to ever have experienced debates here in any of those elections. Here in Ukraine for the first time they were watching television debates of the two candidates. Certainly, you know, when our friend was here from Kiev, he is originally from Yushgrav [*phonetic*] in west Ukraine, and when he was here, he spoke a lot about his country and what it was like in Kiev and about the issues and problems they have there.

Certainly, Madam Acting Speaker, it reminds us of the many privileges that we have here and the

rights and freedoms of the democracy we live in and not have to fear what we say and to be allowed this opportunity to stand-up and speak on issues like this.

Madam Acting Speaker, there is a professor in Kingston that was making some comments the other day. He was a professor of political geography at the Royal Military College in Kingston. He had been receiving a number of e-mails on the situation in Ukraine. He was written about in the various media, talking about these e-mails that he received. The content of the e-mails related to the fraud and the widespread intimidation and the widespread abuse that went on in those elections. He indicated that the situation in Ukraine was very, very volatile, from those people that were passing on information to him. He talked about the fears that Russia will attempt to reclaim Ukraine, which was freed by the Soviet Union's collapse.

Madam Acting Speaker, Ukrainians do deserve to be free to choose their own political course, to remain independent of Russia, and to pursue ties with Europe. I think Canada, Europe and the U.S. must be prepared to support this democracy in the Ukraine. Election fraud must be resolved. Peaceful protests must not be put down by violence. Certainly, when we look at the pictures in the paper, or we watch the coverage on the television, it really is quite a compelling picture, and quite dramatic, to see the thousands of protestors packing Kiev's Freedom Square and to see the tent village and the young people that are working hard and striving towards achieving a democracy, to feel strongly enough about it to face the cold weather in the tents and to fight for something that they are beginning to have a strong value in.

It is a human rights issue, and Canada did do the right thing in refusing to recognize the election results there. They certainly acknowledge the disputed results. In light of widespread reports of voting fraud, some from the Canadian M.P.s who were there as observers, it is right that Canada cannot endorse that particular election.

Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan has declared, and I quote, "Canada cannot accept that the announced results reflect the true democratic will of the Ukrainian people." Certainly, those comments are echoing throughout the world right now, and it is coming from many people at many levels in many countries, and it is important the world speaks up. It

is important the world not allow this kind of fraud to exist, to have elections that have turned out to be this way, to be allowed to be recognized in any way whatsoever.

Ukraine, with its population of 48 million people, with its wonderful agricultural resources, could have a very, very rich democratic future. Canada was the first western country to recognize Ukraine's independence, and it is right that we stand by her now as her fragile democracy teeters in crisis. It is right we stand now and put our voices forward on behalf of the many, many Ukrainian people in this province. I am pleased to stand here today with all parties, to offer support to the people of Ukraine in their struggle for democracy. Thank you very much.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): It is my pleasure, as well, to rise today to speak in favour of this resolution. It is with much chagrin that I have been watching the events unfold in Ukraine over the last couple of weeks. We are privileged to live in a democracy here in Canada, and it is something that cannot be under-emphasized or shown any lack of respect whatsoever. Democracy is something our ancestors have fought and died for, and it is indubitably the superior system of government where people can live in harmony without fear of retribution by the government, where the rule of law is paramount and we have the right to assemble freely and elect people to legislatures where their views are represented and put forth in an equitable manner.

I went to university in the 1980s, and I have an honours degree in east European studies. I remember those days when the Russian Prime Minister, Leonid Brezhnev, had passed away and there was so much hope in the eastern bloc countries. Mr. Gorbachev came to power. We had *glasnost*, we had *perestroika*, which were policies to free the press and to allow the democratization process to come into being; the free market system and so forth. It was with great hope I watched this process unfold. It was not long after that the Soviet Union unilaterally declared the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact countries and all of the eastern bloc countries were freed from the Soviet yoke through that process, to the betterment of mankind. It was not much longer after that the Soviet Union itself was dissolved and it was unique. It was a peaceful process with a total lack of bloodshed. The result was the release of a further 15 countries from the former Soviet Union, Ukraine being one of them.

* (16:50)

There was a lot of hope, and since that time a lot of progress has been made in putting the cold war to rest. The second world has, in large part, embraced democracy and moved very much in the right direction. It is something I have taken great pleasure in observing over the last 20 or so years since I left university. I am somewhat afraid at this point to see this retroactive action in Ukraine, to see the thugs, once again rearing their heads trying to controvert elections, it is very disturbing to me. I think this resolution is very timely in putting our thoughts on the record here, from the Manitoba Legislature, that the West will not tolerate this, we will not go back to the bad old days of the Cold War, that this will not be tolerated. I hope that in the days to come, common sense will prevail there, that it will be acknowledged this election that just took place there was a fraud, and that another election will be held, and we can get a truly representative and democratic government in the Ukraine as the people of that region so richly deserve.

I, too, am of Russian ancestry, and I have had the pleasure of growing up amongst the Ukrainians. I live in Poplarfield, which has got to be the centre of the Ukrainian people in Manitoba here, certainly in the Interlake. It has been my pleasure to have grown up amongst those people in that ethnic group.

I have deep concerns that we are going back to the bad old days, which is never an impossibility. Those who do not follow history are doomed to repeat it, and to think that a second Cold War is not possible would be very optimistic. The Russians have made a number of moves over the decades, positive moves, I think. I do not know what involvement there is in the Ukrainian election. I am not happy with President Putin for acknowledging that the election was legitimate. I think that he should reconsider that. But I think there are things that we in the West can do as well.

One thing that deeply concerns me is moves that the United States has made in the not-too-distant past. I thought it was regrettable that they withdrew from the antiballistic missile treaty and they are moving so aggressively forward on the militarization of outer space. I do not think that these are positive developments. A lot of money will be wasted on this, money that could be better spent teaching people how to farm, building hospitals, schools and so forth.

So these are negative things as well. It was not too, too many years ago that the Soviets and the Americans fought proxy wars, and if things do not improve then we could be back to those bad old days very quickly, and the Ukraine could be the next battlefield. I do not think anybody wants to see that, so hopefully we will all bear these thoughts in mind.

I fully support this resolution. I think it is the right thing to do at this point in time, and we can only hope and pray that in the days to come common sense will prevail and due process will take place in the Ukraine, and we will get a democratic, freedom-loving government that will justly represent the people of the Ukraine. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): I would like to thank the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Chomiak) as well as the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) for bringing this resolution forward to the House. I think it is an extremely important issue that is affecting a large part of the world and, certainly, a large number of Manitobans, those of Ukrainian descent and recent immigrants in particular.

But, in a lot of ways, it affects all of us in the province of Manitoba. Certainly, as individuals who have been elected here in fair and honest elections, we will do whatever we can to see that the citizens of the Ukraine enjoy the same opportunities and the same rights to express their views to elect their representatives in an open, honest and fair manner, and that is really the nub of this resolution. I am pleased to be able to offer my support to this resolution. I cannot claim to have Ukrainian heritage, but I can tell the Legislature that my ancestors did spend some time in the Ukraine before finally settling in Canada and Manitoba in the 1870s, so there is definitely an affinity to the country. We do hope that in the not-too-distant future there will be, in fact in the very near future, there will be some resolve to the issues facing the citizens of the Ukraine today.

I think we have to understand in this Legislature that not everybody in the Ukraine these days is united. I mean there are definitely two factions at work here. There are individuals who want to have a closer allegiance to the eastern block; there are other individuals in the country that want to have more of an affinity and more relationship with the European union. What we hope for in this Legislature is to

ensure and to particularly express to the government of Canada, who is more directly involved in this issue, that it is our desire as legislators to ensure that the government of Canada does whatever possible to ensure that the people of the Ukraine have the opportunity to be masters of their own destiny in an open, honest and democratic manner.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I was, Mr. Speaker, in attendance at the vigil last Monday night that was held on the grounds of the Legislature, along with the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Chomiak), who spoke very eloquently for all members of this Legislature. I believe there were some other members there as well but it was an extremely moving experience to see the passion that the individuals who attended the vigil, and obviously many of them were of Ukrainian heritage, and in fact some I spoke to were recent immigrants, and you could tell from the passion that they brought to that vigil that they were determined to do whatever they could do to ensure that democracy was alive and well in the Ukraine.

Again, I just think it is an obligation that we have and I am grateful that we have an opportunity in this Legislature to speak freely and to encourage our national government to do whatever it can do to ensure that the people of the Ukraine are able to select their legislators and, in fact, select their leaders in an open and free democracy.

We also pray that this division within the country is resolved quickly and that it does not end in any type of violent way. I think we have to recognize that there is a very real possibility that it could spin out of control very, very quickly and that is why, I think, it is important that we urge the government of Canada to do whatever possible in a very quick and a very meaningful way to ensure that some resolution is brought to this country. If it takes another election to do that, if that is the only way to resolve it, then hopefully Canada can be represented in that election in terms of doing what we can do to ensure that it is a fair election and that democracy prevails in the Ukraine.

On that basis I am pleased to be able to offer my support to this motion. Thank you.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to add my comments. I would like to

start first by thanking the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), and the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), for moving and seconding this particular resolution dealing with the Ukraine election.

Mr. Speaker, since this is a joint resolution, I think this demonstrates quite clearly that the Manitoba Legislature is acting in a unified way and in fact in a non-partisan way with respect to this resolution.

Now, Mr. Speaker, through the course of my time here I have had the opportunity to engage in many debates and have obviously taken part in a number of provincial general elections. In engaging in the debate inside of this Manitoba Legislature, we recognize, on a daily basis, that there are strongly held views by individual members of the Legislative Assembly, and yet we recognize that each and every member of this Legislative Assembly has the ability and the opportunity to freely, openly and fairly express their views while they represent their respective constituencies.

* (17:00)

Now the situation in Ukraine, Mr. Speaker, of course, is something different. During the presidential election campaign that was held there recently, we have had opportunity to learn and see the new stories that are appearing on the national television outlets. Every day reports of the events that are happening in Ukraine and the way that particular election has been conducted, in what many describe as a fraudulent manner. There have been many thousands of international observers that have taken part during that electoral process. In fact, I think there was some 100 from Canada that participated as election observers. Those observers have reported back to the world that those elections were not conducted in a fair and impartial manner and that there were many electoral fraud situations that would have occurred and that we need to revisit the elections that have occurred.

Mr. Speaker, I am not of Ukrainian ancestry, but my community is comprised of a large component of Ukrainian people, very hardworking, very industrious people. Strength of character is the first thought that comes to mind when working with people of Ukrainian ancestry.

Just this past week I had the opportunity in one of my local community clubs to speak to a young

lady of Ukrainian ancestry, a person, Katerina Jacob, whose mother's maiden name was Prymak, which is of Ukrainian ancestry. I listened to that young lady, who is about 14 years of age, talk very openly about her experiences not only within the community in which she has lived for her entire life, but as a young student within the education system of my community and was enrolled in the Ukrainian immersion program. She had the opportunity to travel to Ukraine this past summer to observe not only the culture and the heritage and the beauty of that nation, but also to talk with her relatives and other people of Ukraine and to learn more about the country. She expressed to me during our discussions this week her very strong worry that Ukraine would in a way dissolve itself into a situation that would cause greater hardship and disunity within the country.

In fact, the way she described it to me was that she was very worried that the situation in Ukraine would lead to conditions that would perhaps cause people to take matters into their own hands in a less than democratic fashion. She was worried about civil war in situations like this. These were the comments that this young lady was expressing to me in her worry about what would happen as she too would be watching the nightly newscast about the events that were happening in a country that she had just visited just a few months ago.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are people within all of our communities, no doubt, that have relatives they communicate with and can learn and share experiences about events that are occurring in Ukraine. I do know that we are demonstrating despite our strong differences and strongly held viewpoints in this Manitoba Legislature. Despite those strong viewpoints that we have, we can from time to time come together and agree on something of such significant importance to the wellbeing of the world and to the people of the world. We are demonstrating through this particular resolution here today that we are speaking with one united voice in sending a message to those living in Ukraine and to others in the world that they too can join as one united voice in expressing our displeasure with the events that have occurred in the electoral process in Ukraine just recently.

Mr. Speaker, I think that, while we are one legislature of many in Canada, we are demonstrating quite clearly that we are united in that voice, and that

we call upon those that are making the decisions in Ukraine to allow for a free, open and democratic electoral process to occur that will reflect the true will of the people of Ukraine. Then we will let the people of Ukraine determine their future. I would like to thank the mover of this resolution and the seconder who have demonstrated quite clearly that we are speaking with one voice, and that we will work as a Legislative Assembly in co-operation, and members in that position will work in co-operation with the Canadian government in support of measures that may undertake to uphold the democratic process in Ukraine.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to, with that, conclude my comments and say that I support this resolution and very strongly hope that the people of Ukraine will also demonstrate that there should be free and fair elections that will occur in that country. Thank you.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I, too, want to add my voice and support to this resolution. I want to thank the mover, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), and the seconder, the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), for bringing forward this resolution.

Democratic freedoms are freedoms that we enjoy in this country. Certainly, it is something we want to see take place throughout the world, but, at this point in time, as we read the papers and as we watch television and see what is unfolding in the Ukraine, there are concerns out there.

So I am pleased that we, as a Legislative Assembly, that we can come together to debate and to talk about the resolution that is in front of us in support of democracy as we would like to see it unfold.

Mr. Speaker, I represent an area where there are a number of people, families who have come from the Ukraine, but, more closely to my heart, I want to illustrate and also tell a story about my in-laws who came from the Ukraine. In fact, my father-in-law came in 1920, he was 20 years old at the time, and it was in the dead of the night that he saw his father killed as the bandits came through the village that they lived in. In fact, they killed his father with a pitchfork. So he, being the eldest of the family, was responsible for his mother and seven siblings. They left the village in the Ukraine at that time, took whatever they could carry and proceeded to immigrate and to come to Manitoba.

A number of times he has talked about the experiences that he had out there, but he also talked about the country that was so rich in resources, human resources, but also in natural resources. They did not want to leave the country, but, again, because the freedoms that they had experienced to that point were taken away they felt they had no other choice but to leave the country and move, and consequently they came to Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put those few comments on the record. My father-in-law passed away just six months ago, but even at the age of 95 he was very keenly interested in the things that took place throughout the world and of course back in the Ukraine as well. He followed politics closely. In fact, he was a great supporter of mine and was keenly interested in the democracy that was taking place and unfolding throughout the country.

So I just want to put on the record the resolution, the last part of it, in support of the discussion that we have had here today:

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to join with the people throughout the world, and particularly Manitobans of Ukrainian heritage in marking unity with the Ukrainian people; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba to work in co-operation with the Canadian government in support of measures they may undertake to uphold the democratic process in Ukraine."

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I, too, support this resolution and want to thank you for that opportunity.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Wellington): I am very much honoured, and I appreciate the privilege to participate in this resolution.

The United Nations declaration said: *Tous les êtres humains naissent libres et égaux en dignité et en droits; all persons are born free and equal in dignity and rights.*

Although I am not from Ukraine, I am from this world, and I like holobchi, perogies, borscht,

sometimes better than my own food. I have had the opportunity in the past to represent Ukrainian communities. I have lived with them, and we celebrated the New Year on the different date, and Christmas. So I am an adopted Ukrainian person, but I am a citizen of the world.

* (17:10)

Whenever there is this danger of escalation of conflicts among people and among groups, we have to remember that democracy is the better solution. Indeed, democracy is the application of the Christian doctrine of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all men, sisterhood of all women. We are all brothers and sisters, and anyone that suffers in the world, suffers with us, so we feel the pain and we feel also the inequity whenever it occurs in this world. But, by the nature of things, because every individual is pursuing his own benefit, every group its own interest, by necessity there is unavoidable conflict among individuals and groups.

It is democracy that we have been defending in all the conflicts, in all the wars and all the conflicts among the nations, because democracy is the orderly, peaceful way of reconciling conflict. It is by discussions and debates and arguments and negotiations, as we have been doing in this Chamber. It is slow, painfully slow, calls for all the patience that you can give, but democracy in the long run, the people's collective will, the people's collective wisdom, will indeed prevail, as we have observed in the historical experience.

I like the Ukrainian culture and values. I feel like I belong to it, although I was born in another part of the world. Family, unity, collective responsibility, these are the values that I appreciate, but as human beings we have to understand that confrontation is less preferable, but reconciliation, discussion, negotiation, is the better way of settling any kind of conflict. Democracy professes that it is not possible to reconcile. The rules are that the minority should observe the majority will, but the majority is obligated to respect minority rights. We have been trained in such a system and, by following all these procedural rules, then we follow the democratic process.

As is stated in the second part of the resolve, that we "may undertake and uphold democratic process in the Ukraine," I am not advocating anything there,

where there is another election or anything. All I am asking is that they follow the peaceful, non-violent way of resolving their conflict. Why? If they follow the violent way, violence breeds violence. Those who live by the sword shall die by the sword, but if we follow the peaceful way it will be an orderly resolution of conflict, although it is painful, arduous, needs all the patience we need, all the time we need, but in the long run the people's will will prevail. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and it brings me great pleasure to speak to this motion, a motion very timely in a period in time of turmoil in our world, a time where, I think, we should take heed. There is a lot of danger, a lot of danger signals coming out of Ukraine. Nobody wishes to see civil war.

Probably the worst of bad is a civil war. If you look back at the United States, the number of individuals who died in the Civil War, the same amount, even today, they have not lost the same amount of soldiers in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam and so on and so forth, as they did in the Civil War.

We, as legislators, sitting here in Manitoba, certainly look upon what is going on in Ukraine with great distress. I, as one legislator, the son of immigrants, and I know I have mentioned to this House before that my grandparents who got married in Kreinisberg [*phonetic*], East Prussia, decided to sell all their property and move to Wolinya [*phonetic*], which is now in the Ukraine, where my father was born. Unfortunately, with my father's untimely passing away, it was up to my aunts and uncles who told me about the years in the Ukraine.

They said it was an incredibly beautiful area. They used to call it "The Breadbasket of Europe." Incredible agricultural lands, very rich. Hardworking people who appreciated the land and the fact that they were the ones that were supporting the big cities. Food was not quite as plentiful as it is today. It was not the same kind of abundance. They had an understanding for agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, what happened during World War II and then after World War II, the democratic vote, the right for democracy was denied the people of the Ukraine, and they suffered for it. Their institutions suffered, all their industry

suffered, agriculture suffered, until, of course, with the crumbling of the walls that split eastern Europe from western Europe, when they started to come down, there was this new awakening, this new love and desire for change and a desire for democracy. Certainly, the people of the Ukraine and in the east bloc saw what took place in western Europe and in North America and they looked at the institutions that had developed over hundreds of years and decided that that is what they wanted.

It is amazing, Mr. Speaker, that we stand here today, the year 2004, and we still have individuals in the world who believe that somehow that they will have a legitimacy of power using a corruption and a corrupt system. By corrupting the democratic process, they still want to have the power and they still want to have the recognition that they are, de facto, the moral authority when it comes to government. But corruption will never give you that.

So we stand by those who are camping in incredibly severe conditions. It is cold. It has been snowing. It is wet. They are sleeping in tents on concrete.

They are protesting and actually standing up for their belief. They are standing up for that ideal we call democracy. But an unfettered, a clean, clear democratic system where ballot boxes are not snuck into the back and filled with ballots, where ballot boxes, from what we understand from observers, were sitting in corners with coats over them. And a thick envelope full of ballots had another coat thrown over it until the observers were supposed to be gone and then they would be stuffed. All these demonstrators want is the right to express their vote in a free and democratic way.

Certainly, on behalf of the people of Springfield, where we have had settlers from the Ukraine for over a hundred years, certainly the people of Springfield would wish that for the people of Ukraine. We wish them well. Continue on the struggle for a free and democratic Ukraine.

When the election results are counted, you say, fine, my candidate may not have made it, however we believe it to be fair. We know that every vote was counted, it was fairly cast, it was done in a secret ballot, it was done in proper fashion and we certainly then accept that result.

* (17:20)

The result that has been announced is not an accurate reflection of what the people wanted and certainly we stand by our Canadian government, as the resolution says. We as a House stand by the people of Ukraine that they have a free and democratic vote because in the end, that is what they have desired for over 50 years and that is what they deserve to have right now. Certainly, we salute those individuals that are standing in the streets, banging on drums, living in incredibly poor conditions. We wish them all the best. We wish them Godspeed. Hopefully, this will resolve itself in a proper way.

Certainly, that is our wish and our prayer for the people of Ukraine. May God bless and keep them.

I thank those who moved and seconded this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. We have another speaker, okay.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to put a few comments on the record, certainly, in support of this resolution, and thank both sides of the House for the co-operation that existed in order to prepare and present this resolution, both the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach).

I, too, share the comments that I believe every speaker has made in the House today when we talk about wanting to see the situation in Ukraine settled in a very democratic, in a very peaceful way. My heart, our hearts go out to those that are having to protest to have the ability for the freedoms that we enjoy here.

I do want to indicate that I grew up in the North End of the city of Winnipeg. Although I am not of Ukrainian descent, I was immersed in the Ukrainian culture and tradition. My neighbours, my very best friends were of Ukrainian descent, and I want to indicate that there were many, many good times that we celebrated over the Easter festivities, our normal Christmas and Ukrainian Christmas. You know, I felt somewhat, as a third-generation Canadian, that I was

missing something. We did not have the strong culture and tradition around our celebrations that they had. They were fiercely proud, proud of their Ukrainian heritage; very, very hardworking, family-oriented individuals with a very strong work ethic.

I do also remember at school and at times when, because there were a majority of Ukrainians that I went to school with, the comments that were made around the schoolyard were that there were those that were Ukrainian and those that wished they were. Mr. Speaker, I was one of those who, from time to time, wished that I had the culture and the tradition and the heritage that we shared on very special celebrations and occasions.

Mr. Speaker, my first responsibility when we formed government in 1998 was responsibility for culture, heritage, recreation and multiculturalism. I went on to develop new and lasting relationships with many in the Ukrainian community. It never ceases to amaze me how much they do treasure and honour, in a very proud way, their roots.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that many of those, all of those that are involved and are of Ukrainian descent right here in Manitoba, hate to see the kind of setback that we have just seen in Ukraine. I want to join with them and ensure that all of us here in Manitoba and in our country desire and work strongly towards doing anything we can to ensure that democracy prevails, and that they will enjoy the freedoms that we do enjoy right here in this province and this country: to speak freely, and to elect a government that will represent those freedoms, and strive for the kind of life that those of Ukrainian descent do experience right here in our country and our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I just want to say that I support this resolution. I know all of us would want to see a proper process undertaken in Ukraine to make sure that freedom and democracy prevail. Thank you.

Hon. Eric Robison (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I simply want to take this opportunity, as well, to add my voice to this resolution. I believe that, as a family in the world community, it is important to give voice on issues that sometimes arise, that affect all of us in this family of humanity that share Mother Earth. Myself, like other Canadians, have been deeply moved by the

goings-on in the Ukraine. I believe that many Canadians share my concern, as well, for the future and, especially, the children and the elders in that country. I think that is certainly what we pray and wish will not happen is bloodshed, and there are indications that there are possibilities that that could occur.

Mr. Speaker, why I wanted to say a few words is simply because of the experiences that my people, the Cree people, and Aboriginal people generally, have experienced. But not only that, I believe it was the camaraderie that developed between my father's generation and people he shared time with in his upbringing, being a helper on the farms that he worked at in his youth. But he also told me about the persecution that the Ukrainian people went through when they first arrived in Canada and how they were used as second-class and, not only used, but used as cheap labour, and how they were deemed to be second-class citizens of this country. So in a lot of ways there were a lot of parallels between Aboriginal people and the Ukrainian people who first arrived here in what we now know as Canada.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is incumbent upon all of us as being responsible leaders in our own right to unanimously support this in this Legislature. I believe that what we want for everybody in our own country Canada, in our own communities and, indeed, in the world community, is freedom, democracy and the opportunity to enjoy the things in life that were meant for all of us.

So I join with the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Chomiak) and the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) in this joint resolution of the Assembly, and I certainly want to indicate my entire support for the resolution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Is there leave not to see the clock, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement for the Speaker not to see the clock? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I, too, would like to, as a representative, a member of the Manitoba Legislature, put a few words on the record in relation to support for the resolution before us today, which I am sure will be supported by all members of this House. I would like to congratulate

the member from Kildonan, as well as the member from Russell, for bringing this resolution forward.

This is a most important issue, Mr. Speaker, because it is right to the core of democracy, as we know it, in free and fair elections, and that is a right of all citizens that we should cherish and work very hard, democratically, in every democratic society, to make sure is spread worldwide, to have that opportunity. I think it is incumbent upon all of us to pay special attention at times like this, because we can never take for granted the freedoms that we enjoy. I only go back to the times of *Mein Kampf* and the writings of Adolf Hitler to emphasize the concerns that we have around taking freedoms for granted. Of course, we did not at that time, and we ended up with a horrendous world war, and that cannot be allowed to take place again or should, at least, never be taken for granted over a situation like this, particularly when it is dealing with the democratic process.

* (17:30)

I want to say that not only have we as a Legislature recognized the concern here in this election process, but several thousand international observers have observed it as well, including people from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, NATO and the United States, as the resolution states, that have reported massive electoral fraud in the recent Ukrainian elections. It includes a hundred Canadian observers as well as two Canadian parliamentary delegations and I think that that is most significant, that we note that we have had a participation in this process.

Of course, the Ukrainian Supreme Court has suspended these presidential results and looked internally at the kind of process that was undergone and the fraud that took place, apparent fraud that took place in this outcome of these elections. I think that that is why it is extremely important that all of us have the opportunity to recognize the concern expressed by these local citizens. I think that, it is a fact actually, that the citizens of the Ukraine are very, very concerned about the outcome and the mechanism that was used to get to the point that we are at today where there is division in their country in regard to the freedoms of the democratic side of the world, if you will, as opposed to more centralized

control and I think that we should all work towards making sure that democracy is spread throughout the world.

So I want to close by just saying that it is important for many of us in Manitoba that are representing citizens of Ukrainian heritage and Ukrainian descent, and all Ukrainian people, that we stick up for their rights in their own home country, and that we work in a co-operative manner with the Canadian government in support of these measures that they may undertake to uphold the democratic process in Ukraine and encourage all other provinces to be a part of supporting the Ukrainian resolution into this issue for the part that the Canadian government is playing in the resolve of the affairs of the Ukraine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker for the opportunity to speak to this resolution and I certainly would be speaking in favour of it.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I think it is our collective hope that not only Ukrainian Manitobans but Manitobans generally will recognize the joint effort made here this afternoon. It was a singular event where there was a joint scheduling, a joint drafting and a joint eagerness being expressed for stability, for democracy in Ukraine. I think that the events this afternoon speak highly of this institution. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the resolution on Ukrainian elections.

Do the members wish to have the resolution read?

Some Honourable Members: No

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

WHEREAS it is the right of all citizens to participate in free and fair elections as outlined in the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights; and

WHEREAS hundreds of thousands of opposition supporters are gathered in central Kiev waving large banners and singing after spending more than a week on the streets; and

WHEREAS several thousand international observers, including observers from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, NATO and the United States have reported massive electoral fraud in the recent Ukrainian elections; and

WHEREAS these observers include approximately 100 Canadian observers and two Canadian parliamentary delegations; and

WHEREAS the Ukrainian Supreme Court suspended the presidential poll result on Thursday to consider the opposition's complaints; and

WHEREAS Ukraine's parliament declared the country's disputed presidential election invalid Saturday and also passed a vote of no confidence in the election commission; and

WHEREAS the Ukrainian Supreme Court is now considering the claim of massive fraud in the presidential elections, stopping the inauguration of Mr. Yanukovich; and

WHEREAS based on the above mentioned observations, the electoral commission does not have a legitimate basis for declaring Mr. Yanukovich the winner of the presidential election.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to join the people throughout the world and particularly Manitobans of Ukrainian heritage in marking unity with the Ukrainian people.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba to work in co-operation with the Canadian government in support of measures they may undertake to uphold democratic processes in Ukraine.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

So the resolution has been passed unanimously? *[Agreed]*

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): House business, Mr. Speaker. I would like to announce that the meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs called earlier for Wednesday morning to deal with the recruitment of the Ombudsman and Children's Advocate is rescheduled to 10 a.m., Thursday, December 2.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that the meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs called for Wednesday morning, December 1, at 10 a.m., to deal with the issue of the recruitment process for hiring a new Ombudsman and a new Children's Advocate is being rescheduled to 10 a.m. on Thursday, December 2. *[Agreed]*

Mr. Speaker: The hour being past 5:30, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 30, 2004

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